INFORMAL WORKPLACE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF GOLD-COLLAR WORKERS

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INFORMAL WORKPLACE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF GOLD-COLLAR WORKERS

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Oya Sarkan, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
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ABSTRACT

Informal Workplace Learning Experiences of

Gold-Collar Workers

The purpose of this study was to examine informal workplace learning experiences of gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders. It was expected to understand what, how and why gold-collar leaders learned informally in the workplace, throughout their careers. The research was designed as a qualitative study and the data was collected mainly through semi-structured interviews. This study reveals the learning outcomes that are essential to act and perform as better leaders while dealing with increasingly complex tasks and responsibilities. These are solving problems, making decisions, managing risks and crisis, communicating, building teams, delegating, and monitoring tasks. The findings indicate that thinking strategically, exercising judgment, leading by values, engaging people, empowering leaders, developing teams, leading the change and transformations, and fostering the organizational culture are the major learning outcomes associated with leadership thinking, mindsets, and styles. Learning from experiences and other people, self-directed learning and meta cognitive learning skills, initiatives taken for increasing self-knowledge, dialogue, and networks as communities of practices are found as the major sources, strategies, and processes of informal learning used by the corporate leaders. Growth mindset, flexibility, passion, adaptation, and curiosity are revealed as individual factors influencing learning in the workplace. It is concluded that informal learning accounts for most of the leader`s learning in the workplace and leader development in the workplace should be considered and redesigned more from the perspective of informal learning.

ÖZET

Altın-Yakalı İşçilerin
Enformel İşyeri Öğrenme Deneyimleri

Bu araştırma ile şirketlerde üst düzey yönetici olarak çalışan altın-yakalı işçilerin, enformel işyeri öğrenme deneyimlerini anlamak; kariyerleri boyunca enformel olarak ne, nasıl ve neden öğrendiklerini incelemek hedeflenmiştir. Araştırma nitel bir çalışma olarak tasarlanmış ve veriler, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Çalışma, karmaşıklaşan görev ve sorumluluklarla uğraşırken daha iyi liderler olarak hareket etmek ve performans göstermek için gerekli öğrenme kazanımlarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bunlar sorun çözmek, karar vermek, riskleri ve krizleri yönetmek, iletişim kurmak, ekip kurmak, delege etmek ve takip etmektir. Stratejik düşünmek, muhakeme kullanmak, değerlerle yönetmek, çalışan bağlılığını arttırmak, liderleri güçlendirmek ve takımları geliştirmek, değişim ve dönüşümlere öncülük etmek ve gerekli organizasyon kültürü oluşturmak; liderlik düşünce yapısı, zihniyetleri ve stilleriyle ilişkili başlıca enformel öğrenme kazanımlarıdır. Deneyimlerden ve diğer insanlardan öğrenme, kendi kendine öğrenme ve meta bilişsel öğrenme becerileri, öz bilgiyi artırmak için girişimler, diyalog ve uygulama toplulukları olarak ağlar; başlıca enformel öğrenme kaynakları, stratejileri ve süreçleri olarak bulunmuştur. Gelişme zihniyeti, esneklik, tutku, adaptasyon ve merak, işyerinde öğrenmeyi etkileyen bireysel faktörler olarak ortaya konmuştur. Enformel öğrenmenin, liderlerin işyeri öğrenmesinin çoğunu oluşturduğu ve lider gelişiminin, enformel öğrenme perspektifinden tekrar düşünülmesi ve tasarlanması gerektiği sonucuna varılmıştır.

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To Çınar…

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEO	Chief Executive Officers
CFO	Chief Finance Officer
CIQ	Critical Incident Question
CIT	Critical Incident Technique
COO	Chief Operating Officer
EMEA	Europe, Middle East and Africa
HBS	Harvard Business School
HR	Human Resources
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NLTK	Natural Language Tool Kit
P&L	Profit and Loss
SDL	Self-directed learning
TRNLTK	Turkish Natural Language Tool Kit
VUCA	Vulnerable, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter background and the purpose of the study, the research questions, significance of the study, identity of the researcher, definition of terms and organization of the dissertation are presented.

1.1 Background of the study

Global capitalist restructuring set the driving ideology, policy framework and governance model in the last decades. It represents the transformation from the nation-state phase to transnational phase of economic, social, cultural, and political structures. In the former phase, nation-states were the major actors, and all relations and regulations were formed in relation to their territory bounds. In the new phase, all structures and relations are now worldwide while internationalizing production itself and all systems, processes, and relations around it (Robinson, 2011; Stephen, 2014). This worldwide transformation triggered knowledge economy, urbanization, growth of consumerist markets, emergence of economic power centers, strengthening of multinational corporations and formation of new work groups (Sassen, 2001). Although globalization has been a key word for describing all these changes, discussions on it ignore the process behind its evolvement, phases of materialization and how it is realized by involved actors (Sklair & Struna, 2013).

In the last thirty years, middle class has differentiated itself from other classes through some determining factors and having different forms of capitals. It has already been separated from the working class due to the education one has, type of the job one

does and the amount of income one brings in. This separation can also be discussed as the secession of white-collar workers from the blue-collar workers (Giddens, 2016). Today the market, designed by the dynamics of global economy, got even more intensified by different tasks requiring numerous kinds of different workers with varying vision, knowledge, perspectives, behaviors, and capabilities (Wickman, 2012). Focusing on these actors are key to explore how work dynamics, and workplaces are changing.

The label of knowledge economy started to get attention by 1970s, covering a wide array of activities and interpretations in relation to changing dynamics (Powell & Snellman, 2004). First, it is presented as a core idea that centralize knowledge as a source of innovation and economic growth (Bell, 1973; Romer, 1990). Powell and Snellman (2004) define the knowledge economy as production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technological and scientific advance as well as equally rapid obsolescence. They explore knowledge intensive industries in terms of their contributions to growth in the productivity. Due to the expansion of these activities and accompanying productivity increase, much recent research particularly in sociology, management sciences and economics focus to understand how knowledge economy operates differently from the past economic versions, and how jobs, workers and forms of organization are different from the old ones. The key, enabling component of this change is discussed as the intellectual capital of the knowledge workers, combined with efforts to integrate information and improvements in every stage of production process and the workforce.

To understand the horizontal differentiation within white-collar workers and the new emerging worker types better; Reich's (1991) book, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism*, can be a good starting point. Although

Reich completes this book in the beginning of 1990s, he presents a futurist vision for the work force of today. He was then the U.S. Secretary of Labor, and his book presented a policy framework for shaping the future of work life and labor market. His main questions focus on what skills and knowledge will be the most valuable in the coming century and, how will the workforce change accordingly since money, goods and services have no borders and circulate free from national economies. While responding these questions, Reich defines three work groups that will be essential for global capitalism and knowledge economy: unskilled group entailing the routine production services and repetitive tasks, in-service sector group implementing routine but more qualified work that needs to be monitored, and symbolic-analytic group executing the strategic brokering activities. This last work group is differentiated with the intellectual capabilities, high level of education, transferable skills like problem identifying and solving, flexible working style and differentiating relations to knowledge. According to Reich, symbolic-analytic group positions learning as a continuous activity and have the capacity to use this knowledge effectively and creatively:

> Corporations no longer focus on products as such, their business strategies increasingly center upon specialized knowledge. In the successful organizations of the future, only one asset grows more valuable as it is used – the knowledge skills of people. Unlike machinery that gradually wears out, materials that become depleted, patents and copyrights that grow obsolete, and trademarks that lose their ability to comfort, the knowledge and insights that come from the learning of employees actually increase in value when used (Reich, 1991, p. 8).

Reich defines the symbolic-analytic group as the major, rule-setting actors of global capitalism who are continuously generating information and wealth but also who will construct new forms of these in the coming future.

Drucker (1992) is also one of the key scholars who initiated the discussion about the new actors of global economy and their characteristics. He defines the new worker

type as the knowledge worker who can access and apply theoretical and analytical information to develop products and services. Knowledge workers are differentiated with their intellectual and learning capabilities to access and prioritize information, transform these into value and apply into practices. They are interested to learn continuously, to find new information, and to improve their skills to handle the complex tasks they are responsible for. They are also differentiated with their communication skills which they use in coordinating, influencing, and managing all the stakeholders related to their job. As examples, Drucker lists professionals such as programmers and system analysts in information technology fields, designers, researchers, architects, lawyers, and scientists as knowledge workers. These refer to a differentiation based on the nature of the job, among the white-collar workers.

It is possible to say that several years after Reich's (1991) and Drucker`s (1992) works, differentiation among the white-collar workers group and conceptualization of knowledge worker are more visible and clearer now. Wickman (2012) states that these definitions about actors and their differentiating characteristics are also evolving parallel to dynamics like advent of information technologies, indistinct national borders, global re-organization of the production and systems, and advancement of multinational corporations (MNCs). He underlines that the traditional approach of management theories based on white-collar and blue-collar workers terms and distinctions are not sufficient to grasp the pace of this change in the global economic structure, and to understand the transformation in the workforce today. In line with Wickman (2012), there are scholars who also discuss the need for new colors, names, and concepts to represent different types of workers responsible for different tasks in the global, knowledge economy (Bughin et al., 2018; Morgan, 2014; Störmer et al., 2014).

Parallel to these discussions, some scholars prefer to use *gold-collar workers* term consistently for referring the distinctly evolving group out of the white-collar workers, towards the upper axis or as an alternative to represent some of the knowledge workers (Holland, Hecker, & Steen, 2002; Işığıçok, 2005; Kolzow, 2014; Pardue & Morgan, 2008; Wonacott, 2007; Wood, 2001; Yüksel, 2010; Yılmaz & Çetin, 2008; Zaim & Koçak, 2010; Zeybek, 2006). The term gold-collar worker is first presented by Robert Kelley in 1985. He states that although the gold-collar workers have been traditionally classified as white-collar workers, they are a small subgroup who are differentiating from the rest of white-collar workers through their jobs, performances, and characteristics. Kelley (1985) emphasizes gold-collar workers as a new and distinct type of workers group due to their professional profiles featuring with potential to take peak performance jobs, advanced educational degrees, higher incomes, non-repetitive responsibilities, value contributions to the organizations through materializing new information into practice and increased flexibility and level of independence. He defines them as the brainpowers of organizations and the global economic structure. As examples, Kelley (1985) describes professionals who are working in high ranking, crucial roles for business success and continuity like higher level executives, high expertise roles in engineering, medicine, law, scientific research, and finance areas as the gold-collar workers.

Gold-collar workers term is still not widely used in the literature but the scholars, who prefer to use the term consistently, try to explore the role of this group in relation to changing dynamics of global economic structuring and knowledge society today. These scholars share Kelley`s (1985) highlights about gold-collar workers being not regular white-collar workers. Furthermore, they add the discussion about who gold-collar

workers are and what their differentiating characteristics are for today since gold-collar worker group is a continuously evolving one parallel to today`s pace of change (Holland et al., 2002; Roe, 2001; Roongrerngsuke & Liefooghe, 2013; Wonacott, 2007; Yüksel, 2010; Zeybek, 2006). These scholars discuss gold-collar workers consistently with their high-level of expertise and knowledge, high-level of education, the featured abilities to learn continuously, to renew and to adapt themselves, to use technology very well, and to respond endlessly changing tasks and challenges of global economy through learning and transforming information into value. Alabay (2011) adds that mobility, adaptability, creativity, flexibility, taking initiatives, teamwork, internationality, development of projects and objectivity to evaluate even their own performance are among the characteristics of this group. For these scholars, gold-collar workers can be differentiated with their jobs, the roles, and responsibilities in the companies, and daily and annual routines. They are setting the strategy, generating information and innovation, and making decisions mostly linking the global and the local in the organizations (Roe, 2001; Wonacott, 2007; Yüksel, 2010; Zeybek, 2006). Referring to the symbolic-analyst's terminology presented by Reich (1991), Dirlik (2019) defines them as the entrepreneurs in the companies:

> Unlike the proletariat of capitalist modernity who, even when highly skilled, was subject to the drudgery of mass production and management decisions over which s/he had little control, the new worker modeled after the symbolic analyst is a closer approximation of the pre-capitalist artisan who has far greater control over the product, and the process of production. Indeed, with the new controls over the process of production, this worker is more of an entrepreneur than proletarian, responsible for his/her own performance (Dirlik, 2019, p. 197)

There are also some scholars who underline the rareness of this worker type and tries to comprehend them through their values for organizations (Holland et al., 2002; Roongrerngsuke & Liefooghe, 2013; Zeybek, 2006). They underline that increase in the

number of multinational companies, and requirement of connectivity between systems, people and processes in different geographies yielded to different requirements, tasks, and new global jobs in work life. These requirements and jobs can be filled by gold-collar workers due to their features, but these professionals are low in number and highly valuable for the companies and therefore being in-high demand. This increases their negotiating power with the organizations, leading to special perks along with high pay, differentiated positions and more flexibility and autonomy in the companies and decision-making capacity. Therefore, they underline that the color gold is highly representative of these characteristics, rarity and being in high demand, and upper and/or independent positions in organizational hierarchies.

Despite various studies on who gold-collar workers and what their characteristics are taking place, it is still not easy to define a concrete group of people concerning gold-collar workers. Relying on Drucker`s (1992) highlight about knowledge worker being the most valuable assets in 21st century organization, and discussion about the role of the leaders as increasing the productivity of the knowledge workers in this century, Kolzow (2014) states that knowledge workers are now forming majority of the multinational organizations, and it would be too simplistic to define and understand them as one single worker type. Instead, he underlines that knowledge workers are already the leading class of knowledge society so questions about how they are led, how they set the rules of management and what they demand from leadership and what the characteristics of these leaders are may contribute a lot to understand the differentiations among this group. Therefore, understanding the leaders of knowledge workers is key to make a holistic analysis:

> If the modern organization is becoming increasingly knowledge-based, then it becomes important that all its employees are knowledge workers rather than people merely receiving orders and implementing them. In this context, each employee has a specific set of skills and expertise, all of which are subject to continual change and upgrading. In addition, each tends to use powerful technologies that give them access to a depth and range of information that was formerly restricted to top management. This organizational sophistication minimizes the distinctions between those who make decisions and those who carry them out, and between those who conceive of tasks and those who execute them. As operational employees take on increasing responsibility for making decisions regarding their work and the outcomes of their work, the identity and reputation of the organization is placed into the hands of all its members rather than of a strategic one or several at the top. Power is therefore found at every level in today's organizations. The reality of this distribution of power and leadership throughout the effective organization of today and tomorrow forces a change of thinking about just who is a leader (Kolzow, 2014, p. 269).

According to these discussions, gold-collar workers may involve different members from different levels of the organization, they are not required to be in managerial roles but also in ones that require high expertise and knowledge. But due to their role definitions, tasks and responsibilities, corporate executive leaders in the organizations, particularly in the multinational companies, are the clear and concrete members of gold-collar workers group. Some scholars support this discussion by exploring the emergence of a new capitalist class to manage the international organization of corporations, circuits of accumulation, transnational capital, worldwide means of production and global workforce (Robinson & Harris, 2000; Sklair & Struna, 2013). In his works, Sklair (2001, 2016) names this new capitalist class as the transnational capitalist class and discusses their formation and characteristics further. For him, this class consists of corporate executives, globalizing bureaucrats and politicians, globalizing professionals, and consumerist elites. Together, these groups constitute a global power elite that have transformed capitalism into a globalizing project in each locality: "concept of the transnational capitalist class implies that there is one central inner circle that makes

system-wide decisions, and that it connects in a variety of ways with members of the transnational capitalist class in each locality, country, and region" (Sklair, 2016, p. 502). Sklair (2001) provides a model to analyze the new global systems with three spheres – namely economic, political, and cultural-ideological. Based on the interviews conducted with leading Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and corporate executives, he adapts the model specific to the field of work through these three spheres. The primary institution for economic sphere is the multi-national corporations, the main actor for political sphere is the transnational capitalist class and the dominating framework of cultural-ideological sphere is consumerism. He underlines that as part of transnational capitalist class; corporate executives make decisions for, control, and manage the means of production, distribution and exchange of money, the workforce, and other capitals. He says that they derive their power and authority from the corporations they lead but also have great individual impact over formation and transformation of these corporations in terms of strategy, values, and organizational culture. Matching with the new geographies of centrality, corporate executives -like other members of transnational capitalist class - make global and system-wide decisions, share similar values, and therefore have more interests in common with each other than they have with their local and national counterparts and connections within the same territory.

According to Burris and Staples (2012), MNCs become increasingly global in their operations and the executives, who lead those companies, must create direct links between the top decision-making bodies of corporate governance and tie with other leaders in a global network of mutual interests, values, responsibilities, and consensus. Therefore, they underline being global as the major, featuring characteristic of corporate executives. There are also various scholars who prefer to name this part of transnational

capitalist class as *global corporate elites* (Burris & Staples, 2012; Carroll, Carson, & Al, 2010; Castells, 2013; Dyer-Witheford, 2004; Heemskerk, 2013) and / or *global leaders* (Beechler & Javidan, 2007; Canals, 2014). In their studies, they try to understand the shared characteristics and the contexts of this group. For example, Castells (2013) features the internationality, not as a spatial reference only but also a totalizing condition about the communication of this group that is decisive in workplace, school, media, and so on. So, it is not only economical but also social, cultural, ideological, and psychological shifts that have been globalized. He says that identities, lifestyles, sense-making, beliefs, and thoughts of the most powerful individuals in the companies are getting close to each other through these global outlooks. He explains these as cosmopolitan values and refers to a feeling of belonging to broader entities than the nation-state, naming these as *networks*. These networks link up capital, labor, values, information, markets, companies` economic objectives, functions and people around the world while making the network members who are coordinating all these more like each other, more noticeable and considerable.

Today, emphasis is placed on the worker as an adult learner (Burns, 2020; European Center for the Development of Vocational Training, 2020a, 2020b). Since the gold-collar workers are increasingly featured and differentiated with their continuous learning potential, this emphasis is even more relevant for this worker type. Therefore, adult learning field has a lot to contribute to the exploration of who gold-collar workers are, how they shape and conceptualize their relations to learning, what and how they learned to become a gold-collar worker and why they learned these. Additionally, gold-collar leaders are important and powerful figures in today`s companies and they are reshaping and reforming the concepts of workplace learning and leadership to a certain

extent. Thus, exploring their learning experiences is important to understand workplace learning and therefore has a lot to contribute to adult learning field.

Learning is fundamental for professional and personal growth, to an individual`s life and economic success. Although majority would agree with this statement, there are a lot of discussions ongoing about what learning is. Learning is not a confinable concept that has only one definition. Primarily, it is associated mostly with formal learning, which is structured and located in the classroom, leading to an educational credential. In recent studies, learning started to be discussed in the context of where it happens, in varying settings and in multiple of ways (Marsick & Neaman, 2018). Various research findings support this by demonstrating that 80% of the learning occurs outside the formal classroom, and mostly in informal forms emerging majorly from experiences (Cerasoli et al., 2018). These critical points have shifted the focus of both the practitioners and the researchers towards informal learning, and workplace as a site for informal learning. Informal learning occurs naturally in the workplace and is the primary driver of professional and personal growth. To support it and to increase the effectiveness, what informal learning in the workplace is and how it occurs, which factors, and strategies contribute to it are important areas to explore.

Informal learning involves the wide range of learning that does not happen in a structured, formal learning setting like workplace. Its organic and just in time nature is at the heart of its success in the workplace, but at the same time poses challenges for scholars who would like to explore it and for organizations and practitioners who would like to support it. It is based on the experience and integrated into the activities and tasks of daily work, highly social and contextually embedded (Marsick & Neaman, 2018). This kind of learning is essential for the worker to build and rebuild the knowledge and

skills continuously, to respond the needs of global economy and to maintain his/her livelihood (Lester & Costley, 2010). In any work context, the worker learns about how to complete a task and to perform, how to coordinate relations around and to become a part of the workplace. The worker also gains insights about who s/he is. The worker gets more competent through learning from experiences, from others or through self-learning while becoming a better worker but also transforming into a different individual.

With a rapidly changing labor market and growing importance of knowledge economy, learning started to be perceived as a life-long, holistic, experience based and self-directed process that changes the individual, moves forward towards his/her self-fulfillment, his/her relations with self, other people, and environment (Billett, 2010; Ciporen, 2010; Jarvis, 2006). Although it is typically motivated by economical concerns, informal workplace learning also applies to the broader concept of ongoing learning throughout the lifespan for personal and social fulfillment (Sheridan, 2007). How the individual thinks on and makes sense of one`s own experiences and what the learning outcomes are, how they claim social and professional recognition and materialize life expectations by increasing their knowledge, skills and abilities while matching the demands of the organization are recent focuses of the research in the field of informal workplace learning (Filliettaz, 2013; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013; van Dellen & Cohen-Scali, 2015). Thus, workplace learning is not limited to employee being competent in his or her work but also about constructing a worker's identity which is built through experiencing the personal and social aspects of work as a subject.

As a significant mode of informal learning, transformative learning is grounded in the premise that a person interprets his/her experience in an individual manner, reflects on the question of who I am as a worker through experiencing, personal

reflection, and social interactions (van Dellen & Cohen-Scali, 2015). These influences and transform the way one thinks and acts in the workplace (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Mezirow (1994) defines transformative learning as "the process of construing and appropriating a new and revised interpretation of meaning of one's experience as a guide to action" (p. 222). This is related with change in the way one sees oneself as a worker, and the relations, and the world around in the workplace.

At the intersection point of informal workplace learning, and global economic restructuring stands the informal learning experiences of gold-collar workers who are working as corporate executive leaders. For leaders, informal workplace learning fundamentally focuses on the experiences, ways, and process in which they learn to lead, develop their leadership style, build their leader identity, and claim recognition, materialize expectations, and realize commitments while increasing their ability to renew own knowledge, skills, and capabilities as leaders (Choy, 2009). Today, leaders are in a more complex and increasingly turbulent environment and in this new environment, continuous change is discussed as a requirement for leader`s success (Kaiser, 2020; Sae-Lim, 2019). Speaking about learning experiences of leaders today mean an exceedingly complex journey (Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013). Miscenko, Guenter, and Day (2017) say that the extent to which someone thinks of him or herself as a leader is subject to change in a dynamic manner because of complexity of experiences and structured interventions but this is rarely studied in academia. In the pace of this change and complexity, there is no limit for the contemporary leaders to learn. There is the continual stream of new information, things, and alternative choices that the leaders need to prosper in this environment. Therefore, it will not be wrong to say that in the current world, leadership can't be understood as something to be learned

but rather the learning itself. When we try to explore an executive leader at work, we are in fact observing a learning process and an exceedingly complex one (Rice, 2019).

Mendenhall and Bird (2013) state that although the significance of informal learning in leader development started to be discovered and this is very important, what is missing is understanding how these learnings related to leadership occur. Though there are myriad discussions on what leadership is today and how people learn to become leaders; leadership is increasingly understood as something in which leaders guide and facilitate the organizations through transformations by developing and gaining commitment to organizational visions, connecting subordinates and empowering them to perform beyond expectations, responding to challenging situations, adapting current knowledge and skills and building the mindsets, values, characteristics and behaviors to support these changes (Northouse, 2019; Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003). Becoming a better leader in these terms and expectations are highly related with gaining relevant experiences, getting aware of oneself as a leader, developing new knowledge and skills, and adapting one`s own vision, perspectives, and leadership styles. These also produce outputs like transforming and redesigning self-conception, own career, teams, and organizations (Haworth, Miller, & Schaub, 2018). Since these are discussed as the most important learning outcomes in leader development, it demonstrates that there is an intense link between informal learning and leadership. Informal learning has a lot to contribute to leader development and vice versa. This intersection point holds some interesting possibilities for exploring workplace as a site for informal learning and understanding how learning related to leadership occur. Examining leadership from adult learning perspective may provide valuable contributions about understanding globalization, new actors and changing relations.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This study attempts to bring informal workplace learning and leadership together. In this research, I aim to explore the informal workplace learning experiences of gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders. I wonder what, how and why they learned informally in the workplace, through their paths of becoming leaders. The learning outputs, the lessons learned, purpose of these learnings, processes, sources, and strategies for learning informally and factors affecting the informal learning experiences are investigated further. These form the major background and inquiries of this research.

1.3 Research questions

In accordance with this purpose, the following questions guided the research:

1. How do gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders learn informally through the work life?
2. What are the factors, forces and dynamics leading gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders to learn informally?
3. What are the informal learning sources, processes, and strategies of gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders?

1.4 Significance of the study

Informal learning is not a recently developed issue. Informal learning is discussed as a holistic process embedded in the context of where it happens, and in multiple of ways. Adults spend considerable time in the workplace and therefore, workplace is one of the most important sites where informal learning occurs. Regarding this significance, there is still limited research focusing on it in the workplace, particularly in relation to leader

development. Since the emphasis is placed on the worker as an adult learner, and on the leadership as a continuous learning process now, exploring informal learning experiences of leaders will contribute to the field of informal learning.

Adult learning is like an iceberg with most of it submerged and hidden (Livingstone & Sawchuk, 2004). This study will focus on to understand informative learning experiences of gold-collar leaders while making these experiences, knowledge, and their meanings visible. It will contribute to the questioning of how learning continues to happen in the absence of teaching by bringing both the conscious and unconscious ways of learning from experiences, from other people, intuitive and incidental moments of learning, and so on to the surface. This will contribute to explore the underwater part of the iceberg. Furthermore, there are increasing studies about gold-collar workers in disciplines like economics, management, and sociology but very limited in educational sciences. So, this study will stand on a multi-disciplinary basis and provide some information to other disciplines from an adult learning perspective.

Fourth; this study will contribute adult educators' understanding about how leaders learn, gain new knowledge and skills, change, and make sense of their practices, how they perceive their relations with others in the workplace context and explain about the reasons behind their choices, particularly in relation to leadership styles. Knowledge about their rationale, experiences, transformations, and struggles may provide a fuller picture to the adult educators who are working in leader development field. By respecting the participants' experiences, meanings, and knowledge; this study will provide practical information to adult educators for excelling in their own fields. For adult educators, the traditional formal training methods no longer meets the complex needs of today's learners at the workplace. To close the gaps, more focus is required on

informal learning in the workplace. This study is potentially significant for adult educators who take role in different workplaces and plan to embed different forms of learning perspective in the organization, in leader development.

Fifth, the study will produce practical information for gold-collar leaders themselves. They will potentially profit from the information generated in this study, by gaining the knowledge to explore and to meet the demands in their contexts, and to shape their continuous learning process. Experiences that will be shared by the participants will also provide information for how to negotiate mechanisms and practices in the organizations which they are leading. I believe this information will contribute to the consciousness and accomplishment of various people in work life for increasing and triggering informal learning opportunities for growth, learning and development.

Clearly gold-collar workers are not the victims of capitalist society. Their problems are not vital compared to the rest of the people who partake in the dominating relations of production like people who are forced to work without security or are unemployed. Still looking at them is important. First, gold-collar leaders are standing at the critical nodes of global economy. They do not own the capital, but control and transform it through their positions in companies. They set the expectations from the rest of the workers, define the employability and evaluation criteria, and clarify the factors for success. As decisive actors, exploring them further may provide an understanding about the broader picture, the new global economic order, workforce re-organization and expectations. These reshape the broader context and factors affecting workplace learning. Looking at informal workplace learning from leaders` lens can help us to better understand how learning is reconceptualized and repositioned in the work context.

1.5 Identity of the researcher

I have been in corporate life for 15 years, worked in different roles at human resources [HR] function and took managerial roles for the last 7 years. I am now globally responsible for succession management, performance management and, leader and talent development processes in a life sciences and biotechnology company and working with leaders from almost 30 countries. Before this role, for 8 years, I worked as the main responsible for organizational development, leadership development and performance management processes in a global professional services company that is specialized in auditing, tax consulting, and in management consulting to businesses of all sizes and in all sectors. My work experience in these companies meant that I am continuously in touch with gold-collar workers, learn about their relations with other people, provide solutions to their learning needs that emerge from changing market demands, observe what they expect from their own teams and how they set the employability and learning criteria for new team members and overall, how they evaluate their performance, with what criteria. I am observing their own informal learning processes, trials, failures, successes, and reflections. Overall, I think my own position, role, observations, and experiences will contribute deeply to this research.

On the other hand, I have the academic background of political science, sociology, and educational sciences fields. These disciplines look at the world from a different lens and try to understand different dynamics of the same phenomena. All these perspectives contribute to my identity, as the base of my studies and contribute to my curiosity to analyze myself, my relations, my environment, and the other people in it. From the place I stand; I am experiencing some of the changing dynamics related to global economy, knowledge economy, related social and cultural capital shifts, changing

knowledge and skills expectations in the workplace. Through these, I am experiencing the restructuring of work life, changing concepts of leadership, learning expectations and the desired knowledge workers since my companies and the people around me stand at the core of these dynamics. All of these are parts of my identity, as the researcher, and the self-reflective position which I am trying to obtain, shape my understanding of the workplace, dynamics, concepts, and learning. I believe that these enrich my research.

1.6 Definition of terms

For clarification, the following definitions are provided for some specific concepts that are in use throughout this study.

Informal Learning refers "any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge and skill which occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria" (Livingstone, 2001, p. 4). It is all individual or collective learning that occurs outside the formal and non-formal educational institutions, where the primary control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner. It occurs in the context where it happens, in varying settings and in multiple of ways. It is based on the experience and integrated into the activities and tasks of daily work, highly social and contextually embedded (Marsick & Neaman, 2018). It can be intentionally or unintentionally encouraged by the learner or the organization.

Incidental Learning is defined as an unintentional, and sometimes unconscious byproduct of some other activity such as task completion, interactions, recognizing the organizational culture, trial-and-error experimentation, experiencing or even formal learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2001).

Transformative learning is the process of construing and appropriating a new and revised interpretation of meaning of one`s experience as a guide to action (Mezirow, 1994, p. 222). It is intertwined with a change in individual`s ways of viewing the world, the knowledge, emotions, attitudes / behaviors, beliefs, mental models and/or skills. It involves what somebody learns about him/herself through experiencing, reflection, and social interactions, which occur in any context (van Dellen & Cohen-Scali, 2015).

Non-Formal Learning takes place outside formal educational institutions and does not end with an educational credential. It is structured and mediated, involves planning and specific objectives (European Commission, 2001; Livingstone, 2006).

Leader / Leadership: Leader is the person who does leadership, rather than as a person designated as a leader merely by rank, title, or position in the organization. Leadership is a social process carried out via communicating with and inspiring others to pursue a vision of a preferred future, to the extent that manifesting that future becomes a shared effort, a shared vision, and a shared success (Malik & Roberson, 2014).

Executive Leaders: Individuals at the highest level of management, who are leading the leaders and responsible for strategy setting and execution in one or more functional areas in their organizations (Menz, 2012).

Gold-Collar Workers: Highly skilled, rare knowledge workers with valuable assets like problem solving, decision making, creativity, intelligence, and motives. They perform non-repetitive and complex work that is difficult to design and evaluate.

Organization: Companies and other employers.

Reflection: Being able to challenge one`s held views, believes and assumptions.

Critical Incident / Event. An experience that is incongruent with one`s knowledge, belief and thinking. This creates dissonance and initiates a learning process.

1.7 Organization of dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters. In chapter one, the background and purpose of the study, the research questions, significance of the research, identity of the researcher and organization of the dissertation are introduced. In chapter two, the related literature on adult learning, informal learning, workplace as a site for informal learning, gold-collar leaders and leadership models are reviewed. Related studies are also shared. In chapter three, research methodology and design, the data collection procedure and instruments, the participants, and data analysis are explained. In chapter four, findings and discussion are shared simultaneously. In the final chapter, summary of the findings, conclusion and final remarks are provided. At the end of this chapter, de-limitations and limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research are presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research aims to explore the informal workplace learning experiences of gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders. To deal with these experiences, adult learning theories, informal workplace learning, literature about gold collar workers and leadership models will be reviewed in this chapter. Finally, related researches combining leader development and informal learning will be included.

2.1 Adult learning

Different theories and models have been discussed since the foundation of adult education discipline. All these theories and models try to conceptualize and explain adult learning from various perspectives. As stated by Merriam (2001), "adult learning is far too complex, too personal and at the same time too context-bound for one theory" (p.1). Thus, first it would be helpful to explore different theories and models of adult learning.

Knowles (1980) indicates that in a world of accelerated change, the knowledge of men becomes obsolete at an ever-growing pace. The education can no more be defined as a process of transmission of what is known and what should be known from an educator to the learner but, a lifelong process to help adults develop towards achieving their full potentials. He defines andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults to learn" (p. 43). He differentiates the distinct characteristics of adults as learners and their learning processes from the premises of pedagogy. The first differentiating assumption is about self-concept of adults as learners. Adults see themselves as either producers or users rather than learners dependent on others. They act autonomously and request for

more freedom to learn and to decide over their learning. They want to relate their experiences during the learning. This self-concept of adult learners affects the learning climate, diagnosis of needs, the planning process, the teaching, and the evaluation of learning. The second assumption is related with adults' reservoir of experience. Experience is a rich resource for adult learning and therefore during the learning practices of adult learners, the instruction must be designed based on these experiences. Experience contributes to make the knowledge relevant to the new situations, to link the known with the unknown and to enable active participation of the adult learner in the learning process. The adult learner and the experiences must be shown respect for enabling learning and making it effective. Another assumption featured in andragogy as a distinctive feature of adults is readiness to learn. This is critical for adults to learn according to their needs and interests in accordance with their developmental stage. Knowles asserts that providing the opportunity to work in collaboration with others in the learning environment can be useful while making them relate with the colleagues having the same readiness level and giving them a flexibility of choice. The other assumption is the orientation of adult learner to learning. Adults are performance centered and focused on problem solving therefore if the learning provides answers to these needs, adults learn more effectively. They look for immediate application of useful knowledge. Last assumption about adult learners is that learning is an internal process. Adult learners are more internally motivated for learning.

Based on these assumptions about adult learners, Knowles (1980) suggests four principles of adult learning which should be considered while helping adults to learn. First principle is that since adults are self-directed, they may contribute and shape the content and process of their learning. Second principle is that former experiences should

be a part of the learning process. Focus of the learning should be adding on what adults have already learned in the past. Thus, third principle is to focus on actual issues related to work and personal life while designing the content. And the fourth principle of adult learning is that learning should be centered on solving problems.

Self-directed learning (SDL) is a major research area in adult learning. It occurs when learners take the initiative and seek a learning opportunity or information on their own (van Noy, James, & Bedley, 2016). Adults take control of their own learning, set their learning goals, locate appropriate resources, decide on learning methods to use, and evaluate their progress. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) underline that in addition to these self-directed practices of learning, the learner`s preference and motivation to assume responsibility for learning is also important. They call this self-direction in learning. Responsibility means individual ownership for the ideas and actions about learning, choosing the way to respond to the circumstances that are sometimes uncontrollable. Motivation means the willingness of the adult learners to take control of their own learning process. These are factors that determine the self-direction potential in learning.

The discussion about the centrality of the adult learner in the learning process is even more relevant in recent years. Some scholars underline that adult learners should be considered holistically since their interest, motivation, access to support and guidance, social and cultural backgrounds, economic capitals are all effective over their self-directed learning and self-direction potentials (Boyer, Edmondson, Artis, & Fleming, 2014). To carry out SDL in an appropriate manner, it is vital for the individuals to consider all these factors. Thus, adults can be prepared to become more self-directed, and more motivated to benefit from learning opportunities and be supported more to increase interpersonal skills and critical thinking abilities (Din, Haron, & Rashid, 2016).

One major focus of SDL is the question of learning how to learn and becoming skilled at learning itself. This involves adults to develop insight into their own habitual ways of learning and an awareness about one`s own preferred pattern of learning. Through developing their meta-learning skills, adult learners can build a more constructive relation with learning and can increase their own SDL potential. They can formulate measures to overcome problems and challenges, increase their life qualities and become more confident in implementation of various tasks and function, particularly in the workplace (Taylor, 2001).

The emphasis on experience as a defining feature of adult learning was primarily expressed by Lindeman (2013) saying that adult education is "a continuing process of evaluating experiences" (p. 85). Several researches (Dewey, 1995; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 2008) focus to ground learning in experiences and to understand the stimulating functions of gained experiences in adults' lives which trigger further learning. Admitting that adult learning is experiential in its nature, Kolb (1984) develops the theory of experiential learning. He describes learning with six different characteristics. According to Kolb (1984), learning is a process rather than an outcome. Learning is grounded in experience, a holistic adaptation to the world, the process of creating knowledge and resolution for the conflicts and involves transactions between the individual and the environment. Depending on these characteristics of learning, he defines learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of practice" (p. 38). Forming a four-stage model to conceptualize the process of learning, the cycle begins with learner being involved in an experience, going on with reflecting on this experience and attributing meaning to it. The learner then integrates the meaning drawn from the experience into the established network of previous experiences to

formulate abstract concepts and reach conclusions that finally lead to new concrete experiences. Kolb`s cycle of experiential learning is represented in Figure 1:

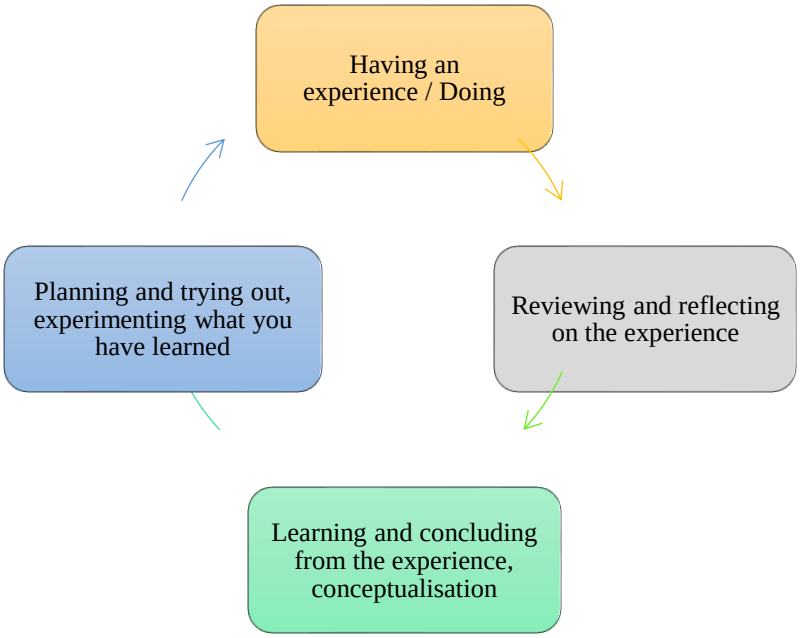

Figure 1. Kolb`s cycle of experiential learning

While going through these stages of learning process, Kolb says that the adult learners should be able (1) to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences, that is concrete experience abilities; (2) to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives, that is reflective observation abilities; (3) to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories, that is abstract conceptualization abilities; and (4) to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems, that is active experimentation abilities. Through these stages of learning process, experiential learning leads to increased capacity for critical thinking and engagement. The role of the learner can change in the process of learning in varying degrees from actor to observer and from specific involvement to general analytic

conceptualization according to abilities and learning style of the individual. These impact the process and outcomes of experiential learning.

Dewey (1995) underlines the use of experience as a starting point for instruction. He defines the complexity of experience as the major difference between children and adults, leading to different dynamics of learning. His experimental model describes steps for building the learning upon experience effectively: formation of ideas, acting upon these ideas, observation of resulting conditions and reflective reviewing, and summarizing of the observed consequences for future use. Overall, Dewey (1995) views learning as “an incessant process of reconstruction of experience” (p. 30).

Another major theory in adult learning is transformative learning which is focused on changing the way learners think about the world around them, and how they think about themselves. Developed by Jack Mezirow, transformative learning is based on the idea that learning is making a new or revised interpretation or meaning of a particular experience. This learning is positioned in the adult learner`s self-concept, assumptions, habits, expectations, mindsets, and beliefs to make sense of the world around them and happens when the adult learner updates or changes one of these or his/her sense-making of the world around. Learning starts when the individual faces a disorienting dilemma, starts to challenge the frames of references, reflects upon what has taken place and alters the frames of references which s/he takes for granted. Bridwell (2013) says that transformative learning refers to the process through which people become more inclusive, reflective, open, and emotionally capable of change.

There are adult learning theories which emphasize learning from the activity and learning from context. These theories highlight the impact of factors surrounding the adult learner on the learning process itself. An example to these theories is situated

learning. Situated learning was first presented by Lave and Wenger (1991). They argue that learning is a social process where knowledge is situated in a specific context and embedded within a particular social and physical environment. For them, learning is not only a cognitive process in which individuals are respectively engaged in as learners but as participation in the social world, inseparable aspect of social practice. For them learning is unintentional rather than deliberate. Individuals become members of a community of practice, which is a context, and they learn the culture, norms, behaviors, values, and relationships in that context to integrate. Through these interactions, they also reconstruct their identity and become a different person.

After presenting main adult learning theories and models, it will be beneficial to introduce the three categories of adult learning as formal learning, non-formal learning, and informal learning. Formal learning is intentionally constructed learning activities where the content is a pre-structured curriculum, has pre-defined learning objectives and delivered by teachers / trainers in a systematic, intentional way within an environment built specific for education (Livingstone, 2001). Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2009) highlight the social context in which learning occurs as essential to defining learning, and state that formal learning occurs in the classroom, with a curriculum. Schugurensky (2000) says that formal learning is highly institutionalized, and hierarchical with a prescribed curriculum and prerequisites identified for entry and completion of classes. Attendance to the formal learning activity is mostly compulsory and an educational credential is granted upon successful completion of the content. Non-formal learning covers learning through all educational activities, including further courses, workshops, and programs that are organized by outside the formal education system. These include a range of learning experiences that are organized with a

curriculum and an instructor but do not lead to an educational credential. They are mostly institutionally sponsored and organized. Merriam et al. (2009) underlines that non-formal learning is mostly classroom based, with a curriculum and a facilitator, short termed, and without any prerequisites for entry or completion. Attendance is voluntary. van Noy et al. (2016) prefer to refer non-formal learning as organized informal learning.

The third category of adult learning is informal learning. Just like the concept of learning, informal learning has various conceptualization and definitions by different scholars. Informal learning is discussed mostly as the contrast to formal learning on the continuum, based on the attributes of location, process, content and purpose (Colley, Hodkinson, & Malcolm, 2002). Formal and informal learning are distinguished in terms of the location in which learning occurs, in terms of the process of whether learning is led by an instructor or the learner, the extent to which the content learned is in an organized curriculum with pre-defined objectives, and the purpose for seeking knowledge. Schugurensky (2000) identifies informal learning as a broad category and states that if anything is neither formal nor non-formal then it is informal. Merriam et al. (2009) define informal learning as spontaneous, unstructured, and occurring in daily life across all settings and with no curriculum. Livingstone (2001) underlines that this type of learning may encompass socialization or learning occurring without awareness.

Based on these discussions, informal learning is featured with being grounded in practice and ongoing experiences, not located in an institution but may occur in a range of settings including work, community, home and so on. Learners have a range of intentionality therefore informal learning has various subcategories ranging according to the intentionality. Since the focus of this dissertation is informal learning experiences, the coming part will focus to review the literature related to informal learning in detail.

2.1.1 Informal learning

Many definitions of informal learning contrast it with structured, organized, or formal learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2015). Informal learning can be defined as "any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of educational institutions, or the courses or workshops offered by educational or social agencies in any context outside the pre-established curricula of educative institutions" (Livingstone, 2006, p. 206). Informal learning occurs anywhere and anytime, when needed and just in time as a response to challenges and problems that call for new and / or modified knowledge, skills, or attitudes (Marsick & Neaman, 2018). The authors discuss informal learning as intentional. It suggests greater flexibility for learners, the control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner although s/he is not always conscious of this learning process. People may learn informally to satisfy curiosity, to pursue interests and to close the recognized gaps. By contrast, incidental learning is not intentional and may be even unconscious; it occurs while engaged in a task or activity undertaken for an unrelated purpose other than learning.

Merriam et al. (2009) note that informal learning refers to different types of learning that are usually combined and conflated. Informal learning, as a concept, is too broad so there are studies which attempted to analyze it through comparison with other forms of learning. The general tendency is towards defining informal learning with not what it is but with what it is not. Thus, informal learning is generally defined and discussed in contrast to formal learning. The distinguishing features of informal learning in the literature are mostly highlighted in relation to the instruction like the setting or the context. Colley et al. (2002) challenges this division and expands it by focusing not only on the questions of who and what, but also on how and where the learner is involved in

the learning experience. Regarding this, the authors extract 20 main criteria that can be used to differentiate between informality and formality in learning (see Table 1):

Table 1. Differences Between Formal Learning and Informal Learning

FORMAL LEARNING	INFORMAL LEARNING
Teacher as authority	No teacher involved
Educational premises	Non-educational premises
Teacher control	Learner control
Structured, planned	Evolving, organic
Summative assessment, accreditation	No assessment
Externally determined outcomes / objectives	Internally determined objectives
Open to participants according to set criteria	Preserves inequality and sponsorship
Interests of powerful and dominant groups	Interests of oppressed groups
Propositional knowledge	Practical and process knowledge
High status	Low status
Measured outcomes	Immeasurable / imprecise outcomes
Education	Not education
Learning predominantly individual	Learning predominantly communal
Learning to preserve status quo	Learning for resistance /empowerment
Pedagogy of transmission and control	Learner centered, negotiated pedagogy
Mediated through agents of authority	Mediated through learner democracy
Fixed and limited timeframe	Open ended engagement
Learning is the main explicit purpose	Of secondary significance or is implicit
Learning is applicable in a range of contexts	Learning is context-specific

Source: Colley et al., 2002, p. 18-19

According to Eraut (2000, 2004); informal learning comes closer to the informal end than the formal end of the continuum. For him, the features of formal learning are a prescribed learning framework, an organized event, the presence of a designated teacher or trainer, and the external specification of outcomes. Then, informal learning takes place outside these features. It is not provided by formal and non-formal educational institutions, there are no authorized instructors or prescribed curricula. Characteristics of informal learning include implicit, unintended, opportunistic, and unstructured learning

and the absence of a teacher. He also highlights that informal learning and experiential learning are partnering concepts since they both are typically grounded in everyday life.

Marsick and Watkins (2015) underline that different conceptualization of informal learning is based on how these scholars understand the nature of learning from experience, which is at the heart of informal and incidental learning. First common approach is based on the work of John Dewey`s (1938) theory on problem-solving. For him, evidence-based reflection on data gathered through one`s learning is at the core of learning. Learning occurs through detecting and correcting errors, solving problems, and reflecting on the experiences. He positions the adult learner as the agent of one`s own learning. The second common approach is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978). This approach focuses on the individual through social relations and context. While accepting the individual as the agent of learning, scholars obtaining this approach underline that individuals learn through socialization, observing and interacting with others, being a part of communities and participation.

Adults interpret new experiences through the lens of past experiences. Mezirow (1991) underlines that adults form meaning perspectives, or habits of mind that they can believe as objective facts. He also suggests that some adults can transform their meaning perspectives by critically reflecting on these taken-for-granted assumptions and constructing new or adjusted frames of reference. Such transformation is enabled by dialogue with other people, relating with their environments who offer differing points of view. This helps adults to alter their perspectives or to create new meaning perspectives that provide better understanding of the situation.

In this context, informal learning is subject to an individual`s meaning making and interpretation. This learning takes place organically and is embedded within a

specific context. Referring to the individual as the adult learner, motivation for learning and the capacity to learn impact the learning process. The adult learner`s approach to learning opportunities, application of the former learning to new situations and the availability of learning resources including other people, information and supportive sociocultural conditions shape the learning (Billett, 2001; Eraut, 2004). These considerations all contribute to understandings about what informal learning is, and how it can be best supported.

2.1.1.1 How informal learning happens

van Noy et al. (2016) focus to understand how informal learning happens and underline that the categories of learning still overlap one another along the continuum. For example, informal learning can occur within the context of formal learning. To clarify distinctions and definitions more, they adapt Colley et al.`s (2002) continuum of learning formality and prepare a table (see Table 2) summarizing how categories are related to the continuum and informal learning. For them, informal learning is broad and involves organized and everyday ways therefore they add the organized informal learning, or the non-formal learning, in the middle of the continuum. As the least formal learning, everyday informal learning occurs through self-directed learning, incidental learning, tacit learning and/or by socialization:

Table 2. Continuum of Learning Formality

	Formal learning	Organized informal learning	Everyday informal learning		
			Self-directed learning	Incidental learning	Tacit learning
Location	School awarding formal credential	School not awarding formal credential, work, or community	Work, community, home	Work, community, home	Work, community, home
Process	Instructor led	Instructor led	Learner led	Contextual	Contextual
Content	Organized curriculum	Organized curriculum	Learner organized	Spontaneous based on need	Social norms and practices
Purpose	Intentionally sought	Intentionally sought	Intentionally sought	Not intentionally sought but aware after	Not intentionally sought, not aware after

Source: van Noy et al., 2016, p. 6

The authors make clear distinctions between the types of everyday informal learning through the purpose, intentionality of learning. They indicate that incidental learning happens spontaneously based on the need and as a byproduct of some other activity like accomplishments or failures resulting from trials. Even the learner is not aware of the learning, it takes place and then the individual becomes conscious of that learning. In tacit learning, the purpose of the learning is not intentional, and it happens through participation to different contexts and practices. Although the learning is there, the individual may stay unaware of it.

Trying to develop a taxonomy of informal learning, Schugurensky (2000) focuses on how informal learning happens and proposes three theories of learning that vary by consciousness and intentionality as highly relevant for informal learning:

- Self-directed learning that is conscious, intentional, and purposeful. It may be the self-learning programs and attempts of the individuals,
- Incidental learning which is unintentional but conscious. An example is a worker learning the office politics in a coffee conversation,
- Socialization which is unconscious and unintentional. Being a member of a group and gaining skills and behaviors as part of a broader system of relations.

Bennett (2010) prefers to replace socialization with tacit since he underlines that the word tacit is more inclusive. He also adds a fourth type of learning to the framework and names it integrative learning. Integrative learning is both unconscious and intentional. For him, integrative learning "combines intentional non-conscious processing of tacit knowledge with conscious access to learning products and mental images" (Bennett, 2010, p. 5). Adults have prior experiences, personal history, and learning schemas and integrative learning may be the mechanism that occurs under the surface. At moments where adults struggle to understand new materials or solve problems, integrative learning synthesizes new and existing knowledge for creativity and productivity purposes and triggers an internal process of pattern matching, intuitive leaps, mental rotations, and moments of sudden understandings. As an example of integrative learning, he underlines solutions that are found at unexpected times.

Marsick and Watkins (2015) state that informal learning comes from and occurs through experience; it is intertwined with tasks and embedded in the challenges that prompt it, like processes, roles, norms, and settings. Informal learning is also social and occurs through the interaction with others, within a particular context. There are also other authors who do not see learning as being internal, within the skin of the individuals but also social.

Straka (2004) tries to understand informal learning at the micro level and focuses on how it occurs. The micro level refers to the actual daily setting in which the learner directly interacts such as the workplace. The individual goes through personal activities like viewing a picture, handling a piece of work, having a conversation by the coffee machine and so on. These activities are not in the head of acting individual as an object but as information about that object generated by the individual. This information and action are inseparably connected saying that there is no action without information and no information without action. This connection is affected by an additional layer, the socio-cultural relations. Other people in the environment and tasks, requirements, social norms, and values form this second layer. The third layer of informal learning is the internal conditions. These are abilities, skills, knowledge, motivation, and emotional dispositions of the acting individual. Motivation relates actions to something which has a certain intensity either for or against it. Emotion embraces the subjective experience from an affective and non-rational perspective, both pleasant and unpleasant. In informal learning, dimensions of information, action, motivation, emotion, and relations presuppose one another. They do not exist separately but come into being only by mutual interplay, generating each other. The summary of his informal learning concept is presented in Figure 2:

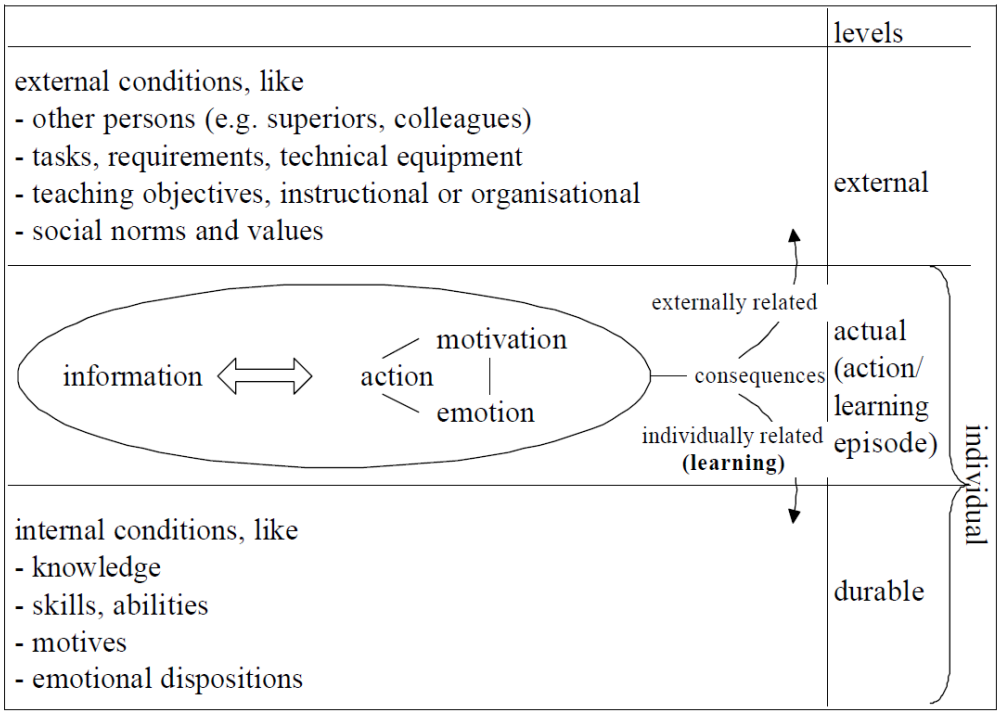

Figure 2. Informal learning concept
Source: Straka, 2004, p. 8

From the above highlights, discussions on informal learning become linked with the situated learning. For Lave and Wenger (1991), informal learning involves the whole person, and it is a relational and an experiential process. Learning is a communal activity centered on the interactions between people, relationships with others and on the participation to communities of practices. Activities, tasks, and understandings do not exist in isolation but have their meanings as part of broader relations and contexts. Situated learning can occur in many contexts, almost all parts of everyday life. It can take place across the continuum of formality, may occur in all categories of learning, but is especially important for informal learning. Cranton and Taylor (2012) say that learning is formed through a learner's engagement with the social world. Learning is a complex process embedded in social interactions taking place in small groups or broader community. Learning is not only built by the learner as an individual but also through

the involvement of other individuals. Learners make meaning and create knowledge through their interactions and experiences with others.

Michael Eraut (2000) starts a helpful discussion on informal learning while taking a psychological approach. His argument is that the term informal is associated with so many other features and situations that "its colloquial application as a descriptor of learning contexts may have little to do with learning per se" (p. 12). Therefore, he outlines three modes of learning concerning intentionality and defines a continuum. He positions implicit and deliberate learning on the sides and adds reactive learning level in between. Reactive learning describes the "situations where the learning is explicit but takes place almost spontaneously in response to recent, current, or imminent situations without any time being specifically set aside for it" (Eraut, 2000, p. 115). The dimension of time is also introduced a significant factor in informal learning. Learning occurs always in the present but focus of learning can be in the past, present, or future. Table 3 shows Eraut's typology of informal learning:

Table 3. Michael Eraut`s Typology of Informal Learning

Time of stimulus	**Implicit learning**	**Reactive learning**	**Deliberative learning**
Past episode(s)	Implicit linkage of memories with current experience	Brief near-spontaneous reflection on past episodes, incidents, communications, events, experiences.	Discussion and review of past actions, communications, events' experiences. More systematic reflection.
Current experience	A selection from experience enters the memory.	Incidental noting of facts, opinions, impressions, ideas. Asking questions, observing effects of actions.	Engagement in decision making, problem solving, planned informal learning.
Future behavior	Unconscious effect of previous experiences.	Being prepared for emergent learning opportunities. Recognition of possible future learning opportunities.	Planning learning opportunities; rehearsing for future events. Planned learning goals

Source: Eraut, 2000, p. 13 and Eraut, 2004, p. 250

In this framework, he challenges the focus of informal learning being dominantly and simply the implicit learning. He criticizes the literature on informal learning being too much concerned with how to make the implicit knowledge explicit and discusses that limiting the informal learning to implicit learning will be very simple. He says that the question of how explicit learning leads to tacit knowledge is also equally critical. As an example, learners can develop solutions to respond emergency situations, may take actions without any significant deliberation. In other words, the individuals can use the learning in appropriate circumstances when needed but prior awareness about the existence of this knowledge may be missing, it may be unconscious. As one develops habits and routines, these unthinkingly can be used in responding to relevant conditions. Thus, he states that no knowledge is totally implicit or explicit. Instead, he tries to bring ways to understand these learnings and analyzes practical situations in which tacit knowledge is gained and used. These main situations are as below (Eraut, 2000, p. 28):

- knowledge acquired by implicit learning of which the knower is unaware.
- knowledge constructed from the aggregation of episodes in long-term memory.
- knowledge inferred by observers to be capable of representation as implicit theories of action, personal constructs, schemas, etc.
- knowledge that enables rapid, intuitive understanding or response.
- knowledge entailed in transferring knowledge from one situation to another.
- knowledge embedded in taken-for-granted activities, perceptions, and norms.

Learning can take place in any space, in any community, due to any experience, at any age and by various means. It can occur immediately after the experience or many years after it and, it can be internally generated or externally led. Therefore, it is more useful to look at informal learning as implicit, reactive, deliberative, and some other possible

modes like social, transformative, integrative. These happen somewhere on the continuum or at a relational crossroad between these different modes of learnings. These substantive modes of learning allow us to develop a better understanding of the informal learning experiences of learners and how their efforts might be enhanced. Likely, Smith (2008) highlights the importance of attaining a broad perspective and inter-relational on the continuum, between different modes of informal learning. Otherwise, he says that focusing down on one dimension or mode only is to miss the depth of informal learning.

2.1.1.2 Transformative informal learning

Relying on the highlights above, transformative learning is discussed as a theory within the scope of informal learning, a model that contributes to in depth understanding of informal learning. Transformation is a topic of interest in several disciplines like psychology, sociology, management sciences but under the theory of transformative learning, it has been a focal point in adult education for several decades (Hoggan, 2016). Transformative learning has emerged within the field of adult education as a powerful image for understanding how adults learn. It focuses on where we learn why we believe and what we believe, and why we do what we do (Malik & Roberson, 2014). It is inherently intertwined with a change in knowledge, understanding, attitudes, beliefs, mindsets, skills and / or behaviors.

For most of the adult learning, there is the centrality of experience and usually learning is unconscious and takes place through a process of assimilation. Some authors discuss the relation between informal learning and transformative learning through informal learning being either positively or negatively transformative for learners (Dirkx, 1998; Kasl & Yorks, 2002; Pokorny & Whittaker, 2014; Travers, 2011).

Sometimes informal learning can also lead to drawing false conclusions, based on an incomplete understanding of the context and inadequate perception of the situation. These may be related with the lack of prior experiences, which avoid the individual from making sense of new experiences.

Over time, adults can develop these broader mindsets capable of viewing situations more fully and accurately. They can reflect critically on themselves, their relations with others, with their environments, on former experiences, assumptions and even on prior learnings. They can change their perspective on a particular situation and transform it into a broader habit of mind leading to a different meaning – making in the specific situation. Thus, they constitute a transformative rather than an assimilating learning process (Mezirow, 1991). As Belanger (2011) clarifies "there is critical difference between an assimilation process, in which new experiences are shaped to conform to an existing knowledge structure and, a transformative process, in which the knowledge structure itself is being changed" (p. 44). Transformative learning refers mostly to experiences that challenge the individual to change the taken-for granted frames of references and generate different thoughts, beliefs, and opinions. Frames of references include two major dimensions. It begins with the conception that people have habits of mind, "a set of assumptions—broad, generalized, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience" (Mezirow, 2012, p. 17). Social, cultural, political, and economic background, the psychological conditions are all constructive parts in habits of mind. These shape how adults make meaning of the world and experiences. As the second dimension, Mezirow (2012) uses the term perspectives. These are the gathering of beliefs, judgments, attitudes, and feelings that direct a particular re-interpretation of experiences. Perspective transformation refers to the

process of "becoming critically aware of one's own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation" (p. 4). Mezirow gives the example of ethnocentrism as the habit of mind while the resulting judgments, attitudes, biases, and feelings towards others are the perspectives. Habits of mind is the meaning framework while perspectives are the implementation.

To make the complexity of transformative learning simple and understand how it happens, Mezirow (1978) identifies ten phases. Later, he updates these phases and adds an eleventh phase to this framework by emphasizing the relational and contextual side (Mezirow, 1991). He also underlines that it is not necessary that a person experience all 11 phases or in a linear order to experience a transformation. These phases are as below:

1. Experiencing a disorienting dilemma,
2. Undergoing self-examination,
3. Conducting a critical assessment of internalized role assumptions and feeling a sense of alienation from traditional social expectations,
4. Relating one's discontent to similar experiences of others or to public issues– recognizing that one's problems are shared and not exclusively a private matter,
5. Exploring one's options for new ways of acting,
6. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles,
7. Planning a course of action,
8. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans,
9. Making provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback,
10. Reintegrating into society based on conditions dictated by the new perspective,
11. Altering present relationships and forging new relationships.

In general, it is necessary to understand these core phases for comprehending how transformative learning occurs. Disorienting dilemma covers the internal responses of a person against any external encounters and causes a sudden change in one's perspective. The disorienting dilemma can be anything like a book, a film, a belief, a conversation, etc. Self-examination, or the individual experiences, is the key in transformation. It is the questioning of one's experience, which is socially constructed, and this awareness makes the transformative learning process begin (Taylor, 2000). Critical assessment or sense of

alienation is the re-interpretation of meaning communicated to us through ideological tools. It requires the questioning of the values embedded in communication, identification of intentions, feelings, and the general context. Cranton (2016) defines the next phase, the recognition of others' similar experiences, as the collaborative process in which the participants attempt to give new meanings to their experiences and formulate new understandings (p.12). This awareness leads the way towards exploring options for actions, building competences, planning a course of action, and acquiring knowledge and skills. After these steps are completed, the person begins to try new roles and reintegrate with his / her environment based on the new learning.

Mezirow (2012) focuses to understand how such changes come about by bringing to the surface, examining, altering, or replacing dysfunctional assumptions, views, and beliefs that adults have internalized through their former experiences. He summarizes transformative learning through three steps. First step covers the reflective questioning of current beliefs, values, and assumptions. When individual's frames of reference are not in accordance with their experience, individuals start to reflect and question these frames. In other words, the challenging times and critical incidents are abundant opportunities for learning. Second step includes the re-interpretation of the existing conditions in relation to prior experience. The last step ends with the person reaching a different judgment system, learning new meaning schemes, or altering the existing ones which all direct the future actions. Individuals change their meaning perspectives by using their cognitive skills to examine, challenge and potentially reformulate the assumptions and beliefs influencing their experiences of the world, emancipating them from the forces that limit their options and control their lives. This transformation is the result of reflecting upon the experience and inventing new

strategies to respond their evaluation of the situation (Mezirow, 2012, p. 8). It leads to elaborating existing frames of reference, learning new frames of reference, transforming points of view, and transforming habits of mind. These transformations / shifts may occur gradually, or from a sudden powerful experience. Overall, he grasps the learning process as a positive personal transformation and empowerment leading the individual to have a fuller and clearer sense of who one is, a new and broader boundary between oneself and the world, integration of experiences, increased personal autonomy, getting more inclusive and emotionally capable of change, betterment in critical reflection, openness to learning, self-direction and becoming more differentiating.

Nohl (2015) tries to understand transformative learning with a relational perspective. He underlines that in this kind of learning, there is the social testing and mirroring phase which leads to shifting the relevance and then social consolidation and reinterpretation of biography. Social testing and mirroring phase include exposure of practices to the appraisal of other people and after having the opportunity to reflect on them considering the reactions of their interaction partners. Either positive or negative, these reactions encourage individuals to learn further. The learners understand the significance of what has newly been included in their lives and share these new knowledge and skills both within the group and when communicating with outsiders.

Baumgartner (2002) reads this social testing and mirroring phase from the perspective of feedback and emotional needs (p.55). The existing of trustful relationships allows individuals to have questioning discussions, share information openly and achieve mutual and consensual understanding on an issue. In the final phase of social consolidation and reinterpretation of biography, individuals stabilize their new learnings and start to practice them within their own environments and contexts.

Considering the complexity of transformative learning and the adult learner, Hoggan (2016) says that transformative learning theory started to be used to refer to almost any kind of learning outcome and therefore, has strayed from its theoretical foundations and no longer serves as a coherent theory. That is why he suggest understanding transformative learning as a holistic, analytical metatheory that can be understood through looking at the learning outcomes. He and two doctoral students complete a literature review between 2013 and 2015, look at the wide variety of learning outcomes that have been published in the literature and prepare a typology for transformative learning summarized below:

1. Worldview. This refers to significant changes in the way the learner understands the world and how it works. Changes in the worldview may take several forms depicted in subcategories like assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, expectations, new awareness, ways of interpreting experience leading to more comprehensive or complex views.
2. Self. This refers to any of several ways that learners experience a significant shift in their sense of self. Self in relation as the learner`s sense of being situated in the world, identity as view of self, empowerment and responsibility, self-knowledge and personal narratives, meaning-purpose, self-knowledge, and personality are the subcategories to represent range of depictions to changes in self.
3. Epistemology. This refers primarily to the way people construct and evaluate knowledge in their day-to-day living, their ways of knowing, rather than how they explicitly define it. Being more discriminating about knowledge and norms, utilizing extra rational ways of knowing like emotional, empathetic, and imaginative, being open to changes and new experiences are discussed outcomes under this category.
4. Ontology. This refers to the way a person exists in the world. It concerns the established mental and emotional inclinations affecting quality and tone of one's existence. Affective experience of life, ways of being, attributes are examples.
5. Behavior. It refers to the action taken after the transformative learning. Actions consistent with the perspective, social actions, professional practices, critical examination and following changes and skills are discussed under this category.
6. Capacity. It refers to developmental outcomes whereby learners experience systematic changes in their abilities that allow greater complexity in the way they see, interpret and function in world. Cognitive development, consciousness, spirituality as a connection and intimacy with something greater than oneself.

Overall, Hoggan (2016) says that transformative learning results in significant and irreversible changes in the way a person experiences, conceptualizes and interacts with

the world. The descriptors "experiences, conceptualizes, and interacts[1]" reflect the ways the transformative learning outcomes affect the heart, head, and the hands of an individual. The criteria for these learning outcomes to be qualified as transformative is them being in depth, breadth, and relative stability[2]. Hoggan (2016) says that this typology of transformative learning outcomes and criteria can be used as an analytical tool for research in this field.

2.1.1.3 Who the learner is and identity

Various authors discuss that pursuing and benefiting from learning depend on who the learner is. Characteristics, abilities, educational experience, social and cultural background impact one`s motivation of learning, the learning processes, and outcomes. White (2012) underlines that if the learner has the foundational skills for learning and positive experiences with education before, then s/he becomes advantageous in all types of learning. These enable the learner to identify learning opportunities, to be open and self-confident towards them, to solve problems easily and, to learn more on their own. van Noy et al. (2016) provide an example to demonstrate this relation. If an adult does not believe that s/he can do something well enough to reach the desired outcome, s/he may stay away from the learning opportunity consciously or unconsciously.

Drago-Severson (2009) states that as adults mature, they develop capacity to think abstractly and complexly in response to the challenges they face in their lives.

[1] Experiences refer to an individual`s actual, lived experiences. Conceptualizes refers to the way the individual interprets the world and experiences. Interacts reflects the way transformation affects how an individual acts and behaves.

[2] Depth refers to impact of change or the degree to which it affects any outcome like worldview, self and so on. Breadth refers to the number of contexts in which a change is manifest. Relative stability implies that transformation is a permanent change, and it is irreversible.

Higher developmental levels are associated with the ability to understand and obtain a broader perspective or a range of different perspectives and, the ability to be aware of and to question one`s own assumptions. Adults learn informally no matter what their developmental levels are, but what that learning looks like and how effective it will be are shaped by their developmental levels. If the developmental level is high, those individuals are more aware about their beliefs, assumptions, frameworks and mindsets and they look for alternative ways of understanding the situations. This is defined as self-transformative way of knowing.

Jarvis (2006) says that "when our biographical repertoire is no longer sufficient to cope with our situation" (p.16), the individual's harmony is disturbed, and this is where the learning may start. He underlines one`s background, experiences, body and mind, cognitive, emotional, and practical characteristics as determinative over pursuing learning and the learning process itself. The experiences may lead to learning regardless of their educative potential and all learnings start with an experience. For him, learning is "a combination of processes whereby whole persons constructs experiences of situations and transforms them into knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, emotions, and the senses, and integrate the outcomes into their own biographies" (Jarvis, 2006, p. 111). The wider the experiences are, and the more the individual reflects on those, the more learning occurs, and the individual becomes whole. Therefore, obtaining a holistic approach and perceiving the individual with all dimensions such as rational, cognitive, emotional, social, cultural, and psychological is required to understand (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Cranton & Wright, 2008; Damasio, 2003; Dirkx, 2001; Howden, 2012; Merriam et al., 2009; Mälkki, 2010; Taylor, 2000).

Supporting this holistic approach and harmony, Taylor (2001) names the mind, body, spirit, and memory dimensions as unconscious ways of learning. He underlines that context and culture of the situation, and the individual within these situations, affect the learning process itself. Each learner is unique, has a level of readiness to learn, and while embedding in a learning context, all will construct knowledge differently based on former experiences, different aspects, and ways to interpret and organize information. All these factors affect one`s learning processes and outcomes.

English and Mayo (2012) say that learning is an inner journey and cannot be thought separated from the heart, the soul, intuition or overall, the human part of the individual. Dirkx (2008) underlines the importance of imagination, memory, emotions, intuition, and soul in learning. This kind of learning leads the individual to his / her alternative images, naming and elaborating all these different selves for now and future. It involves not only the learner's conscious understanding but the deeper and unconscious mental layers and making these layers a part of conscious ego (Dirkx, 2012). These unconscious mental layers and emotions can affect the processes of reason, making them non-linear and more importantly, redirect the whole process of learning. In addition to emotions, memory is an inherent part of our mental capabilities in functioning as a support system for our decision making, through directing attention and regulating its intensity (Damasio, 2003). Emotions and imaginations are embedded in the memory. They form the basis of our interpretations and based on previous experiences, they give automatic messages to go toward or away from a certain experience. Thus, memory should be considered as an intrinsic part of the learner and the learning process since it influences one`s openness to new learning opportunities.

Supporting this, Mälkki (2010) highlights that under the threat of chaos and crisis, people feel unpleasant emotions. These trigger the learning process, since to understand what is happening and discover ways to deal with it, one starts to learn. The learner confronts a specific situation through the sense of being overwhelmed and s/he may reconfigure a new understanding of what was wrong, why it did not work and new possible directions or pathways for growth. These are intense moments of emotions and act as catalysts of informal learning. Therefore, Mälkki (2010) says that most of the learnings occur when the learner is out of the comfort zone.

In recent years, there have been various studies that highlights the strong link between learning and identity (Brown, 2017; Illeris, 2014; Illeris, 2014a; Pittaway, Rivera, & Murphy, 2005; Rogers, 2014; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, de Cremer, & Hogg, 2005). These authors suggest that learning and identity mutually enrich each other and lead to new understandings in both areas. Rogers (2014) say that when the learners engage in learning experiences, each is learning with the whole self. As new understandings and lessons are integrated, the learning becomes cyclical like and even more complex. Since informal learning is mostly unconscious, the learner does not construct him/herself with the learner identity easily and this contribute to the complexity of exploring informal learning. Rather he offers to grasp the learning through the lens of multiple identities, looking at the effects and changes and narratives of identity while conducting research in this field. Erstad and Sefton-Green (2015) also underlines that identities are multiple, flexible, and relational, and informal learning is related with constructing these identities, and related performances and capabilities. To analyze the full extent of informal learning, one should first become aware about the unconscious part of learning, and the related learner identity.

Illeris (2014) focuses on the question that what changes can be understood and defined as learning. He offers that the concept of identity includes the self-perception in an integrated and equal way, both internally in relation to the individual and externally in relation to the individual's interaction with the environment. So, identity is the most balanced term to cover and include the learning dimensions as a coherent whole. Second, he says that which experiences lead to learnings and changes is still a relevant but unanswered question:

> By referring to the concept of identity in relation to learning, it will automatically act as a criterion of importance concerning changes that can be considered transformations because the concept of identity obviously only includes matters of a certain importance in relation to the mental totality of the individual. (Illeris, 2014, p.153)

Last, he highlights that identity today is not only an academic concept but used in everyday language that everybody understands immediately. Therefore, focusing on identity to grasp informal learning outcomes will make life easy for researchers in field.

Illeris (2014) argues that identity is the right term to think in relation with learning and builds a model of identity to demonstrate this link. On the central position of the model, he positions the self-identity or the core identity which people develop and try to maintain despite all tendencies toward instability and fragmentation. He says that gender, family relations, environmental conditions, appearance, characteristics, temperament, desires, emotionality take place within this core. He also challenges the assumption that this core does not change by saying that due to continuous and frequent changes in today`s world, the core identity can change. The second layer around the core identity is the personality layer. This layer is about how one related to others, communities and groups, important issues and instances, events and incidents, crisis and overall, the outside world, society, and environment of which one is a part of. This layer

includes one's principles, behavior patterns, meanings, and social conventions like habits of communication, patterns of collaboration, empathy and belonging. There are all sorts of technical, organizational, political, and private changes in everyday life. Individuals are constantly confronted with new events, situations, conditions, rules, and regulations, demands and arguments, things to discuss and to decide, to relate and to have an opinion about. Due to this fluidity and compared to the core identity, the personality layer of identity is both requested and willing to change, therefore less stable. Illeris (2014) defines this layer as where most of the learning occur. The last layer is the outside one, the layer of preferences. All the things and issues we meet in our daily life stand in this layer. It is the routines, reactions to different situations, what we feel instantly after an event and daily situations. This is where we are not so committed but willing to change and exert ourselves if needed. He also highlights that there are multiple identities such as learner identity, worker identity and so on, and each of these identities can be analyzed through the layers discussed above.

2.1.2 Workplace as a site for learning

Changes happening in the labor market today highlight the central role played by the learning in professional development and organizational success. There is no single approach to or simple definition of workplace learning (Manuti, Pastore, Scardigno, Giancaspro, & Morciano, 2015). Hager (2011) identifies three approaches to understand workplace learning. First approach can be summarized as learning as a product. This approach emphasizes individual behavior change and/or knowledge acquisition as learning outcomes. It focuses mostly on the cognitive and rational aspects of work performance, conceives thinking followed by the application and practice, and has the

tendency to pay limited attention to social, organizational, and cultural factors of workplace in learning and performance. Learning and work are defined as separate activities and learning is viewed as a tool to prepare the workers to do a specific job and to acquire specific areas of knowledge, awareness, and skills useful to perform their job well. This approach is mostly shaped by formal learning activities.

Second approach is characterized by a recognition that workplace learning is significantly shaped by social, and cultural factors that extend well beyond the individual (Hager, 2005). This approach assumes learning as an ongoing process of participation shaped by contextual and social factors. It is influenced by the situated learning theory and activity theory that positions learning within the activity, context, and culture. Lave and Wenger (1991) says that to join the community of practice, novices go through a social learning process and learn to function appropriately in a given social, cultural, and physical environment. Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson, and Unwin (2005) prefer to name the community of practices as field of practices and define learning as social participation. They define intentional / planned and unintentional / unplanned types of workplace learning and summarize the outputs of workplace learning as learning the things which is already known by others, developing the existing capabilities, or learning things that are new in the workplace.

Final approach has the tendency to combine both individual and social aspects of learning, and emphasize workplace learning with the emergent nature of learning as the context does not decide or predict learning. Combining both, Hager (2005) says that workplace learning is both individual and social. He notes the following:

> These theories accept that, while all learning is in some sense social, this is compatible with some instances of learning being learning by individuals, and other instances of learning occurring at the communal level. So at least some of the social learning theories to be discussed later included a place for learning by individuals that is different from pure communal learning. Thus, it is a plausible individual claim that both individual and social learning are different but important dimensions of workplace learning. (Hager, 2005, p.830)

Billett (2004) also underlines the significance of considering all organizational, social, and individual factors on workplace learning. He says that "workplaces as learning spaces where individuals learn through experiences that are mediated by both the contribution of workplaces and individual's agency" (p.109). He identifies workplaces as learning spaces and advocates the re-conceptualization of workplace learning through involving informal learning category more. As a summary presented by Hager (2011), workplace learning has evolved and shifted the focus from individual to the combination of individual, social, and organizational levels, and from formal learning to the combination of both informal and formal learning.

2.1.2.1 Informal learning in the workplace

The simple fact that adults generally spend at least a third of their daytime and more than thirty years in the workplace emphasizes the significance of workplace as a learning site. But considering the limited time that can be dedicated to formal learning activities, some scholars highlight that informal learning form most of the learning occurring in the workplace (Cerasoli et al., 2018; Colley et al., 2002; Eraut, 2004; Tannenbaum, Beard, McNall, & Salas, 2010)[3]. Interest in informal learning has intensified since skills and

[3] de Grip (2015) refers to a Lifelong Learning Survey which he and his colleagues completed in years 2004, 2007, 2010 and 2013 in the Netherlands. Their aim is to identify trends and maps in lifelong development, from a human capital development perspective. In total there were 2376 respondents in 2004, 1776 respondents in 2007, 1974 respondents in 2010 and 1992 respondents in 2013. Relying on

competencies rapidly become outdated because of fast-moving changes in the global economy today, and due to the shortcoming of the formal learning to respond the speed of these changes (Billett, 2002; Felstead, Jewson, & Walters, 2005). Päivi (2008) also says that the gap is expanding daily, and informal workplace learning has the advantage in continuously closing the gap, compared to formal learning.

Russ-Eft, Watkins, Marsick, Jacobs, and McLean (2014) argue that informal learning is increasingly critical in the workplace as the pace of change continues and, there is a need for both corporations and individuals to adapt quickly to changing demands. Informal learning in daily activities provides an important source for achieving both personal and organizational goals (Kyndt, Donche, Gijbels, & Van Petegem, 2014). van Noy et al. (2016) feature that informal learning as an efficient and effective way to learn in the workplace since knowledge and skills necessary for performance can be obtained on a just-in-time and purposeful basis. It has beneficial outcomes such as practical knowledge for the learner, enhance intra and interpersonal skills and awareness, and can immediately be applied to situations specific to the learner. Relying on these, informal workplace learning attracted the attention of scholars, with the tendency to answer the questions of what, how and why is being learned informally in the workplace, factors influencing learning and who the learner is (Hunter, 2010).

Eraut (2000, 2004) defines three types of knowledge in the workplace to answer the question of what is being learned informally in the workplace: codified, personal,

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these surveys, de Grip (2015) states that according to the measure of time during which a worker is learning at work show that workers spend on average 35 % of their working time on activities from which they learn. Informal learning activities account for 96% of this dedicated time in which workers are engaged in activities from which they learn. The Dutch study also demonstrates that informal learning has grown in importance, rising from 31 % of working time in 2004 to 35% in 2013. The workers with higher education spend more time on learning at work (38 % of their working time), while the workers with lower education workers spend less (26% of their working time).

cultural. Codified knowledge includes both the academic knowledge and the written materials like manuals, plans, procedures, etc. Cultural knowledge is the unwritten rules. This knowledge is acquired unintentionally, through participation in activities and practices. Personal knowledge involves what the individuals bring to situations and what enables them to think, interact and perform. It covers the codified academic knowledge, the uncodified knowledge incorporating with people and situations, know-how in the form of skills, memories of episodes and events, self-knowledge, attitudes, and emotions. As seen in Figure 3, Eraut presents these as a typology of informal workplace:

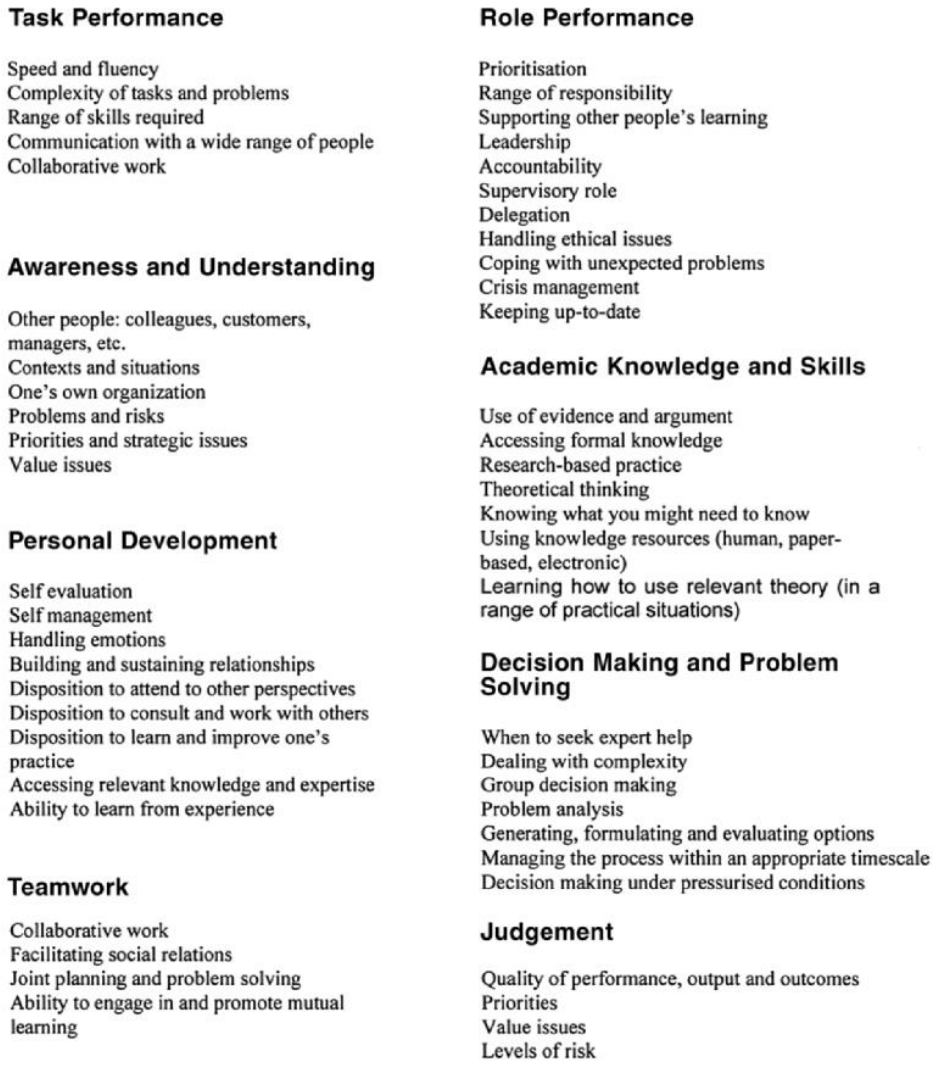


Figure 3. What is being learned in the workplace?
Source: Eraut, 2004, p. 265

Some scholars attempt to understand informal learning in the workplace through focusing on the question of how informal learning occur in the workplace. The answers to this question focus on two major areas: learning activities available in the workplace and, contextual and individual factors impacting learning. Workplace learning activities involve planned activities like mentoring, goal setting, coaching, learning planning and supervision, and SDL. Unplanned activities occur during job performance, such as problem-solving, doing, observing, or participating to specific activities (Rintala, Nokelainen, & Pylväs, 2019). van Rijn, Yang, and Sanders (2013) offer to distinguish workplace activities on individual and collaborative basis since people in different occupations and career levels prefer different kind of learning activities and all these can be initiated by the organization or the workers as learners themselves. These could be enhanced with the guidance of others.

Different scholars say that informal learning is in fact experiential in its nature (Eraut, 2004; Merriam et al., 2009; Sambrook, 2006). They focus to understand the stimulating functions of experiences in adult`s lives which trigger further informal workplace learning. Cheetham and Chivers (2001) conduct interviews and surveys to feature 10 most important experiences triggering informal learning in workplace:

1. On the job learning,
2. Working alongside more experienced colleagues,
3. Working as part of a team,
4. Self-analysis or reflection,
5. Learning from clients, customers, patients, etc.
6. Networking with others doing a similar job,
7. Learning through teaching / training others,
8. Support from a mentor of some kind,
9. Use of a role model,
10. Pre-entry experience.

Learning emerges from a need for problem-solving triggered by disequilibrium, through a mismatching experience and the expected learning comes from experimenting and reflecting. In other words, doing itself is accepted as the major source of informal learning in the workplace. Obtaining this, Cseh, Watkins, and Marsick (1999) conceptualize informal workplace learning with problem-solving processes. They claim that if an individual goes through the steps below, reflective learning occurs.

1. Framing the context,
2. Responding to triggers to a potential learning experience,
3. Interpreting the experience,
4. Examining alternative solutions,
5. Choosing learning strategies,
6. Producing alternative solutions,
7. Assessing intended and unintended consequences,
8. Evaluating lessons learned.

Lohman (2006) criticizes the authors by being too much focused on the cognitive aspect of informal learning since she notes that informal learning involves behavioral activities and environmental factors that workers engage with. In parallel, Cairns and Malloch (2011) underline that workplace can be designed as a site where learning happen as and when it is needed, mostly when problems occur, and alternative solutions are needed.

Rogers (2014) states that there are three sources of experiences that are very relevant for the informal workplace learning to occur, both consciously and unconsciously: (1) entering new roles or interpreting the old roles in new ways, (2) socio-cultural context shifts (like economic changes or the introduction of new technologies) triggering new learning and changes (3) changing individual interests over time. Cunningham and Hillier (2013) cluster three experiences to answer the question of how informal workplace learning occur: (1) learning relationships like mentoring and peer relations, (2) learning opportunities enlarging and redesigning the job like

temporary job changes, cross trainings and stretch assignments, (3) learning opportunities from enriching the job like acting management opportunities, full-time temporary assignments, on-the-job opportunities. Although there is no trainer in any of these activities, there are certain individuals who have higher levels of insight or competence on a topic, and they mostly trigger the learning of others. Thus, they are also related to the work environment and mediated by the people in it.

Eraut (2004) continues to build his typology also with the question of how informal workplace learning occurs. First, he says that this question is a challenging one since so much learning goes unrecognized and this requires differentiation between kinds of learning when several things are happening at once. For him, there are four learning processes with learning as a by-product, eight learning activities located within work or learning processes, and nine learning processes at or near the workplace as illustrated in Table 4. These could occur in either in individual or group contexts:

Table 4. A Typology of How Professionals Learn Through Work

Work processes with learning as a by-product	**Learning activities located within work or learning processes**	**Learning processes at or near the workplace**
Participation in group processes Working alongside others Consultation Tackling challenging tasks & roles Problem solving Trying things out Consolidating, extending, and refining skills Working with clients	Asking questions Getting information Locating resources, people Listening and observing Reflecting Learning from mistakes Giving and receiving feedback Use of mediating artefacts	Being supervised Being coached Being mentored Shadowing Visiting other sites Conferences Short courses Working for a qualification Independent study

Source: Eraut, 2008, p. 18

Some of these processes and activities have the transformative potential to change individual beliefs, assumptions, relations with others and ideas.

Billett (2002a) brings collaborative activities, learning from others forward in the workplace. Participating in the work activities, interacting with, and observing others, taking them as role models and imitating, accessing support and guidance are rich informal learning sources. Froehlich, Beausaert, and Segers (2017) underline seeking feedback, help, and information as social activities and define them as activities where the employee, as the learner must proactively engage in. Marsick (2009) argues that workplace learning grows from a social contact among people who work together, ranging from immediate groups to complex organizations. Although they are interested in individual learning, they highlight collaboration and basic trust as the essential facilitators of informal learning. Peer relations also seem to serve informal workplace learning since they occur mostly on the job interactions in which individuals discuss work-related ideas and issues with the colleagues who have the knowledge and experience (Rowold & Kauffeld, 2008). Trusted peers can provide valuable support to their colleagues, offer feedback on performance and interpersonal skills, and make suggestions for further improvement (Eddy, Tannenbaum, Lorenzet, & Smith-Jentsch, 2005). Park and Jacobs (2011) state that the informal learning outcomes are not limited to the individuals but also to the cultural practices of the workplace. Individual learning affects organizational performance by enhancing competency development, increased productivity, and employee engagement.

Alternatively, Noe, Tews, and Marand (2013) focus on the processes underlying these activities and define three categories: learning from self, learning from others, and learning from non-interpersonal sources. Learning from oneself involves reflecting on how to improve individual performance and trying new ways of performing one's job responsibilities. Learning from self is where informal learning interacts most with the

transformative learning since spending time to build self-awareness and reflecting on how to improve self is transformative. Learning from others involves learning from peers, direct reports, supervisors and obtaining feedback, discuss new ideas, formulate strategies and actions, and gain new knowledge through them. The learning outcomes from this category can transform the individual and his/her relations with this environment. The final category is learning from non-interpersonal sources, whereby the individual acquires new knowledge and skills by searching for and reading published materials. Some of the SDL activities, meta-learning skills are related with this learning. Parallel to this focus on the underlying processes, Rausch, Seifried, and Harteis (2017) gives some examples of external circumstances such as errors, feedback, questions, conflicts, difficult situations, challenges, problems, and the behaviors of others. Interacting and engaging these, experiencing them lead workers primarily to reflection and then to further learning. Drago-Severson (2009) defines this as the self-transformative way of learning and discusses this as a need in today`s global, complex, technology, and information rich environments since it enables people to talk, to understand and to work across national, personal, and professional boundaries.

Eraut (2004) presents a visual of two similar triangles which are summarizing all the factors in the workplace affecting learning. The first triangle involves the context factors related to job characteristics like allocation and structuring of work, relationships with people at work and role expectations of an individual related to performance and progress. The second triangle includes learning factors within the context like feedback and support, characteristics of the learner and availability of challenges. At the middle of the model stand the individual learner since the characteristics and abilities of the learner either expand or reduce the impact of these factors over learning. Learning potential in

the workplace depends on both learning and context factors but especially on the individual factors that interrelate all of these. Therefore, who learner is stand at the center of this discussion. The triangle model is illustrated in Figure 4:

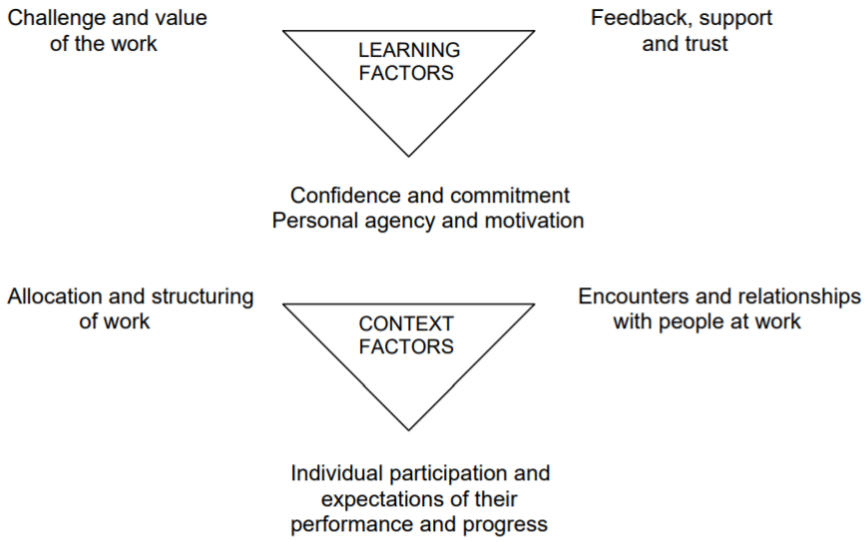


Figure 4. Factors affecting learning in the workplace
Source: Eraut, 2008, p. 24

Confidence and commitment arise as the individual takes challenges and successfully meet the expectations in one`s work, but this depends also on the context factors, the extent to the availability of challenges and the support. In other words, learning emerges from a need for problem-solving like a challenging experience and happens as one goes through it, experience it, and reflect on it. If there are no problems or challenges available or sufficient support to encourage the individuals to look for and to respond to a challenge, then confidence and with it the motivation of the learner to learn will decline (Eraut, Alderton, Cole, & Senker, 2000).

Another key factor in Eraut`s model is the role of the manager. For the learning factor's part, the managers play an important role in promoting and enhancing the

learning of those whom they manage, both individually and collectively. This does not mean that managers will do all the learning support themselves, but they will set the climate, encourage the subordinates to take on learning role as an integral part of their job and include the facilitation of learning in their management of performance. Managers need to understand and be well informed about relationships, interpersonal environments, and collective concerns without being unduly intrusive. They must have the awareness about the need to delegate and to work through other people as well as by direct action. Otherwise, they will never have enough time to realize objectives, and those they manage will have less opportunity for self-development.

Scholars emphasize the impact of context over the informal workplace learning since it influences how the learner interprets the situation, the learning process itself and the outcomes. To understand context factors, Harteis, Billett, Goller, Rausch, and Seifried (2015) underline three characteristics which are influential on informal learning in the workplace. These are work demands (including task significance, task variety, task complexity, information processing, and problem solving), control provided (including autonomy regarding planning, decisions, and methods), and availability of social support in the work environment (feedback and interaction). From the sample of 1162 employees in 31 different organizations, Kyndt, Dochy, and Nijs (2009) conclude that supporting opportunities for feedback (e.g., working in teams, peer feedback) and possibilities to acquire knowledge contributed most to informal learning in the workplace. They also underline that work organization, internal and external learning networks, coaching relation with the managers, and information systems supportive for knowledge sharing as significant factors impacting workplace learning. Expanding the proportion, Felstead and Henseke (2017) highlight that workplace is not a physical space

anymore and there are increasing number of remote workplaces, mobile offices, and global teams. In this context, learning also occur informally outside the boundaries of workplace, in the virtual environments, through teamwork, reflecting, while solving problems, experimenting, and interacting with colleagues, supervisors and clients.

There are authors who underline organizational structure, leadership styles and values, and culture as impacting contextual factors over informal workplace learning. Ashton (2004) underlines access to knowledge and information easily, having the chance to practice skills and make trials, availability of constructive feedback and support, and existence of rewards for learning among these factors. Ellinger's (2005) qualitative case study with 13 participants emphasize the role of leadership and management over informal learning in the workplace. They demonstrate that learning-committed leadership and management promoted coaching and mentoring, provided support, feedback and recognition while impacting learning positively. The opposite of these are unsupportive behaviors and micromanaging which influence learning negatively. Hökkä, Vähäsantanen, Paloniemi, and Eteläpelto (2017) concern the role of power relationships and asymmetries affecting the learning climate. The hierarchical relations and power dynamics within the company are parts of organizational climate and learning culture built by leaders, managers, and others. If these relations are too hierarchical and shaped by power structures, then informal learning will be affected negatively for all workers. Having fun at the workplace has also been discussed to promote informal learning and, eventually, innovation, creativity, and performance (Tews, Michel, & Noe, 2017).

Parallel to Eraut`s highlight about personal agency and motivation in informal learning, there are also some authors who want to understand the impact of individual

characteristics of the learner over informal workplace learning. Hicks, Bagg, Doyle, and Young (2007) underline interest and curiosity of the worker as important characteristics since people with strong learning orientation can set their own learning objectives, evaluation methods and better in reflecting. Lohman (2005) underlines initiative, self-efficacy, love of learning, interest in profession, commitment to professional development, a nurturing personality and an outgoing personality as important characteristics enabling learning. Noe et al. (2013) add the importance of exploring positive traits and states like goal orientation into the list. van Rijn et al. (2013) state that to understand informal workplace learning, attention should be paid to motivational and self-construal factors of the worker related to his/her team and in the workplace. These refer to how an individual can define oneself autonomous or connected to a supervisor or a team. As an example, they discuss career motivation led to positive effect on learning but when this is strengthened by the existence of self-construal factors, then it increases the learning and knowledge sharing in the team.

Hökkä et al. (2017) underline that there is a reciprocal relationship between agency and emotions. Having negative and positive emotions about self, others, workplace, the profession and so on in general impact learning at work, particularly in terms of openness and effectiveness. Rausch et al. (2017) discuss that emotions are especially important in the moments of failures and in error situations. These moments and situations lead to the emergence of negative emotions while blocking the learning but instead these are significant sources of learning. Thus, they state individuals who are aware of their emotions and manage them well have the chance to learn more.

There are authors who explore the effect of demographic variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, educational level, and tenure as well as organization type and size over

informal workplace learning in quantitative research (Berg & Chyung, 2008; Cross, 2007; Harteis et al., 2015; Kyndt et al., 2009; van Rijn et al., 2013). Getting the most out of learning opportunities and activities available in the workplace is more likely by the learners with higher educational level (Skule, 2004). Ashton (2004) notices that access to knowledge, getting the support for learning, and benefiting from the system of rewards are more likely to happen with senior staff and people at managerial levels, whereas junior staff and people at non-managerial levels benefit less from these. According to years spent in the profession and the company, Cross (2007) defines three segments of learners who have three different modes of learning (see Table 5). In other words, he underlines that understanding the segment of the learner will provide ideas about how to organize the informal learning strategies:

Table 5. Three Segments of Learners with Different Modes of Learning

Novice Worker	**Mature Worker**	**Senior Worker**
Directed Learner	Self-Directed Learner	Helping Others
Class, Course, Teacher	Discovery	Coaching
Test, Grades	Searching	Mentoring
Curriculum	Skimming	Story Telling
Listening	Trial-and-error	Feedback
Instructions	Collaborating	Nurturing
	Asking	Modelling
	Observing	Reflecting
	Conversing	Connecting

Source: Cross, 2007, p. 83

Chivers highlights that learning is related with the tenure and age since the young learners in workplace have the belief of a career ahead of them and this is crucial for their initiation of learning and motivation to stay in the learning process. From a generational studies perspective, Berg and Chyung (2008) highlights that older workers prefer individual forms of learning, whereas younger ones are more comfortable with

social situations and networking. Harteis et al. (2015) opposingly said that relation between age and learning potential in the workplace is ambiguous. They state that there is no relevant relationship between employee`s age and learning support at the workplace. They also underline that within the sample group they have looked, there is not significant difference between men and women, too.

Rissanen and Kolehmainen (2005) says that differentiation and hierarchy in the labor market, and unequal opportunities in work life between women and men still prevail. Permanence of gender segregation within labor markets, gap between labor force participation, atypical forms of working like parttime contracts, wage gaps and glass ceiling hindering women`s career advancement form the structural patterns of gender inequalities result with concrete impacts in everyday working life. This also impacts the access to learning opportunities, processes of workplace learning and the outputs for female workers. Martin, Lord, and Warren-Smith (2018) focus on women managers in multinational companies. They say that the success of these companies depends on their abilities to recognize, gain, and use knowledge and capabilities of their leaders to retain competitive advantage. Therefore, women managers are relatively advantageous and visible in this context. But even in these contexts, gender is a barrier to effective learning, with women`s knowledge and experiences are unseen and unheard.

Johansson and Abrahamsson (2018) conduct a literature review on gender and workplace learning and say that there is a gender gap when it comes to workplace learning. They highlight that this gap is related with gendering of the learning climate since it shapes the design and outcome of workplace learning. Sjöberg Forssberg, Parding, and Vänje (2021) support this by saying that gender affects conditions for workplace learning and contributes to an enabling learning environment if the workplace

context and the profession is dominated by the learner`s gender. For them, there is no gender-neutral workplace and the organizational structures and culture in the wider picture are shaped also by gender relations. They suggest analyzing workplace learning from a gender perspective through broad and comparative studies, by this way it would be possible to make gender visible and clearly understand its relations with informal workplace learning. Kyndt and Baert (2013) note that this wide and comparative studies highlight is relevant for all sociodemographic variables since individual factors comprise multiple variables like cognitive, demographic, emotional and motivational factors. Ultimately the interrelationships of these factors and with the organizational context factors affect learning. To be comprehensive, they suggest that instead of including a set of variables, future studies should aim to provide more coherent models.

2.1.2.2 Transformative learning in the workplace

Transformative learning remains one of the most influential theories in adult learning, yet studies focusing on it in the workplace are still limited. Learning in workplace is not limited to an employee getting more competent in the profession but also constructing the employee's identity, beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives that are built through experiencing the personal, social, and organizational aspects of work as a subject and on the process of transformation (Filliettaz, 2013). Transformative learning goes beyond content knowledge and encourages learners to question their own assumptions, beliefs and perspectives and become critically reflective of the content, the problem, the way in which a problem is articulated and/or the process to solve the problem. This implies that learning integrated in workplace offers potential for transformative learning, facilitating primarily the sociocultural experience and then the whole worker. Evans and Guille

(2012) state that transformative learning can be a good answer to the ongoing debate about how best to approach workplace learning processes and how to measure and prove outcomes with respect to permanent changes in knowledge, competences, skills, and capabilities. For the authors, any research within the field of transformative workplace learning will contribute to the formation of a more holistic pedagogy in the workplace.

As Jarvis (2006) underlines the knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses change through transformative informal experiences in the workplace, forming different dimensions of worker`s entire biography. From a workplace point of view, learners become a part of the workplace and a part of the professional community as they learn the language, content, appreciated behaviors, attitudes, professional conducts and processes while responding to these expectations. These are not only limited to the workplace but related with one`s whole identity, evolving biography, corporating the mind, body, and self. As Kersh (2015) underlines, transformative experiences gained in one space like workplace also triggers transformation in the other spaces like family. For him, this is boundary crossing and highlights that research on informal workplace learning must involve transformative learning as a strong lens to grasp the whole.

Transformative workplace learning is about what somebody learns about himself / herself as an employee and how s/he builds the worker identity. It refers to the learning that led the employee to challenge the taken-for granted frames of references so that s/he generates new worker identities. van Dellen and Cohen-Scali (2015) define how freedom of learning in the workplace is experienced by employees, how they learn to construct work identity, the variety of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and how contextual, cultural dimensions and values in the workplace impact the worker as a

learner. They point out that employees should be considered as active learners focusing on their own subjectivity, transformation, and identity at work through socialization or situated learning but furthermore through cultural contexts, discourses, self-understandings, and critical reflections. These involve challenging the assumptions, questioning conformity, embracing change, building empathy with others, collaborating, and aligning actions toward the betterment of workplace and society.

Learning and identity processes in the workplace concern the ways in which employees claim social and professional recognition as related to their ability to renew own knowledge, competencies and skills while matching the expectations of their roles, and the demands of the organization. Illeris (2014a) underlines that internal and external motivation factors, and emotions related to learning may either contribute or constrain worker identity. He defines motivation as the central factor that enables the change possibility of the worker identity. Adults do not transform elements of their identity if they do not have serious reasons for doing, so transformations are only possible with the existence of a strong motivation, this may be social and professional recognition for some people. Thus, he defines the key challenge for transformative learning in the workplace as finding and connecting the psychological and/or practical motivation factors, internal and/or external potentials in self and the work environment. If this connection is established, then it triggers transformative learning. Illeris gives the example of a worker who has lost his job and needed to retrain for new type of work. This regressive learning situation means a loss from the worker identity, and therefore the worker is reluctant to engage in activities of the new training. Overtime, the worker transforms his learner identity, forms a different sense of self, and becomes more

confident and, through this finds a way to overcome his initial fear and resistance. He develops a different worker identity.

Some authors underline the importance of organizational context, relations, and leadership over the transformative learning processes and outcomes in the workplace. Hirsh, Silverman, Tamkin, and Jackson (2004) explore the role of the manager within this context. They focus to investigate relationships around giving and receiving of good or bad development support and look at this through the relationships between the manager and the subordinate. They find that good development was delivered through a supportive relationship, sometimes short-lived but often more permanent over a period of months or years. It is characterized by managers being approachable, setting the climate where development is an important part of working life, building developmental relations with subordinates and fostering these by informal conversations about work, listening concerns and offering positive support, providing information about and making shared analysis of development needs, checking the progress frequently, giving honest but constructive feedback, tailoring the delivery of development to individual needs, coaching, making good use of formal trainings offered in the workplace and focusing heavily on finding the empowering experiences within and outside the job, and helping the subordinates to build a realistic sense of their own potential and readiness for possible moves. The authors discuss that these increase motivation, engagement, and behaviors resulting from increased sense of interest in work. These have transformative potential for the subordinate since in addition to developing knowledge and skills, the good development support of the manager contributes to formation of self-awareness and a different worker identity.

Phornprapha (2015) focuses to understand the role of management and structured engagement programs on the identity and transformative learning, as well as communication within the workplace. She chooses an engagement program integrated in a professional services company as a case, which aims to improve communication, to develop competencies of individuals and teams, to provide a sense of belonging and of sharing the same, corporate identity at work. The program also involves the implementation of an innovative workplace learning culture through professional development. She finds out that the program contributed to the building of a sense of belonging among the employees and underlines that leadership is significant in the organizations to foster transformative learning. If the organizational context and relations are supportive of learning, and the leadership team is promoting this culture and the initiatives, then it is more likely for the transformative learning in the workplace to happen. Andresen (2015) attempts to understand the transformative learning processes in affinity groups formed by primary and secondary school teachers. The affinity groups are learning spaces that increase employee's understanding of the professional challenges of their workplaces through concrete experiences. They demonstrate that these groups develop teachers' professional identities as well as their abilities as part of their work identities. Basically, the author shows that teachers feel responsibility for their own personal and professional development, if their self-regulation and identity construction are acknowledged by their school, as their workplace.

According to Choy (2009), transformative learning in the workplace means more consistent and permanent changes. These changes can easily lead to more creative and innovative practices at work, and immediate application and transfer of learning into the work. Therefore, she underlines that workplace learning should be reviewed and

restructured with the focus of putting transformative learning theory into practice. Providing opportunities for critical thinking, for building relations with others going through same experiences, and for acting on new perspectives may foster transformative learning in the workplace. Mentoring, coaching, social learning groups, expertise sharing and storytelling sessions, job shadowing, simulations, and individualized learning paths developed through transformative learning lens are listed as practices that should be given more space in workplace learning. Longmore, Grant, and Golnaraghi (2017) support this highlight by saying that workplaces in the 21st century are not requiring technical competencies or subject-matter expertise only, but also specific learning-oriented competencies such critical thinking, problem solving, agility, adaptability, initiative, communication, and collaboration. They say that formal business education, or the workplace learning designed through acquisition perspective are failing to produce the workforce needed to meet the demands of the 21st century. Instead, they say that conceptual teaching and learning models anchored in transformative learning, reflective practices and interactions embedded in the workplace can foster transformative learning in the workplace and engage the whole worker, as the learner.

Taylor (2007) underlines that transformative learning in the workplace necessitates appropriate learning design elements and focuses on the question of how transformative informal learning occurs in the workplace. These elements include "direct and active learning experiences that engage learners personally and stimulate reflections; use of a variety of medium including online facilities; appropriate pedagogical entry points such as disorienting dilemma that present the potential for transformation; and nature and importance of support to foster transformative learning" (p. 182). He states that the curriculum of the organization should be designed primarily

considering collective learning, teamwork, and trust. Goals, intentions, and relations in the workplace are shaped by collective values, belief systems and perspectives, do not arise from individuals alone. Therefore, direct, and active learning experiences, and reflective practices that also involve teams to become aware of their own values, belief systems, frames of references and perspectives are required. For this, workers need to engage with others in learning, relating with them to question and to create alternative frames of references, ways of working, and perspectives. Usage of real and virtual learning spaces, open access to paper based, digital and online resources, formation of study circles that met both during the work and in social activities outside the work are ways to strengthen relationships and diminish barriers, while fostering transformative learning. Peer relationships built on trust, non-evaluative feedback, non-hierarchical organizational structure, voluntary participation to work groups and discussing on shared goals to build consensus facilitate varying levels of transformation among the peer group. In developing the learning design, Taylor (2007) advises adult learning professionals working in the field to pay attention to factors limiting transformative learning in the workplace like time required to establish trust relations and mutual learning, setbacks caused by changes in the team, not open discussions, rigid role assignments, unequal distribution of group responsibilities and hierarchical structure. He states that these should be avoided to the extent that it is possible.

Billett (2001) also emphasizes healthy, constructive, and supportive relationships between team members as contextual factors for fostering transformative learning in the workplace. Among methods of transformative learning, he emphasizes constructive discussions and reflective practices both as individuals and as teams, instead of task completion as the focus of learning design. For him, individual and collective reflective

thinking, discussing, and sharing insights challenge existing perspectives and practices, and operate on a continuous improvement cycle for the individuals and the team. This enables the individual learners and the teams to step out of their habits of mind.

Exploring on the practices fostering transformative learning in the workplace, Carter (2002) completes a research with 10 mid-career women managers and focuses on the practice of dialogue to grasp how their work identities are constructed through dialogue. Conducting interviews and analyzing the journals completed by the participants, the study finds that dialogue with peers, bosses, friends, and family members as well as internal dialogue with oneself contribute to transformative learning. Using the dialogical self-framework, he demonstrates that dialogue in the workplace continuously involves the subjectivity and the different selves of the managers. Multiple selves are required both to learn from the other in dialogue and to respond their requests. The authors say that dialogue is a situation where the learning, transformation and identity construction are all interrelated, particularly in the leadership domain. Helyer (2015) says that reflection, both reflective practices and lifelong learning are linked to one`s becoming a professional. Yet, the importance of reflection as a skill is neglected and not stressed in workplace learning. Reflective learning requires time and disciplined habit of learning to facilitate reflection, but the outputs quickly contribute to organizational and individual learning. Therefore, reflective practices should be paid more attention while designing the workplace as a transformative learning space.

2.2 Who the gold-collar workers are

Understanding the gold-collar leaders and exploring their characteristics are important to understand as a background for this study. Moreover, this distinguishing group has a specific relation with learning and information, they re-conceptualize learning both for themselves and for the people they work with in the workplace. Therefore, in this part, I will include the literature about the specific context in which this work group is emerging, who they are and what their distinguishing characteristics are, and how they relate with learning.

2.2.1 Globalization

It is widely recognized that capitalism has been undergoing a restructuring since 1980s and this period is commonly named as globalization. All structures and relations are now worldwide while internationalizing the production itself and all systems, processes, and relations around it (Robinson, 2011; Stephen, 2014). This worldwide transformation triggered knowledge economy, urbanization, growth of consumerist markets, emergence of economic power centers, global re-organization of the production and systems, and formation of new work groups (Sassen, 2001). In addition to these dynamics, the extent usage of information technologies and indistinct national borders and advancement of MNCs prompted the intensification of market through different tasks that require numerous kinds of different workers with varying vision, knowledge, perspectives, behaviors, and capabilities (Wickman, 2012).

Before starting to review the literature related to gold-collar leaders, it would be good to understand the advancement of multinational companies and their increasing strengths in the global economy. A key indicator for globalization is the expansion of

MNCs and changing workforce around this expansion (Hart, 2015). Basically, a multinational corporation is an "enterprise that engages in foreign direct investment and that owns, or controls value added activities in more than one country" (Dunning & Lundan, 2008, p. 3). In 1974, the United Nations Centre for Transnational Corporations set up a program to monitor these international business activities and the flow of investments. This program introduces the term *transnational corporation (TNC)* as a terminology as complementary to the term *multinational corporation (MNC)*. These corporations are defined as organizations consisting of a parent company and its foreign affiliates, whose activity permeates national borders and is organized, integrated, and coordinated by the headquarters operating in the home country (Jaworek & Kuzel, 2015, p. 10). Rapid technological progress, liberalization of trade and capital flows, development of new capital markets, de-regulations and de-monopolization associated with privatization increased internationalization of business activities as well as the number of these companies (Thomsen, 2000, p. 3).

According to Global Top 100 Companies Report of a global professional services and consulting company (PricewaterhouseCoopers [PWC], 2020), market capitalization of the top valuable companies amounted to more than $25 billion dollars, which was around $16 billion in 2015, and around $8,5 billion in 2009. Among the top hundred, all the companies have a market value of more than $100 billion. Just as another example to imagine the magnitude, Fortune Magazine Global 500 Report (2017a) shows that these companies have a total revenue close to $28 trillion dollars. Their assets all over the world worth more than $120 trillion dollars. The headquarters of these companies are in 34 different countries, the most dominant powers are China and USA with having 109 and 123 companies in the list.

In the figures compiled by Global Justice Now (2017), we can grasp the power and economic impact of these companies even better. 69 of the top 100 economic entities and 157 of the top 200 economic entities are corporations not countries. The revenues of top 100 corporations exceed $3 trillion dollars. Top 200 corporations are greater than a quarter of the world`s economic activity, expanding the gap even more from the poorest countries. Overall, these companies have become very important actors in global economy, their impacts and power grow increasingly.

One major result of the global economic structuring is the restructuring of the workforce, emergence of new capitalist classes, and their associated characteristics. There is a need for new colors, names, and concepts to represent different types of workers responsible for different tasks in the global, knowledge economy (Bughin et al., 2018; Morgan, 2014; Störmer et al., 2014; Wickman, 2012). According to Kolzow (2014), there is a differentiation between the knowledge workers as the leading capitalist class, and he proposes to look at the leaders of this group and the characteristics of these leaders to understand the differentiation among the current actors.

2.2.2 Characteristics of the gold-collar workers

This study aims to explore informal learning experiences of corporate executive leaders. Corporate executive leaders are not the only members of gold-collar workers group, but due to their role definitions, tasks, and responsibilities, they are the clear and concrete members of this group. There are limited studies in this area, therefore I will start with reviewing the studies aiming to understand them broadly and then focus on leaders.

Studies about this emergent capitalist class look after the right name to refer them and understand their distinguishing characteristics. Long ago, Reich (1991) starts the

discussion by naming this group as symbolic analysts and defines them as the architects of the global economy. He attributes managerial responsibilities like setting the rules, decision making, generating wealth, framing the desired human capital, and evaluating the results to the symbolic analysts. He does not define symbolic analysts as only the corporate leaders, but considering leader`s responsibilities in corporations, clearly, they form a part of this group. He underlines high levels of education, transferable skills like problem solving, problem identifying and decision making, accumulation of information, flexibility in working style as the distinctive features of symbolic analysts.

Sklair (2001) positions these new actors as a distinct capitalist class, and names them as transnational capitalist class / transnational elites. This class consists of corporate executives, globalizing bureaucrats and politicians, globalizing professionals, and consumerist elites. The emergence of this class is not only related to economic needs but also to the need of materializing capitalist transformation into a globalizing project. In his model, there are three spheres which transform the world into a global capitalist project, and these are economic, political, and cultural-ideological spheres. He provides examples related to these spheres. In the work area example, multinational companies are related with economic sphere, corporate executives are related with political and social spheres shaping the decisions and management dynamics, and consumerism is related with the establishment for cultural-ideological spheres. These spheres must be thought relationally to each other, not as separate units for each unit/area of analysis.

Sklair (2016) says that the most important fraction of the transnational capitalist class is the corporate leaders of the world`s major companies. The corporate executives, derive their power and authority from the multi-national corporations they own, control and / or manage. They re-organize resources, processes, and people of the world for the

aim of increasing private profit and accumulation. This means that these leaders manage and control parts of the global economy by using their power in corporations, and their decisions and actions may possibly have important effects globally and on the local communities in which their corporations are acting in.

Sklair (2005) lists five characteristics to understand the transnational capitalist class. These are clearly relevant for corporate executives, as members of the transnational capitalist class. First the economic interests of transnational capitalist class members are getting globally linked. For him, members of transnational capitalist class live and act in many different countries but have more common interests with each other than they have with people in their own countries. Second, they exercise economic control in the workplace, political control in power and governance relations and cultural-ideological control in everyday life through consumerist discourses and practices. Third in economic, political, and cultural-ideological spheres, transnational capitalist class members have outward-oriented global perspectives. The globalization of capital can only be adequately understood when the ownership and control of economic capital is considered together with ownership and control of other kinds of capital, which are political, organizational, cultural and knowledge. Here, the transnational capitalist class is characterized by the ownership and control of major means of production, distribution and exchange through ownership and control of not only money, the economic capital, but also other capitals. He gives the example of global marketing and sales to explain the second and third characteristics. Irrespective of how executives prefer to live their own lives, they use the ideological, global rationale of the system as a whole and communicate / present the capitals in a standardized way, in the local marketing and sales activities. Fourth, they have similar lifestyles, educational

background, consumption habits and agenda items. Finally, they present an image of themselves as citizens of the world.

In the last two decades, some scholars prefer to use gold-collar workers term consistently for referring to either the distinctly evolving group out of the white-collar workers towards the upper axis or as an alternative to represent some of the few knowledge workers as the new transnational actors of global economic structuring (Holland et al., 2002; Işığıçok, 2005; Kolzow, 2014; Pardue & Morgan, 2008; Wonacott, 2007; Wood, 2001; Yüksel, 2010; Yılmaz & Çetin, 2008; Zaim & Koçak, 2010; Zeybek, 2006). Kolzow (2014) states that knowledge workers are already the leading class of knowledge society and now forming majority of the multinational organizations, and it would be too simplistic to define and understand them as one single type. There is also differentiation among them, one example is the differences between knowledge workers executing the job and their leaders with the responsibility of leading knowledge workers. Although the term gold-collar worker is not widely used in the literature, and therefore it is still not easy to define a concrete group of people concerning gold-collar workers, for these scholars the color gold and the term gold-collar are highly representative of the characteristics differentiating these workers from the rest of their groups.

The term gold collar worker is first presented by Kelley in 1985. He uses the term to describe the workers who have been traditionally classified as white-collar workers but forming a small subgroup who are differentiating from the rest of white-collar workers through their jobs, performances, and characteristics. Kelley (1985) emphasizes gold-collar workers as a new and distinct type of workers group due to their professional profiles featuring with potential to take peak performance jobs, advanced educational degrees, higher incomes, non-repetitive responsibilities, value contributions

to the organizations through materializing new information into practice and increased flexibility and level of independence. He defines them as the brainpowers of organizations and the global economic structure. As examples, Kelley (1985) describes professionals who are working in high ranking, crucial roles for business success and continuity like higher level executives, high expertise roles in engineering, medicine, law, scientific research, and finance areas as the gold-collar workers. These workers may be at managerial roles or not.

For him, these people are differentiated by the professional profiles that require advanced educational degrees, continuity of learning, flexibility, a non-repetitive performance, and high level of independence. Kelley (1985) highlights abilities like vision, strategy setting, problem-solving, problem-identifying, creativity, intelligence, imagination, entrepreneurship, innovation, decision making and execution as the major distinctions of this group (p.11). These distinctions can be seen through the daily life of the gold-collar worker; how s/he defines oneself, delivers the role and executes the responsibilities. This means that although features like high income, advanced educational degree, elevated hierarchical positions are indicators to identify the gold collar worker, a deep understanding about the essence and content of the gold collar job and explanations about sense of self are also required. This is to say that it is also the job itself and the senses of these individuals that help us to recognize this worker group.

Işığıçok (2005) defines gold-collar workers as the brains of companies and says that their productivity and effectiveness are vital since they create the main comparative advantage, information, for the global competition. They have intense relation with information and innovation as the distinguishing feature of both the job and the individual. For Castells and Hall (2014), the most valuable activities of global are

information and innovation generation, and these are assigned to these new actors. Gold-collar workers generate information and transform these into actions by innovating, planning, executing, quantifying results, solving problems, and evaluating the outputs. Zeybek (2006) defines gold-collar workers as "autonomous, responsible, highly skilled workers with upgraded abilities in interpersonal communication, leadership, and motivation" (p.2). He says that these workers of the last few decades have higher degree of autonomy, intensified relations with global networks, and control over the product and production. They are like entrepreneurs within the companies, the decision makers who are mostly responsible for their own performance. For him, major responsibilities of gold collar workers in the companies are innovation, strategic planning, information generation and decision making. These are hidden in the daily activities of the gold collar worker. He also underlines that statistical data and demographics prepared on labor do not cover information about the content of the job. Therefore, one cannot concretize the gold collar worker by looking at these. Zeybek (2006) says that these individuals can only be identified and understood through their own sense of identity. Their own explanations, motivations, images, and relations to global flows should be explored to understand this distinct work group.

For grasping the sense of identity, broader definition of gold-collar worker is required. Although the term gold collar worker indicates one`s economic capital, it is also the social and cultural capital one has (Zeybek, 2006). In Weberian terms (Weber, 1968), class includes material conditions of a group relying on economic chances but also the identity of that group shaped around common interests, expectations, trends, and so on. Bourdieu (1984) states that to define a class and understand the agents, it is not enough to regard one`s position in relation to production means, occupation, and income

so to say economic capital but also the social, cultural, and symbolic capitals. The groups with different conditions mostly are differentiated through the total volume of capital, including all capitals. According to him:

> Economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and social capital, made up of social obligations which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241).

Relying on Bourdieu`s understanding of class, different scholars also highlight that differentiation and being a group are also about knowledge, information, behaviors, attitudes, capabilities, perspectives, preferences, expectations of oneself and of others, similar understanding of problems, and ideas about the future (Hooks, 2009; Nesbit, 2006; Wright, 2008). Borrowing from this, some scholars highlight distinctive features of gold-collar workers and leaders building their different types of capitals.

Likely, Beechler and Javidan (2007) complete a literature review and conclude that the list of effective leadership competencies is practically endless, to the point in which they become useless to respond complexity and challenges of global economy. Instead, they define intellectual capital, psychological capital, and social capital as components of leadership. Intellectual capital refers to the knowledge and understanding of global business, cognitive complexity, and cultural acumen. Psychological capital is composed of a positive psychological profile (i.e., self-confidence, optimism and hope and resilience), cosmopolitanism (e.g., respect for other cultures, openness and sensitivity, flexibility) and a passion for cross-cultural encounters. They define three types of social capital: structural, relational, and cognitive. These involve participation

to social networks, established relationships in those networks and shared meanings derived from them. These capitals mediate the leader identity, style, and mindset.

Forming an important part of their social capital, connection to global networks is highlighted as the distinctive feature of gold-collar workers (Pardue & Morgan, 2008; Yüksel, 2010). Castells (2004) describes that networks are different units of analysis to which all the dominant social groups, territories and functions in each country are connected to. He says that these networks have binary logic regarding in / out positions. The distance within the network is zero and all in the network is useful, valuable, and necessary for the existence of the network. The distance between those in the network and outside the network are infinite, in other words what is not in the network does not exist from the network`s perspective. This binary logic ensures accessing to information, knowledge, and lessons of other members in the networks through being a part of it.

For the corporate leaders, networks enable quick and easy access to information and innovation, and therefore central to productivity, power, execution, and competition (Hardt & Negri, 2007). Gold collar workers have some specific capabilities, information, different forms of capitals and motivations that make them compatible in being and staying as part of these networks. As Sklair (2016) demonstrates corporate leaders have both global and local contacts with influential people from business world, politics, media, universities, associations and so on. These people have the information, impact, and power over important decisions. Zeybek (2006) defines this as gold-collar worker`s desire of inclusion and need to the global flows (p.9). He adds that this does not mean that all gold-collar workers have global activities, or international responsibilities but they are distinguished with their potential and capabilities to do so. Being and staying a member of global networks are among the distinguishing characteristics of them.

Jensen (2008) equalizes today`s leadership with global leadership and says that it has emerged as a response to the structural crisis of 1980s. Global leaders emerge to eliminate the constraints created by the nation-state over MNCs. They strengthen the harmonization of economic policies across the world including the labor market and capital accumulation, therefore mobility and decentralization in decision making are shaping their daily and annual routines (Carroll et al., 2010; Osland, Taylor, & Mendhall, 2009). In addition to economic needs and dynamics enabling global integration around the world, Zheng, Yang, and McLean (2010) underline that the culture of multinational companies contributes to the formation of global leadership. This means that these companies, according to their needs, are setting the expectations out of leaders in terms of capabilities, cognitive abilities, mindsets, leadership values, commitment, and motivations. Thus, the adjective of global to describe leaders involve not only the structural or spatial scope of management, but also the set of characteristics and approaches expected from the leaders.

Djodat and zu Knyphausen-Aufseß (2017) define contemporary multi-national companies as transnational spaces and inter organizational networks. These companies want to demonstrate similar values, promote similar behaviors, ask for similar capabilities and knowledge, organized in similar ways, and have similar processes. Horizontal organizational structures, usage of global information management systems, focus on knowledge management, existence of talent management programs, learning opportunities, global employment chances and assignments, projects, individual reward systems, existence of progressive career paths, innovation and suggestion platforms are among the examples of this similarity.

This similarity is also valid for the leadership values, mindset, and expectations in terms of leadership styles. Dirlik (2004) discusses the role of corporate leaders in this framework. He says that the role of leaders is to create 'the first worlds within the third' meaning that both for the multinational companies they work for and the local enterprises they are leading in; these leaders shift the decision-making process from central to the local. They act as the representatives of the global culture in the local, establish the links, homogenize standards, and supervise. Sklair (2001) says that this is the standardization of local through using the global connectivity.

Montgomery and Arensdorf (2012) underline that having a global mindset, a set of capabilities and attitudes that support execution of international business like the talent for global networking, the ability to build effective international teams and to inspire these teams to take steps forward, and to transform the organization are features expected from corporate leaders. Dotlich, Cairo, and Rhinesmith (2009) study corporate leaders in multinational companies and based on a former discussion of Rhinesmith (1993), they discuss twenty-four capabilities that are important to fulfill a corporate leadership role today. They categorize these capabilities into three areas: strategy and structure, corporate culture, and people. Furthermore, they even simplify these areas and focus on the global mindset as the basis of all these, which they describe as making decisions with increasing reference points. Global mindset consists of intellectual intelligence and global emotional intelligence. Intellectual intelligence is related with business acumen and paradox management. Global emotional intelligence consists of cultural self-awareness, cultural adjustment, cross-cultural understanding, and cross-cultural effectiveness. Corporate leaders will be dealing with paradoxes like the tension between global and local, stability and change, work versus family, individual versus

team and so on. These paradoxes will always be present in the business and for managing these, the leaders must develop themselves in identifying the competing forces of the paradox, creating a paradox management grid to show the positive and negative forces of competing forces, optimizing the responsibility by seeking win-win solutions, including contradictions in one`s thinking by meeting with stakeholders likely to have opposing views, and creating paradox alarm metrics that sound when negative reactions arise. These are shaping the role descriptions, expectations from and responsibilities of the corporate leaders today.

Lane, Maznevski, Mendenhall, and McNett (2009) say that the businesses are complex and troubled with disorienting challenges. There is multiplicity covering various dimensions, interdependence involving many different stakeholders and systems, ambiguity in understanding causal relations and identifying appropriate actions and goals, and flux in terms of quick changes, transitioning systems, shifting values and patterns of organizational structure and behavior. The authors say that the corporate leaders are expected to respond this complexity through managing for major processes and be strong in capabilities required for these processes: collaborating, discovering, architecting, and system thinking. Collaborating process is relating and working with others through flexibility, trust, respect, and accountability. Discovering process is leading transformations by seeing and acting in new ways while creating new knowledge and actions. Architecting process is the designing the steps of alignment, balance, and synchronization of organizational behaviors in a mindful way. System thinking process is seeing the interrelationships among components and levels in the complex system and anticipating consequences of changes in and to the system.

Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2003) discuss social and cultural capitals of the leaders from a lifestyle and global connectivity perspective. They name leaders as cosmocrats and underline that mobility and connectivity as integral elements of their lifestyles related to leadership. Cosmocrats are the people who are constantly 'on the move and on the make' while challenging the comfort zones and routines of the local. They are internationally loyal and usage of communication tools and traveling itself are their routine habits to stay connected. These fulfill two essential requirements of the cosmocrats, being connected to and getting information from each other.

Ojala (2017) highlights that there is a cultural element in this connectivity. She says that executive leaders should be viewed as a club. The metaphor of club implies a network of informal connections, similar lifestyles and loops of information which are actively maintained through the contributions of club members. She says that "individuals do not necessarily have to know all other members in the club, but when two of them meet, they are supposed to recognize and treat each other as peers" (p.30). This club-like nature in their relations implies the existence of informal rules of admission, a homogenizing cultural and ideological impact on its members, sharing of certain worldviews, ideas, values, and interests. Various business associations, clubs, conferences, meetings, seminars, usage of communication tools and even social media accounts create spaces of interaction and offer executive leaders to recognize members of their clubs and be recognized by others in the club. This is to say that just 'being' in some spaces of interaction means being a part of and acceptance of this culture.

There are also Turkish scholars discussing executive leaders from the perspective of lifestyle and identity. Öncü (1999) suggests that executive leaders of the MNCs corporations are a part of global business culture and this does not only mean working

through computers, speaking English, sitting in the VIP lounges but also includes wearing similar clothes, reading certain magazines and newspapers, laughing at the same jokes, watching similar things, and overall having the same lifestyle. She updates the findings of this research and adds taking part in the same social media platforms, following similar accounts in social media and, participating to the same conferences and learning events, as indicators of shared identity since these contribute to the formation of values, setting the priorities and building self-perceptions (Öncü, 2011).

Şener (2007) conducts interviews with the corporate leaders of a multinational corporation located in Istanbul and tries to explore cultural practices, characteristics, lifestyles, and mindsets of these leaders. Although these leaders are not positioned at one of the centers where global capitalism is led, she highlights that these leaders also share similar lifestyles, characteristics, ideologies, aspirations and overall, the identities with their counterparts positioned at the centers. In the research, executive leaders in the Istanbul branch define themselves primarily as world citizens highlighting their global mindset and connectivity. They feature the capabilities, skills, and relations for being the members of a global group instead of local ones. They all highlight that they travel a lot for both business and holiday purposes. This mobility is the mean to stay connected with their peers who are like them although they are living in different parts of the world.

2.2.3 Leadership models and styles

Burns (1978) attempts to understand historical foundations of leadership and concludes that “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p.2). Even though there are a lot of contributions; Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, and

Osland (2012) state that the field “continues to lack a specific, rigorous and widely accepted definition of the construct” and an inclusive model of all aspects of leadership in today’s world (p.3). Different models and styles of leadership provide different explanations and perspectives about leadership, and all these contribute positively to understand the phenomenon. In general, these models and styles classify values, traits, capabilities, behaviors, beliefs, perspectives and even experiences of leaders and help us to understand who they are, how they lead and how they want to lead. These shed light on how leaders see and define themselves, what they think and believe, how they prefer to behave, what they commit, how they see themselves as successful and effective, what capabilities they think they need, and consequently what they want to learn. As highlighted in the former part, organizational culture and learning approach in the organization are highly relevant with leadership. These, in relation to each other, moderate and lead the way people perceive learning, and how it occurs within the organization. Therefore, in this part, I will briefly review some of the featuring leadership styles that are discussed to be relevant for today, their significance, historical evolvement, and relation to learning.

Leadership models and styles emerge in relation to evolvement of historical aspects, but this does not mean that the old ones fade away when new ones arise. All these models and styles still apply in different companies, organizational contexts, countries and even in the same leader facing different challenges and experiences (Petriglieri, 2020). Cullen, Palus, and Appaneal (2014) underline that in a certain moment of time, there are different and numerous leadership models and styles on live meaning that they exist simultaneously and form the leadership.

Today’s globalized dynamics and changing organizations are adding different layers and complexities to leadership while making the phenomenon even harder to grasp. So, awareness about the past models and their evolvement provides elements to generate better understanding of leadership and related leadership styles today. Since this study targets leaders of today, I will start with the brief information about some featuring former leadership models and how they have evolved to respond today`s leadership. Later in this part, I will focus on the latest developments affecting leadership and newly emergent models and styles.

Leading in the twenty-first century is different from leading in the twentieth century. The 21st Century has brought some challenges for humans like pollution, energy resilience, pandemics, species extinction, food resilience, waste disposal, poverty reduction, water shortages, climate change, natural disasters, accelerated digitalization, global economy, and global terrorism (Barrett, 2014). The capabilities, behaviors and characteristics required to respond these challenges, to manage the continuous crisis and to transform organizations in these conditions are also changing (Prewitt, Weil, & McClure, 2011). Kolzow (2014) discusses that modern organization is becoming increasingly knowledge-based, and almost every employee is a knowledge worker who has a specific set of skills and expertise, all of which are subject to continual upgrading. How they are led, how they set the rules of management and what they demand from leadership and what the characteristics of these leaders are important questions to understand leadership. He adds that information is now shared and accessed by everyone in the organization. This eliminates the differences between the leaders as decision makers and the employees as executors. The strategy is places into the hands of everyone in the organization, and the power is found at every level in the organization.

In this context, what kind of leadership is expected is an increasingly important question. The challenges of 21st century, the challenges of global economy, and changes in the organization and the workforce require a fundamental transformation of leadership because the leadership models, which focused on the leader as an individual and worked in the past, are not enough to face the current situation (Taylor, 2013).

Employees and their expectations from the leaders have also changed— they no longer tolerate the classic command and control leadership style of the previous century. They are not impressed by charismatic leaders whose leadership is based primarily on personal ego and individual trait (Cullen et al., 2014). Instead of focusing on the leader as an individual, new pillars to grasp leadership practices through their roles in the organizations, how they adapt and transform their organizations, how they related with others, from which sources they learn, their leadership values and capabilities for not only surviving but also thriving in today`s environments are needed to be added in the new leadership paradigm (Barrett, 2014; Mucharraz, 2016; Wilson, 2017).

Taylor (2013) summarizes the evolvement of leadership models into autocratic forms, transitional forms, and participative forms. In autocratic forms, absolute authority and fear as a control mechanism were dominant. These leadership forms were predominant starting by the medieval kingdoms. When nations emerged, bureaucratic leadership appeared and division of labor, hierarchy, rules, and work were regulated by contracts (Taylor, 2013, p. 4). The Great Man Theory was popular in this context and the assumption was that great leaders are born with a set of traits, not made. As research and study of traits and behaviors progressed, this theoretical thought got some critiques which led to the evolvement of traits theories and the emergence of behavioral models (Russell, 2011). Although there are some criticisms against trait-based theories

regarding its insufficiency to explain leadership today, trait-based leadership models are still valuable in understanding some daily practices and leadership functions such as planning, organizing, directing, and controlling, and exploring how leaders behave and develop competencies (Barrett, 2014; Manyena, 2006; Verawati & Hartono, 2020).

To find the right ones that are important in leading and the combination of these common among leaders; scholars search for personality, cognitive and interpersonal traits and behaviors that are positively correlated with success of the leaders (Carleton, Barling, & Trivisonno, 2018). Emotional intelligence is highlighted as a common behavior and trait in relation to performance and as effective in building engagement of the followers in the organizations (Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2018). Peterson, Walumbwa, Byron, and Myrowitz (2009) find that positive psychological traits such as hope, optimism, and resiliency were highly related with CEO`s change leadership ratings that impact the company`s overall performance. Dries and Pepermans (2012) review the literature between 1986 – 2010 with this lens and develop a model of leadership potential consisting of some traits and behaviors. They define learning agility, results orientation, commitment, being analytical, and sensitivity as important traits and behaviors as part of leadership potential required to be successful today. Manyena (2006) also discusses that the leadership models that focus on traits and behaviors are still relevant in the new global context, but she highlights that new traits like adaptability, self-awareness, vision, coaching ability, collaboration, and resilience to address the complex problems should be added to the picture.

Cognitive-behavioral models in leadership is receiving increased attention. In this approach, leaders' behaviors are analyzed in relation to, and as results of their mental models, how they perceive themselves and how these perceptions affect their

leadership styles (Bass & Bass, 2008; van Knippenberg et al., 2005). Judge and Bono (2001) say that leaders have fundamental beliefs about themselves, others, and their environment. These cognitive maps influence all appraisals, expectancies, and behavioral scrips and shape leadership tendencies and behaviors. These may vary over time and between different circumstances for one leader, as the leader has gone through different experiences. According to authors, these cognitive maps and evaluations determine leader`s reaction on a continuum of activity-passivity, getting a reactive or a proactive way of leading, obtaining a transactional or transformational leadership style. Dóci, Stouten, and Hofmans (2015) give the example that if a person believes that the world is an unfair place, s/he may perceive any criticism as hostile and react back.

One major characteristic distinguishing the emergent leader group is discussed as growth mindset by different scholars (Caniëls, Semeijn, & Renders, 2018; Lee & Jang, 2018). Growth mindset is a belief that one can improve abilities and intelligence through experience and effort while fixed mindset is a belief that one cannot change through effort because the ability or intelligence is fixed (Dweck, 2006). Growth mindset attributes success to learning since in its existence, people are not afraid of making mistakes, but acting with the belief that if they pay more effort to practice, and master the new learning opportunity, than they will succeed. It is also related with one`s own awareness about strengths and weaknesses and exerting their leadership to integrate their strengths to grow as leaders and to transform their organizations, and the people. Differences in growth mindset impact one`s decisions and actions as a leader, how one builds his/her leader identity and decides on the style. The leaders with growth mindset make long-term goals, devote efforts without giving in to obstacles and failures, try until the achievement and has optimism and hope as distinct characteristics (Lee, 2018).

Self-identity is defined as an ever-changing construct that represents the core beliefs individuals hold about themselves in personal, relational, and collective terms. Lord and Hall (2005) define self-identity as a combination of current and future cognitions about self. The future selves include the possible and / or desired ones that interact with one another to create a working self-concept appropriate for different times, places, and contexts. These are beliefs and cognitive generalizations that one hold about oneself. They are built on past experiences and used as organizing filters to process information about the self, to determine whether the new information is relevant and useful. These form cognitive maps to interpret events, respond to problems and opportunities, and make sense of the world. One`s self-concept as a leader is important in building the leadership skills, knowledge and style while becoming a part of self-identity. Leader's self-identity evolves over time in relation to how the individual perceives oneself as a leader (Hertneky, 2008). Furthermore, how subordinates think about the leader and how leader perceives these thoughts are also linked to leader`s self-identity and performance (Dinh et al., 2014; van Quaquebeke & van Knippenberg, 2012). Dóci et al. (2015) state that leader's self-identity develops parallel to experiences, and milestones one has gone through the leadership years. Problems, challenges, failures, and successes all inform the elements of self-identity, and these create cognitive maps that lead usage and application of information in possible future events. In any leadership situation entered, leaders assess their own capacities to cope with the task and the interpersonal demands of the situation, the competence and willingness of their subordinates to perform their tasks and the benevolence, fairness, and dangerousness of the context. Based on the results of these evaluations, they engage in each leadership behavior. In a broader and consistent context, this determines the functional and

desirable leadership style. As an example, Klann (2003) say that the anxiety, insecurity, and confusion generated by a crisis make the leader to think beyond the scope of his/her work and comfort zone in business. Once this happens, the deepest strengths and weaknesses of the leader are tested. The leader either stays calm and acts effectively or gets lost through stress and acts ineffectively. This event affects the leader's self-awareness, self-regulation, self-confidence, and self-esteem while leading to a different self-identity after the crisis is over. For Koh, Yeo, and Hung (2015), it is the risk taking that makes the same thing while expanding the cognitive abilities and changing the beliefs / cognitive maps. Taking the risk is evaluating alternatives, thinking about scenarios and alternatives, making an informed choice as possible, and later reflecting on the outcomes. This intellectual process contributes one`s self-identity as a leader by elevating the believes in high achievement and strong leadership.

The cognitive-behavioral models of leadership have an intensified relation with transformative learning. According to Johnson (2008), transformative learning is directed at changing the meaning structure, or the mental model itself. The outcome of transformative learning is a different mental model, a new way of looking at self, others, and environment. Therefore, he suggests focusing more on the disorienting events like challenging assignments, feedback, and reflection as sources of executive development. Based on cognitive-behavioral models, there is an increasing emphasis on building self-awareness to contribute to the formation of leader`s self-identity and to increase the quality of leader development (Zes & Landis, 2013). Therefore, development programs support leaders to cultivate self-awareness through executive coaching, 360-degree feedback processes, personality assessments, peer reviews and so on. Mirvis and Ayas (2003) state that there is also story-telling and personal reflection as a more non-

structured means to promote self-awareness. These exercises all make the leaders more self-aware about the motivations and the skills, strengths, and weaknesses. While a leader focuses to understand cognitive maps and to build self-awareness, s/he also bridges changes on both self as a leader and the organization because it is common for the cognitive leaders to take actions for both individual development and towards organizational change, after reflection or an awareness gained about self-identity.

By the middle of the 20th Century, there was first the post war socio-political and economic conditions, and then accelerating effects of globalization. In these conditions, transitional / contingent forms of leadership come forward which focus on the continuous change of leadership style to respond these challenges and accompanying organizational changes required (Taylor, 2013). This new leadership approach involves the thought that there is no right way to lead because the internal and external factors and forces of the context require the leader to respond and to adapt (Russell, 2011). Giving the attention to how contextual and situational factors influence the leader, leadership and the outcomes, contingent leadership theory focuses on matching the leadership style according to the right context and situational leadership theory on adapting the leadership style to the situation at hand (Day & Antonakis, 2012; Hiller, DeChurch, Murase, & Doty, 2011). Overall, they both highlight the requirement for change and adaptability (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Referring to this fluency, Blanchard (2018) discusses that situational leadership, and the adaptation capacity of the leader to change is the core solution for today. Based on the complexity of the tasks, the developmental levels of the subordinate, and the conditions which the leader is in; the leader adapts his or her vision and responses, builds energizing systems and structures that make it easy for the subordinates to get

things done and provide leadership that is focused on empowering and developing others as opposed to self-serving one. In other words, if the leader is working with experienced people and delivering a very complex project, then his / her attitudes and approaches change accordingly. Coaching, sharing information, engaging the followers in the decisions, and sharing the power with them are the right adaptations to respond in this situation. If the leader is working with inexperienced people, then teaching and ongoing learning should be the focus of the leader meaning that the leader will mostly take the decisions on his / her own and, take the responsibility to deliver more complex tasks.

Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz, Laur, and Schley (2009) describe being adaptive as creating the capacity for adults to shape the future they desire, both individually and collectively. This consistent requirement for building the adaptive capacity open the way to discuss adaptive leadership as a distinct, featuring form of leadership that is highly related with learning. Relying on the contingency leadership theories, Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) develop the adaptive leadership as a model, which is majorly oriented toward the engagement of crisis and complex challenges that do not have conventional solutions, and which are new for the people facing them. They define these challenges as adaptive challenges. Opposite to the technical challenges, adaptive challenges have no clear problem definition and cannot be resolved using existing methods, tools, and the exercise of authority. Facing and managing these challenges require ongoing learnings, new ways of knowing, doing and being.

Some scholars underline adaptation as the learning itself, for the leader and for all who are involved into the process. Adaptive leaders are both the continuous learners themselves and the facilitators who enable other learners to discover and take responsibility for their situation (Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013; Northouse, 2019;

Senge et al., 2009; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). Northouse (2019) says the role of the adaptive leader is assessing the current situation by viewing patterns from a distance, developing a perspective of the environment, and separating the adaptive challenges from the technical ones, and providing direction, protection, and development to the subordinates. As leader becomes aware of the problem they face, then they work to change themselves, to learn and to mobilize people around to tackle and to make necessary adaptations in the direction of their goals. They help the subordinates to raise problems themselves, to question, to unlearn outmoded and habituated ways, and to find alternative solutions themselves. Zimmerman (2012) underlines that previous learnings on how to deal with chaos, complexity and pressure make the leader adaptive. They link these professional experiences to learnings which are used in the moment of decision making and adaptation. For him, adaptive leadership is a continuous process that involves learning from the experience, reflecting, and developing a mindset on it and relate it to possible outcomes in potential future situations. Learning promotes resilience and flexibility of the leader, help him/her to build capacity to adapt when it is needed.

Nicolaides and McCallum (2013) say that adaptive leadership require transformative learning and inquiry in action. They define single loop learning as the level of learning and behavioral adaptation that brings effective performance and some solutions to current problems. The double loop learning in the professional context is knowing what the right goals are, and what the underlying models and assumptions of set strategies are. Triple loop learning is at the level of being, using all the learnings and experiences willingly and consciously to reshape the mindsets, intentions, purposes, and motives. This is where transformative learning occurs, and volitional freedom stands

(see Figure 5). The authors say that the single and double loop learnings are not enough for leaders to adapt and to thrive, instead they need to inquire triple loop learning.

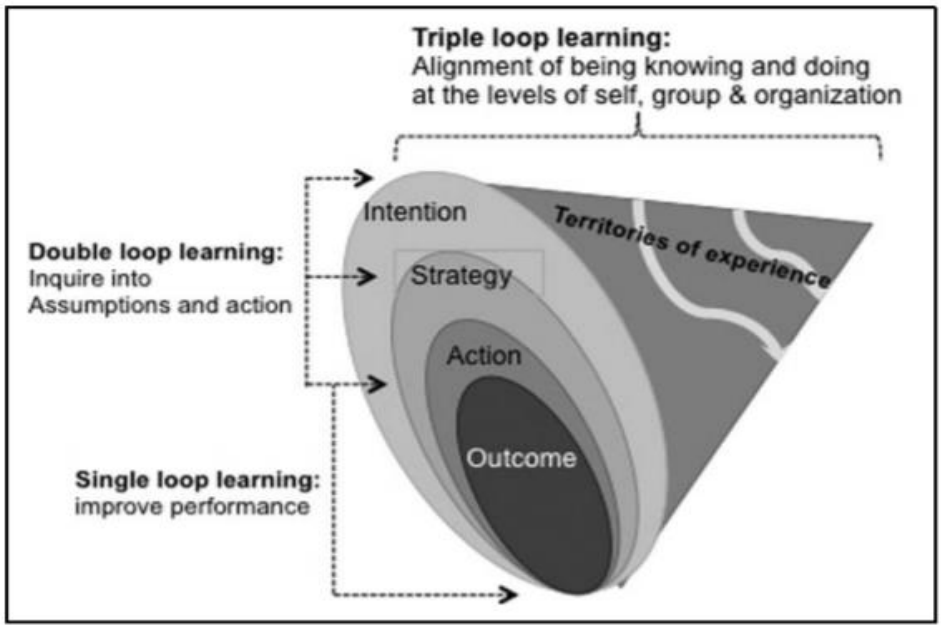


Figure 5. Triple loop learning
Source: Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013, p. 252

Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) focus on the role of the adaptive leader through changes, and state that the only appropriate course of action for the leader is never stop learning as an individual. For them, the leader is also responsible for ensuring the learning within the organization since this is critical for organizational survival (p.299).

Relying on Piaget`s (1971) human development approach, Glover, Friedman, and Jones (2002) also define four adaptive leadership principles for global leaders operating in multinational companies. These principles involved cultural competency, knowledge acquisition and use, creating synergy from diversity and holistic vision that provides a non-prescriptive, culturally relative guide for global contexts. First, cultural competency comprises a set of knowledge and skills about culture, how to observe it, how to analyze and measure it, and how to change it. They must adapt to many local contexts while

maintaining their global network. Second, adaptive leaders need to be aware of what their organizations know and what they need to learn. To accomplish learning, they constantly verify and validate what they know, both the explicit and tacit knowledge, to better understand that environment and to anticipate change. Third, an adaptive leader can create synergy from diversity. This begins by avoiding the tyranny of "OR" and gaining the synergic combination of "AND". Value is added when all existing elements are combined. Fourth, adaptive vision is needed for adaptive leadership. Adaptive leaders must be able to scan their horizons and to think beyond the obvious, beyond what is known about their world. This vision involves the ability to visualize and consider all viable options before proceeding, including scenarios anticipating future conditions and situations while making choices today. Leaders learn these principles through experiences and with the motivation to be successful and apply them to create change. Confirming that House, Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, and Sully de Luque (2014) highlight that adaptive leadership is even more important for the global world today. The leader manages the organizational culture while ensuring the effective execution of international business goals in the local. In doing this, the leader engages in the process of influencing both local and global communities to work towards shared visions, changes, and common goals. S/he works with multiple communities from different cultural backgrounds and complexities, involving multiple stakeholders and sources of authorities. These are all distinct areas that require adaptation from the leader.

Zhang, Jia, and Gu (2012) state that in the 21st century, crisis and leadership are two coordinates that are closely and directly correlated. The financial crisis at the end of the 20th century, corporate scandals, climate problems, wars, technology, and fast dynamics frequently leading to different crisis challenged the prevailing paradigms on

leadership. Crisis is usually characterized by the law of chaos, non-predictability, unusual circumstances, limited time for solution development, the need for immediate action, lack of definite and linear solutions and limited resources (Mumford, Watts, & Partlow, 2015). As a result, the ability to lead effectively before, during and after a crisis is more than a significant responsibility, it is turning into the new leadership context itself (Barton, Grant, & Horn, 2012). In line with that, Baker, Irwin, and Matthews (2020) highlight that the periods of turmoil are no longer exceptional in today's rapidly changing world, but they are the rule now[4]. Antonacopoulou (2018) says that these new permanent conditions can be summarized with the acronym VUCA. This means that today`s context is vulnerable, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

Taylor (2013) states that extreme conditions of crisis and the new contextual factors are the major reasons that led to the emergence of participative leadership styles like integrative, transformational, collaborative, and visionary. The leader alone cannot resolve the crisis but must develop a solution that incorporates others who are also under stress from the same situation, positively influence the subordinates, ensure their participation and commitment, and share both power and responsibility with them towards improving individual and organizational performance.

According to Barrett (2014), these are shifts from the 'I to We'. The leader distributes the authority, power and decision making to all key stakeholders across multiple systems and geographies. The root of this participative model is that the leader

[4] Institute for Crisis Management (2018) defines any issue, problem or disruption which triggers negative stakeholder reactions that can impact the organization`s reputation, business, and financial strength as a crisis. The report on crises present 792,336 business crisis cases tracked, and many of them belong to world`s best-known brands. 67% of these cases were related to smoldering problems that could have been prevented or mitigated if management addressed them sooner. Mismanagement, leadership decisions and actions were identified as the major reason for most of these crises, accounting for 22% of the total.

tries to create a sense of engagement and belonging so that all subordinates will be part of the effectiveness, solutions, decision making and operations. This is not limited to the company but also involves influencing other related stakeholders like external decision makers, clients, professional associations, other leaders, and colleagues in the affiliates located in other countries. And the role of the leader is discussed as to coordinate these relations, to identify the need for change, to gain the agreement and commitment of others, to create a vision that guides transformation and to realize it (Barrett, 2014; Wilson, 2017). Wang and Zhu (2010) underline that therefore these leaders are frequently named as transformational leaders in the literature and demonstrate that transformational leadership style has its benefits today over other leadership[5].

Powell (2007) highlights that transformational leadership and learning, particularly transformative learning, are symbiotic. The capabilities of a transformational leader are embedded within the journey of learning, transformation, and individuation. Transformational leader first creates awareness about the points that require change, while urging people out of status quo towards openness and action. Second step is to create a vision by involving different subordinates' views. Third step is to realize this vision by building structures and processes. Defining workplace as a professional learning community, Wiener (2007) states that the leader is both a learner and a contributor for a work environment that emphasizes reflective dialogue and learning. Likely Bass and Riggio (2006), highlight that transformational leaders focus to empower

[5] Based on 117 independent samples over 113 studies, Wang, and Zhu (2010) complete a metanalytic study focusing on how transformational leadership is related to individual-level follower and organization performance. They demonstrate that transformational leadership is positively related to performance in both individual and organizational level, particularly in hard times. Also, in a simple Google Scholar search for 2010-2020 period, 175.000 yield for transformational leadership while the result is 90.000 for 2000-2010 period. This also demonstrates that it takes increasing attention today.

their subordinates by engaging them in an idealized influence, providing inspirational motivation, triggering intellectual stimulation, and learning, and individually taking their development needs into consideration. While focusing on these, the leader also learns to become better leaders. Avolio and Gardner (2005) highlight that transformational leader`s self-awareness and organizational awareness deepen and broaden a continuous learning process and a growth mindset situated in the workplace towards improving individual and collective performance. The leader is asked to analyze organization`s need for change, to understand one`s own and subordinates` strengths and weaknesses, and to focus on to improve them, and to develop, empower and motivate subordinates into their full potential. The leader provides an attractive vision for the future, motivates the subordinates for performance and encourages them to learn further, to find innovative ideas and solutions to replace the existing ones (Pradhan & Jena, 2019).

2.2.4 Relations to education and learning

Some scholars underline that education and learning have a great significance in understanding who gold collar workers are and try to analyze this relation in depth. For some of these scholars, the educational background determines the accumulated social and cultural capitals, the lifestyles, and preferences, perceiving learning as a continuous activity and is related with the identity formation of this group.

Power (2000) highlights that educational pathways are related with individual factors and influence directly occupational locations and further learning; some schools feed a greater proportion of students into high-status universities and these universities into high-status leadership roles. In terms of occupation, the status of university influences the choice of a managerial career path and contributes to horizontal

differentiation of middle classes. Likely, Adolph (2013) highlights that many of the executive leaders have similar educational backgrounds and are graduates of reputable universities with Western values. This culture is shaped mostly by American culture and values, and homogenizes the outlook, behaviors, and perspectives of leaders globally.

There are some scholars who investigate the gold-collar worker relations to education in terms of preferences and life choices. Freeland (2014) says that the executive leaders are highly aware of the power coming from their educational background, continuous relations with learning and having accumulated social and cultural capitals for their roles and therefore they increasingly educate their children abroad, particularly in cities with a reputation for hosting international communities (p.52). In parallel, they prefer to live and work in these cities while gaining the international working experience that are vital for their roles and to excel in leadership.

Rose (1998) attempts to understand education and learning as differentiating features of corporate leaders. He underlines that through globalized education and curriculum, leaders internalize and spread the values, perspectives, and behaviors of personal development as being in their best interest. Since they are "both active and calculating selves who evaluate about themselves and act upon themselves to better themselves" (p.154); they continuously gain new knowledge and information, learn and attempt to maximize their potential for becoming more productive and efficient leaders.

Wood (2001) questions that although all white-collar workers have educational degrees from universities and high skills, not each of them becomes a gold-collar worker. The answer for this question is the differentiating characteristics of gold-collar workers with learning, the ability and agility to maintain the skills base relevant through planning their own learning paths, taking self-development actions, and consequently

staying well-connected to their networks. Since gold collar workers exchange information for information within their networks, learning is key to become and to stay as part of this group. As confirmed by Castells (1998), high level leaders improve and re-program themselves according to the endlessly changing tasks of the production process and, to cope with unpredictable, chaotic, often hostile environment of global economy. Continuous learning is part of their values, behaviors and perspectives which contribute apparently to who they are.

In highly demanding and competitive working conditions, continuous learning is now presented as a crucial requirement for success and therefore took its place as part of organizational strategies. Learning becomes a possession that can be transformed directly into materialized results, like being a part of a network, and as something totally under the control and responsibility of the individual. Higher social status and mobility are assumed to be the direct result of learning, emphasized as 'self-development'. Better performance in work life, and in leadership, are exclusively associated with gaining new attitudes, behaviors, and strategies or in other words, by changing and developing oneself continuously. Those leaders who are interested in being successful, efficient, and happy need to keep themselves updated, creating better versions of themselves, and focusing on new learnings through various activities and methods presented by the organization (Reichard & Johnson, 2011).

Holland et al. (2002) explore how gold-collar workers relate to learning, and what learning means for them. They try to understand this relation from the perspective of organizational psychology, attraction, and engagement. First, learning is defined as a within group dynamic that relate gold collar workers, particularly the leaders, to each other. Their interests are globally linked to each other rather than exclusively national,

local, or corporal. This new environment more than ever requires flexible and skilled workers circulating in different locations and establishing the links and homogenizing standards. They learn on their own, from each other, gain experience and share their knowledge with each other. Second, learning shapes the relations of gold collar workers with other labor groups. Considering the significance of learning for the gold-collar workers, the authors look at how learning is presented as an attraction issue for gold collar workers in the business world and by the companies. Because of their desirable skills, gold collar workers are highly employable in the market and there is the shortfall of these talents. This combination paves the way towards their lack of organizational commitment and causes major concern for the employers. The authors say that gold collar workers are loyal to their own development, career evolvement and learning therefore in the companies, they are only attracted to existence of new experiences, challenges as learning opportunities, and richness of learning opportunities.

Wonacott (2007) also states this by saying that the contract between the employer and the gold-collar worker is a psychological one. Gold collar workers who are "educated, smart, creative, computer literate, equipped with portable skills and demanding" and who view work "as a hobby that you happen to get paid for" (p. 356) are loyal only to themselves. Therefore, for the definite time of employment, they want to get the most in terms of learning opportunities, experiences, flexibility, and autonomy. Due to gold collar workers' special relations to learning, these companies present numerous learning and development opportunities like coaching, leadership academies, talent programs, online tools, and experiential learning opportunities like assignments, projects, rotations, hot seats, and so on. Organizational culture is also designed in the way to value learning (Roongrerngsuke & Liefooghe, 2013).

Zeybek (2006) points out that one of the foundational roots of the gold-collar workers group depend highly on learning, learning is integral to their identity. Thus, gold-collar workers reconceptualize learning as a requirement and a continuous activity for themselves, but also set the expectations from other groups on educational and learning outcomes and build their own relations with and around it. Through their own identity formation and relations with other labor groups; the “good” employee is now defined in relation to learning. The education one has and / or the willingness to learn continuously further are set as the dominating criteria for being included or excluded in work life. Zeybek (2006) interprets this process as leader`s values and capabilities becoming identical with the business`s success and for keeping the process ongoing, the leader must be self-learning, self-motivating, self-managing and self-programmable.

2.3 Related studies

In this part, some statistics regarding leader development are shared. Next, the role of adult learning practices in leader development, types of experiences and factors influencing leader`s learning, and characteristics and behaviors enabling the leaders to learn are reviewed.

2.3.1 Leader development

Leaders must understand and manage the complexities and challenges of their present contexts such as increased global competition, diversity, information transfer, interconnected networks, media, technological advancement, expectations of knowledge workers, interdisciplinary teams, flattened organizational hierarchies and new forms of

working, and complexity on an unprecedented scale like crisis (Cross, 2007; Ehlers, 2020; Friedman, 2005). These all demonstrate the criticality of leader development today. As a result, leader development gets dramatically increasing attention, and its purpose and content are continuously changing (Bersin, 2013; Brotherton, 2011).

Leader development is discussed for almost a century. Lamoureux (2007) defines it as a high-profile learning activity focusing on senior, elite staff and comprising key element in competitive strategy. Leader development has also been described as "a complex process of professional and personal growth of acquiring and increasing knowledge, experience and skills, and of enabling personal qualities to mature" (Pierce, Association for Management Education and Development, & Institute of Directors, 2001, p. 96). It is the whole of activities aiming to develop skills and competencies of those that hold leadership positions, the top 5% to 10%, in the organization.

Leader development is mostly discussed with its relation to expectations and outcomes related to company`s strategies and performance. Wuestewald (2016) defines leader development as the efficient means of imparting critical, functional, social-behavioral skills to current and future leaders. Brotherton (2011) defines it as all the learning and development activities and practices that enhance the critical cornerstone for corporate strategy, coordination of effort, crisis management and change capacity.

Intellectual capital is now valued just as much as physical and financial assets. Therefore, continuous learning has become determinative in creating and maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage (Urdan & Weggen, 2000). Demonstrated in statistics, US based corporations allocate an average of 11% of their budget on employee training and development in 2018 (Freifeld, 2019). According to Training Industry Magazine's (2019) report regarding the learning and development expenses of USA companies that

organize these global activities from the headquarter, total spending on employee training globally in 2019 reached $370.3 billion. According to the Association for Talent Development`s report (2019), although 55 % of organizations emphasized on the-job learning to a high or very high extent, this is not reflected in the methods preferred. Average learning hours per employee is calculated as 34 hours. 65 % of these hours were delivered by using traditional, live, face-to-face classroom or through virtual classrooms, that connect the instructor and the learners on a platform in real time. 22 % of learning hours were completed through self-directed online delivery, on e-learning platforms. The rest, around 13 % is dedicated to learning activities embedded in daily life, on the job learning practices. The top focal point of learning content was leadership and supervisory skills, with 14%. The remaining ones were mandatory trainings, compliance trainings, profession specific and industry specific trainings, and process, procedure, and business-related trainings.

Leader development comprises a significant portion of the learning investments. Although there are not clear statistics demonstrating the allocation of learning and development budget in the companies, there are some numbers mentioned to understand the significance of leader development. In 2006; corporations spend $56 billion on learning and development and 45% of this amount targeted leader development (O'Leonard, 2010). Universities offer numerous courses on leadership, and the cost of customized leadership-development offerings from a top business school in US can reach $150,000 per person which are sponsored by the organizations for leaders at top levels (Gurdjian, Halbeisen, & Lane, 2014). Overall, Training Industry Magazine (2019) estimates the leader development as a global industry with $366 billion worth.

Chief Learning Officer Magazine (Prokopeak, 2018) has conducted a research with 28,000 corporate leaders. According to the findings of this research, estimated leadership development spending is around $50 billion annually of the companies these leaders are working in. Leader development should focus on to develop soft skills like coaching, communication, employee engagement, strategic planning, and business acumen[6]. The participating leaders in the research prefer instructor led trainings mostly, by 74 %, and then executive coaching 63% as the learning activity. As also demonstrated in a research conducted by LinkedIn Learning in 2020, leadership and management skills take the highest priority in skills training by a prioritization of 57 % which is followed by creative problem solving and design thinking skills by 42 % and communication by 40%. To be more specific, the top five soft skills which are prioritized for corporate leaders in companies are creativity, persuasion, collaboration, adaptability, and emotional intelligence. These skills are discussed to contribute future needs and solutions of the organizations (LinkedIn Learning, 2020).

Akrofi (2019) says that corporate leaders have a compelling and strategic responsibility for creating and protecting long-term organizational value. They can achieve this value by responding rapidly changing business contexts, building talent base capable of driving innovative services and products, and enhancing customer experience and growth. To ensure the sustainability of this value creation, they are required to learn continuously and transform themselves. Thus, organizations heavily

[6] Mercer | Mettl (2019), a global consulting company in leadership, conducts an executive development survey and collects insights of over 500 respondents that include CXOs, L&D specialists, TEDx speakers, leadership coaches and influencers in the leadership space from 200 organizations. According to 2019 report, the spending in leadership development is dedicated mostly to leaders that have spent long years in leadership. The spend per a senior leader (plus 12 years) is 3x compared to an early leader (0-5 years).

invest in various leader development interventions. However, he says that since most of these programs are generic and based mostly on formal ways of learning, they fail to provide the requirements for value creation and growth. He underlines the need to explore leadership development through different forms of learning like informal and transformative informal learning, and with defining the value creation as a concrete output. He refers to a joint study by University of North Carolina Business School and the Human Capital Institute conducted in 2014 (p. 5). As demonstrated in this study although 85 % of the corporate leaders and learning professionals say that leader development is defined as a strategic priority for decades, there is still the urgent need to accelerate the development of leaders. Only 40 % of leaders and professionals report that their high potential talents can meet future business needs, while underlining the fact that this accelerated need is not fulfilled despite the investment. Around 30 % of US based multinational companies admit although they have spent a lot in leadership development, they have failed to exploit their international business opportunities fully because they still lack enough leaders with the right capabilities (Ghemawat, 2012). As highlighted by other scholars (Brotherton, 2011; Wuestewald, 2016), this lack is due to the reason that formal learning practices in leader development could not respond to needs and fulfill expectations. Different forms of learning, particularly informal and transformative informal learning in leader development should be paid more attention.

2.3.2 Informal learning in leader development

Wuestewald (2016) says executive development gained importance in 1920s and changed due to different historical trends and transformations with particular attention to

different learning outcomes and evolving pedagogies (Wuestewald, 2016). It has gone through industrial and post-industrial phases and now is going through digital phase. The expected outcome of leader development in industrial period was to better the production. The learning practices were mostly handled by universities, in management programs, that are designed by using cognitive instructional methods. In the post-industrial period, developing the managers and equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to manage personnel, budget, and technologies for strategic purposes was the focus of leader development initiatives. Since these are both generic and specific to the organization, both in-house experts and external training consultants become important actors to design tailor made leader development programs. Increasing concerns about dedicated time, relevance and costs of the university degrees have moved companies to search for non-degree, relatively short-termed alternatives in executive development (Conger & Xin, 2000). This is not to say that the importance of the formal learning in executive development decreased, since corporations still form partnerships with universities to prepare tailor made leader programs specific for their needs and interests. Formal learning has shifted forms in relation to leader development, companies now feature non-formal learning initiatives and establish their own training centers and corporate academies to train and develop their leaders.

As 20th century closed, the digital age featured by information, global crisis and technology explosion started. This phase transforms the leader development to another step. The ability to collect, process, disseminate individual knowledge and to utilize collective knowledge for facilitating adaptive change are now valuable for organizations. Thus, leader development becomes both learner-centered and organization-centered. Johansson (2004) says that this brought different disciplines and people together for

designing intensive, interactive development trainings, using both formal and informal means of learning together, while shifting the content of leader development to soft skills like problem solving, questioning, listening, strategic thinking and so on.

For better engaging corporate leaders and providing a more relevant learning experience, various forms of adult learning have gained importance in leader development. Daniels and Preziosi (2010) underline that cognitive approaches and formal learning practices are less effective for developing social – behavioral skills of leaders like communication, emotional intelligence, problem solving and collaboration. As confirmed by Beechler, Ciporen, and Yorks (2013), developing these soft skills require new pedagogical approaches in leader development. Conger and Xin (2000) discuss adult learning practices as effective for transferring knowledge to the work context of senior leaders. Affective, self-directed, and experiential nature of informal learning, self-discovery, and self-actualization focus of transformative learning start to form the learning philosophy of leader development. Problem-based learning tools, simulations, action learning, social and team-based learning, task forces, learning communities and networks and reflective practices take over an important space in leader development field (Brown, Garnjost, & Heilmann, 2011). Skule (2004) highlights that the significance of actual experiences is discovered in leader development, therefore experiences gained in positions with high degree of exposure to changes and demands, existence of extensive professional networks, challenging managerial responsibilities, superior feedback, management support for learning, and rewarding structures become important initiatives that are used to design leader development

Updating the results of a research that has been completed 30 years ago, van Velsor, McCauley, Ruderman, and Center for Creative Leadership (2010) look at how

executive leaders learn, grow, and change over the course of their careers. Underlining experiences as the major source for executive learning; the authors demonstrate that successful leaders learn through three clusters of experience: 70% from challenging assignments, 20% from developmental relationships and %10 from coursework and trainings. This makes 90% of leader learning in the workplace informal. In fact, other researchers also estimate that more than 70% of executive development occurs through informal learning, from on-the-job experiences and formal programs contribute less than %10 to leader's learning (Robinson & Wick, 1992).

Without giving any percentages, Becker and Bish (2017) indicate that a large part of the current leadership capabilities is acquired through informal means, and these are desirable for ongoing development. Gold, Thorpe, and Mumford (2010) state that 'managers often talk about informal and unplanned experiences as explicit, powerful, relevant and realistic' and as the main source for their learning (p. 142). It seems however that still majority of expenditures are directed to formal learning activities despite the growing challenge among scholars and practitioners that on-the-job experiences are the most effective way to develop leadership skills (McCall, 2004).

McCall (2004) complete a research to understand what experiences matter in the development of executive talents, what those experiences potentially teach, the processes by which the lessons of leadership are learned and how experience can be used more effectively in organizational settings to develop leaders. He has involved hundreds of interviews with leaders from different types of organizations, in different countries. His basic assumption is that leadership can be learned, and his conclusion is clear that the primary source of learning to lead is one's own leadership experiences: "Primary source of learning to lead, to the extent that leadership can be learned, is

experience. The role played by training and other formal programs is relatively modest in comparison to other kinds of (on-the-job) experiences" (p. 127). He further suggests that experiences should form the core of leader development programs but recently very little is known about how to effectively use experiences for learning and development. This involves questioning and identification about which experiences are developmental, what leaders might learn from them, why some leaders learn from these and others do not, and which experiences should be provided to whom.

One answer to this question relies on the enormous number of experiences the leaders are going through in their daily practices, or the ones which they have gone through their leadership paths as they are learning to become leaders. Day and Dragoni (2015) say that that intrapersonal changes in knowledge and skills, the social and cultural capitals to perform leadership roles can only be gained through managerial experiences. In a review of 25 years of research about leader development, Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014) accept the importance of experiences for leader development but say that 'we lack a clear idea of the ongoing ways in which people practice becoming more expert leaders. Such practice may not be intentional or mindful, which may make it more difficult to study. But this notion of ongoing practice through day-to-day leadership activities is where the crux of development really resides (p.80). In parallel, McHenry and McKenna (2014) focus on the development of superior performance through deliberate daily practices. They define deliberate practices as regular, repetitive, and individualized activities through which skills are refined, often by setting specific goals for improving on narrow tasks and monitoring performance to achieve them. These practices appear to help leaders avoid or overcome difficulties when acquiring complex skills. For leaders, deliberate practices involve practice of

activities supporting task performance, with the goal of improving competences that are contributing to the performance of individuals (e.g., exploring new strategies, mental simulation, asking for feedback) and developing the expertise in different fields and gaining entrepreneurial knowledge to support growth and improvement.

Responsibilities in leadership roles, the novelty of experiences after promotion to each role, high-decision making responsibility and latitude, lack of goal clarity, the need to innovate, the environment surrounding the job, supervisory pressure, challenging assignments and projects with the possibility of success or failure, peer relations, managing across boundaries and dealing with diversity, high visibility, intellectual challenges and the need to work with diverse or difficult relationships are discussed among the developmental experiences the leader learns through while becoming an executive leader (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000; McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002).

Ratanjee (2018) completes a key word search of leader learning in the researches completed by Gallup Consulting since 1935. It is an American analytics and consulting company, which is founded by George Gallup in 1935. The company assessed more than 50,000 leaders for different positions and conducted more than 450 quantitative and qualitative studies on executive development. In conclusion, Ratanjee (2018) presents the below experiences as the most developmental ones in executive development:

1. working on stretch assignments and out-of-expertise projects,
2. turning around a failing business or product,
3. navigating a new culture, new country or a previously uncharted customer segment or technology,
4. expanding technical capability significantly specifically skills that enhance agility and digital readiness,
5. leading a cross-functional team on a mission-critical organizational project
6. experiencing failure and learning from it,
7. actively building a network of supporters that led to significant gains for the organization.

Becker and Bish (2017) complete a qualitative research with 21 leaders in an Australian non-profit organization in health research. They find out that daily work is the common response to the question of how the leadership skills are developed. The participants overwhelmingly report that they gain the leadership skills through trial and error, taking action that was not effective and / or had an unexpected outcome after their decisions. They add that promotion to a new role contribute to their learning since it provides the opportunity to develop and apply different management skills or the experience different situations. Importantly their participants highlight that in these moments, they often reflect on the reasons for these outcomes and plan to do something different in future.

Supportive supervisors or coworkers are facilitators of learning (Choi & Jacobs, 2011). Supportive supervisors lead employees to engage in activities that lead to professional development or career advancement. Drawing on recent research on developmental networks (Chandler, Hall, & Kram, 2010) and high-quality relationships (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009), the relations with the supervisors can serve as a holding environment that helps leaders to grow, develop capacity to perform in response to complex leadership challenges and the ability to reconcile demanding leadership experiences. They provide decisional discretion and encouragement to solve their own problems (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Moreover, skills, knowledge, and experiences that the superior executive has developed over their career are vital resources for developing the peers and the successors. The superior can provide the opportunity to let other leaders take advantage of such learning and contribute to the development of successors or the opposite may also be. In both cases whether conforming or opposing, the evaluation of the supervisor about skills, knowledge, competencies, overall performance, and readiness to be promoted presented together with his / her observations and

feedback will contribute a lot to the executive's self-awareness and individual planning of his / her own development (DeRue & Wellman, 2009; Dragoni et al., 2014; de Pater, van Vianen, Bechtoldt, & Klehe, 2009). The evaluation of the board or top team itself is a prominent activity increasing the self-awareness of the leaders while increasing the pressure on them to ensure that they and their organizations are performing well.

Prasetyo (2018) underlines learning with others as a dimension of learning which has gained importance recently. To tackle the problems and dynamic changes in 21st century, leaders need more effective and efficient ways to connect with one another, share information, support, and learn from each other, and mobilize resources in a strategic direction. He defines four levels of leader networks helpful for learning:

1. Peer network consists of people who share similar identities, circumstances or contexts and provides the members trusted and relevant information, advice and support when needed.
2. Organizational network includes the capacity to set direction, create alignment and maintain commitment to get work done. These ties are often informal and exist outside the formal organizational structure, such as seeking advice from a colleague.
3. Field-policy network provides the capacity to influence how problems are framed and solved, to mobilize members around a shared vision, to develop and enact innovative solutions to complex problems, and to participate actively in decision-making.
4. Collective network provides the capacity to deliver contribution in service of the common good through assuming joining and flexible membership, according to what is perceived and required. Although network members exercise leadership locally, there is the increasing interaction that the group begin to align and connect to form larger networks. These networks are often rooted in a purpose.

Focusing on the networks; he offers to understand leadership as a social capital that collects around certain individuals based on commonalities and with the orientation of learning from them and taking collective action.

Gold et al. (2010) state that action learning, performance dialogue, coaching and mentoring are among the structured learning opportunities that are built on experiences. There are clear highlights about action learning being one of the strongest factors that

promote leader development. Action learning involves a group working on real problems, acting, and learning as individuals, as team and as organization. On organizational level, its strength comes from its outcome as developing creative, flexible, adaptive, and real-life strategies to solve issues. On individual level, Dilworth, and Willis (2003) state that the strength comes from that the leaders decide on what are the high priorities for them, decide on their own developmental goals and plan the individual development plan accordingly. Leonard and Marquardt (2010) examine 21 studies and conclude that action learning programs help the leaders develop multiple leadership skills. Being collaborative, using the coaching skills in a crisis moment and developing win – win solutions in conflict situations are discussed among the developed skills through action learning programs. Moreover, there are more learning outcomes for the daily life of the leaders like questioning, deciding on the action to take, listening, judging, confronting, team building, managing the diversity within the team, risk taking and acting as the coach when needed. It is a simulative, safe platform to live the joy of the success and to calculate the possible results of failures. Marquardt, Leonard, Freedman, and Hill (2009) lists the leadership skills as the powerful outcomes of action learning; (1) when to lead and when to follow; (2) when to be directive and when to encourage collaboration and consensus, (3) how to use intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivators to keep people engaged, (4) how to engage people's idealism and desire for personal development and growth to develop inspiring visions and passion, (5) how to empower subordinates and peers to use and develop their ability to self-manage and self-lead, (6) how to develop a mindset for continuous learning throughout the organization.

Coaching and mentoring are practices and activities that provide valuable support to leaders for transforming the challenges of their jobs and experiences into learnings.

These structured events may not be considered as sources for informal learning, but the reflection and the meaning constructed through these by the individual form a part of informal learning experiences (Clutterbuck, 2014; Garvey, Stokes, & Megginson, 2018). Boud, Cohen, and Walker (1993) note that experiences are not simply events that happen; they are events with meaning. Learning involves the process where knowledge is created through reflecting on the experiences. Therefore, practices or tools like coaching and mentoring help leaders to learn from their experiences, to interpret one`s experiences once again to affect one`s further actions. Vito (2018) says that mentoring and coaching practices provide the individuals feedback from others, and this is a learning process to increase self-awareness. Byrne, Crossan, and Seijts (2018) discuss coaching session as a reflection process on oneself and interpretation of one`s own experiences that are supportive for learning. Spreitzer, McCall, and Mahoney (1997) discuss seeking feedback as an ability that triggers learning from experiences through promoting the reflection of feedback seekers. Mentoring, as a structured activity, is discussed as part of developmental support network. Mentors provide their mentees vocational and psychosocial support like acceptance and confirmation and, role modelling. They also help mentees enhance self-efficacy and promotability by providing protection, confidence, and challenging assignments (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2005).

Adding new dimensions to the resource of developmental experiences for leaders; Flaherty and Osicki (2014) highlight that for the leaders, not all developmental experiences happen on the job or within the workplace. For example, volunteer experiences provide valuable opportunities to build leadership skills. Adding another dimension to the learning out of workplace; Yip and Wilson (2010) say that when asked about experiences that have helped them develop, executive leaders have described

business mistakes and failures as well as family and personal challenges. For example, job rotations, which transfers leaders to another job in the organization or to a different location for a determined time, is an experience that impacts the whole leader, including the one`s personal life while enhancing diverse skills leaders need to adapt. This experience provides the leader a broader perspective on business, life, his adaptation, and flexibility capabilities.

2.3.3 Transformative informal learning in leader development

There are also some studies that focus on the possible connections between transformative informal workplace learning and leader development. Fisher-Yoshida, Geller, and Wasserman (2005) say that leaders should be agile decision makers, engage in critical self-reflection, and integrate reflection with action and partner with those who are different from themselves in significant ways. The authors define these capabilities and skills as the learning outcomes of leader development, that can be gained through transformative learning experiences. Thus, for the authors, learning how to lead is transformative in nature.

Brooks (2004) says that the awareness gained through work life ends with transformation of the leader. The leader learns to be better in managing across national boundaries, dealing with complexity, questioning, embracing change, managing conflict, building effective relations, motivating, listening, and developing others and aligning their actions toward the advancement of organization. Dialogue, learning contracts, feedback, role plays, simulations and storytelling methods in leader development practices foster relationships and dynamics that broaden the perspectives of the leaders.

Brown and Posner (2001) conclude that leader development initiatives need to grasp the corporate leaders at a transformative learning level, to touch their personal interests and emotions and to trigger critical self-reflection and meaning making. Hibbert (2013) offers to adopt reflective learning practices into leader development programs and in the daily routines of leaders as break points. He lists journaling, self-reflecting, personality inventories, coaching sessions and 360 feedback processes as examples of reflective learning practices. These practices foster transformative experiences since the leaders engage in dialogue with others, build self-awareness and increase their reflection capacities through these practices. The learning outcomes of these are transformations in attitudes, leadership values and perspectives.

Nicolaides and McCallum (2013) provide a theoretical foundation and practical means that link adaptive leadership to transformative learning in terms of both capacity (complexity of meaning making) and competence (skillful means). Relying on Mezirow (2012), they say that the types of complex changes and challenges that leaders face today require the skillful means of literacy, numeracy and problem solving and include types of learning liberated from habituated ways of knowing and acting. The individual capacity of the leader and the collective capacities created by the leadership teams to act in a constructive and transforming manner demand an evolution of the way one learns and leads. The expectations of the current organizations, the leadership role itself and current routines are all potential sources of disorienting dilemmas, that after these experiences the leaders no longer view themselves in the same way they did before, even if they select the same behaviors or actions afterwards.

Reflection, as a transformative practice, takes considerable attention of the scholars. Daudelin (1996) conducts a research with 48 leaders in a Fortune 500 company

with 10,000 employees. She says that reflection is a deliberate tool for leader`s learning and various multinational companies use reflection on actions in their leader development initiatives to solve actual business problems. Her results show that “just one hour spent reflecting on one aspect of a challenging situation, using some general questions and guidelines, either alone or with a helper, can significantly increase learning from that situation” (p. 45). Bersin (2013) says that technology and mobile devices expand the potential of learning from others to be transformative. Through these devices and technological platforms, social networks, and information that a leader can access are numerous, while contributing to the reservoir of experiences that a leader can learn by thinking about and reflecting on.

Price (2004, 2004a) discusses executive coaching as a leader development tool that has great potential for transformative learning. The coaching session helps the leader to focus on a problem, to reflect, to think about scenarios and alternative ways to cope with organizational changes and challenges and to interpret the experiences and choices one has gone through. The emphasis of coaching on encouraging self-reflection and fostering action makes transformative learning a potentially powerful guide to coaching and coaching a powerful tool for generating transformative learning. The coach questions the leader to return to a former experience, attend to feelings, re-evaluate the experience and to unlearn behaviors, mindsets, and perspectives and to adopt new ones. The coachee is autonomous, self-directed learner who has full control of and responsibility for his / her coaching process and the learning. For Taylor (2000), coaching sessions with the leaders have transformative potential for the whole organization. For him, one feature that makes transformative learning theory so applicable to coaching in workplace environments is that it sees the most significant

learning arising from critical reflection on premises about oneself in relation to social and cultural systems of the organization. The actions, behaviors, perspectives transformed through the coaching sessions are triggering transformations in the organizations. Gray (2006) discusses coaching as a transformative learning process since the coach seeks to foster a deeper critical awareness about leader`s individual and organizational assumptions and the ways s/he chooses to act. Newman (2012) says that coaching is a form of reflection that permits the coachee to see and question their views, identity, assumptions, meanings, and constructions.

Carpenter and Cilliers (2008) compete a research with senior leaders who take coaching in a six-month period in an IT company in South Africa. At the end of the coaching period, the participants write a reflective essay. Majority of them highlight that coaching provide them an open, inquiring and trusting relationship in which the deconstruction of fundamental believes could take place. Moreover, coaching provides the environment and support required for the reconstruction of and experimentation with new beliefs and insights. The participants say that they become aware of their own feelings, assumptions, beliefs, and behaviors which have impact on their teams and clients. They highlight the growing awareness about themselves in relation to others, the own insecurities, failures, and fears make them replace these with new ones, leading to alternative behaviors. Overall, the authors argue that although it is a structured activity organized by the corporation, coaching triggers transformative learning. In the coaching, the coach does not do the work but questions, provides the opportunity and support that leads the work to be done by the leader who is taking the coaching. For the coachee, coaching itself is a learning experience which leads further learnings and transformation.

Researches also show that the corporations that are led by CEOs with international experiences perform better financially (Carpenter, Sanders, & Gregersen, 2001; Daily, Certo, & Dalton, 2000). Parallel to these highlights, Hall, Zhu, and Yan (2001) state that many multinational companies now prefer high-potential leaders who have at least one overseas assignment in their careers. In parallel 80 % of corporate leaders who have lived and worked abroad report that it was the most powerful and transformative experience in developing their global leadership capabilities (Gregersen, Morrison, & Black, 1998). The international assignment is an enriched and holistic experience that expose individuals to the challenges of living and working in a foreign environment. Foreign environment mostly includes differences in cultural expectations and expressions, forms of power distances to and within the leadership hierarchy, persuasion and reasoning styles, high and low context communication styles (Salicru, 2015). For the global leader, it involves high confusions (Osland & Bird, 2000) and an emotional cultural shock experience (Adler & Gundersen, 2008).

Ng, Van Dyne, and Ang (2009) also discuss international work assignments and responsibilities as transformative learning experiences in leader development. They say that "in the current milieu of diversity, complexities and international competition; having leaders who are capable of understanding, functioning and managing in the global environment is a valuable, rare and inimitable resource that offer firms a competitive advantage" (p. 511). They highlight that a leader actively engages in four stages of experiential learning (experience, reflect, conceptualize, experiment) in an international assignment which in turn leads to global leadership self-efficacy, ethno-relative attitudes toward other cultures, accurate mental models of leadership across cultures and flexibility of leadership styles. Participants say that when they move to

another country after the first experience, they begin responding to events and relating to others in new and different ways, automatically.

Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) also say that intercultural experiences in either an individual's professional or personal life positively impact their flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity. They have surveyed 420 global corporate leaders about the experiential opportunities initiated by corporations such as working abroad, operating on a global team, being mentored by someone from another culture, and participating in meetings in international locales and non-work-related cross-cultural exposure (travel abroad for vacation, study or volunteering, and family diversity). Findings indicated that significant intercultural experiences on both the professional and personal levels help individuals learn the appropriate skills and behaviors to operate effectively in a variety of cultural contexts. These individuals primarily learn the procedural ways of living in a different country, routines embedded in daily live. Then, they develop new habits, customs, and routines. This learning is also a transformative one since the individual develops new capabilities to adapt and transforms one`s own perspectives, beliefs, and values. The participants of the study share that they learned to accept things without criticism, to think and to act non-judgmental and become more open. In this adaptation, there is the unconscious level of learning the routines and practicing them without reflection but through conditioning and embedding in memory, these new practices become habits and meaning schemes. As a result, these individuals experience a perspective transformation and began to look at the world more inclusively than in the past.

Illeris (2014a) discusses leader development together with identity transformation. For him, any change with the leader`s identity or self-conception ends with different understanding and evaluation that are connected to leader`s sense of

competence and choices to respond daily routines. Focusing on the professional identity and transformative learning, he states that a meaningful sense of competence must be an integrated element of the leader identity since it allows the leader to adaptively confront unforeseen problems of practice. The path towards leadership includes various trials and re-understanding of one`s attitudes, values, and convictions. If the sense of competence, the identity, structure of daily life in the organization and the direction it is going are not in harmony, then it will lead to leader`s re-questioning and evaluation about any one of these fields. Through transformative experiences, the leader builds new capacities and sense of competences to analyze, to deal with innovations and challenges, unexpected problems and to develop alternative choices for the organization compatible with the one`s own identity and sense of competence.

Assuming that there are multiple identities of an individual; Ashforth (2001) say that leadership is related to multiple identities; social roles and memberships a person holds forming social identities, personal and character traits and others' attributes to them forming personal identities and professional identities referring to attributes, beliefs, values, and motives which people define in a leader role. Professional leader identity transforms over time through various experiences, but also in interaction with social and personal identities. Receiving meaningful feedback and reactions, teaming with others from other functions, reflecting on assumptions of current mental models, having an opportunity to attempt new approaches make the leaders gain insight about themselves while contributing to their formation of identities, transformation, and active subjectivity (Billett, 2002; Marquardt, 2018).

In this context, Flannery (2000) discusses the concept of *crossing the border* and highlights the challenging times just after the promotions as the major source of

transformative learning. The border is an intersection point where there is the transition from one group to the other and where their cultures meet. This is the period where the social and cultural capitals of the new group are started to be learnt and to be used as one's own. Flannery underlines that at this period, one struggle to understand the dynamics within his / her environment, the expectations set on oneself and tries to respond accordingly for success. The person begins to think that s/he lacks necessary skills required for the new position, as incomplete in terms of mind and tools, and feel the need to reinvent oneself. This need is particularly significant for the leader to be ready for the learning, to see the experiences as sources of learning.

Field and Malcolm (2010) highlight the roles of emotions in transformative learning, particularly at managerial roles. They say that emotions are subject to management control and surveillance but at the same time they express workers' identities. They conducted a research in Scotland which explores the ways in which the experiences and meanings of emotional labor relate to recent changes in how adults learn, specifically how they learn for work. They draw data from people holding leader roles to understand identity, agency, change and learning in work life. All the research participants highlight the importance of emotional performance and competent emotional management in leadership. Learning about the self, the abilities to control emotions and management of one's identity are highlighted as significant to the survival of the leader in the new economy and to possibilities for resistance. The authors state that emotions and emotional control develop narratives of identity that express the confidence of the leader in his / her abilities, become an important part of self-judgment and self-respect while leading to position themselves more securely within this economical context. These are critical particularly where managers are pushed to

experiences of crisis. For responding and managing these crises, the leaders develop strategies that balances their thinking and feelings. Some of these strategies are listed as networking more with similar people, thinking about their own commitments to the companies, determining ways of engagement in learning activities, prioritizing significant items in their own agenda, and inventing new coping methods with challenges. All these suggest that individuals are actively engaged in remaking practices and in changing their ways of learning and sense of self. Neuman (1996), after a two-year longitudinal study on the development of critical reflection skill in a leader program, finds that the role of emotions is creating patterns of salience among various thoughts and assumptions, determining what will and will not be reflected upon, and guiding or distorting the process of reasoning. The outcome of this emotional exploration in conjunction with critical reflection helps leader to have a greater self-trust, inner strength, and feelings of courage, to develop immediate self-awareness about own emotions and emotions of others, the ability to manage sometimes obstreperous nature of emotions, and to handle relationships.

Among different leadership theories, transformative learning is at most discussed in relation to transformational leadership. Transformational leaders "motivate their subordinates to perform at a higher level by inspiring them, offering them intellectual challenges and paying attention to their individual needs" (Belias & Koustelios, 2014, p. 187). Marsick, and Faller (2012) suggest strategies and interventions for the change leader to employ in fostering organization transformation. Their model for facilitating transformative learning in organizational change includes two dimensions; change in system perspective touching culture and strategies and change in individual perspectives touching employees. The leader generates strategic planning and social learning to

challenge the system and generates group and individual learning to challenge the individuals. Linking these with transformative learning interventions, the authors say that critical reflection on assumptions, communities of practices, mentoring, coaching, storytelling, small group based reflective practices and cooperative action learning and individual reflection practices are the interventions that are used mostly by leaders who adopt transformational leadership style. Their model basically assume that transformative learning principles and practices can be apply to organizational development as aptly as they do to individual development since both leaders and organizations are systems that necessitate to adapt changing circumstances to grow and survive. Malik and Roberson (2014) highlight that leaders today need to empower anyone in the organization to be a better leader. They refer to the concept of learning organization (Senge, 1990) by saying that when everyone leads, everyone learns; when everyone learns, the organization becomes a learning organization. Building a learning organization is fundamental for the leaders and transformative learning has a key role in this organizational transformation due to its promise of creating permanent change.

Cross (2007) also discusses organizational transformation as the major responsibility of the corporate leaders. He says that organizational transformation is related with making an organization a better workplace and is only possible through building beliefs, shifting the culture, and ensuring these through operational change. For him, what is learned in work life by the corporate leader should be identified in relation to this organizational transformation. While leading through a transformation, every employee including the corporate leaders acquire head, heart, and hand related learnings and each of these require a specific method that should be supported in the organization. Head related learnings cover processes, abstractions, understandings, and technical

knowledge; heart related learnings are beliefs, emotions, soft skills, abilities, and values; hands related learnings include procedures, hard skills, facts, and memories. Transformative learning is fundamental particularly for heart related learnings since it enhances and elaborates the ways of making sense of our environments and shifting the ways of seeing and understanding our experiences.

2.3.4 Factors and sources for leader development

Avolio and Hannah (2008) state that the existence of growth mindset and the high readiness level of the leader for learning influence the learning experience positively. Lombardo and Eichinger (2010) highlight learning agility and willingness to learn as key individual factors triggering further learning. Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, and Freedman (2006) invent the concept of *reperceiving*. It is the practice of attending to situations with and open and non-judging attitude which causes a significant learning at the end. When individuals can reperceive, it enables them to see and reflect on their experiences with greater clarity and objectivity. In other words, in addition to the experience being there, how the leader approaches and interprets it also have a positive or negative influence on the whole learning.

From a broader perspective, Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) discuss the term learning agility and look at the relationship between learning agility and leadership potential. They define learning agility as "the willingness and ability to learn new competencies to perform under first-time, tough, or different conditions" (p. 323). They state that learning agility consists of four factors; (1) people agility as the extent to which individuals know themselves well, learn from experience, treat others constructively and are cool and resilient under the pressure of change (2) change agility

as the level to which individuals are curious, have passion for ideas, like to experiment with test cases and engage in skill building activities (3) results agility as the extent to which individuals get results under tough conditions, inspire others to perform beyond normal, and exhibit the sort of presence that builds confidence in others (4) mental agility as the degree to which individuals think through problems from a fresh point of view and are comfortable with complexity, ambiguity, and explaining their thinking to others. In their research conducted via a multi-rater assessment with 217 corporate leaders, they demonstrate that there is a positive correlation between performance potential and learning agility, with all four dimensions. They finalize their work by saying that leaders differentiate in terms of being great learners from experience. Since they learn effectively, they can adapt more flexibility and lead changes.

Supporting these findings, DeRue and Wellman (2009) state that leadership-skill development starts to diminish when an individual lacks the pre-requisite learning agility. Murrell (2013) defines learning agility as the most in-demand leadership skill of the 21st century. Parallel to academic focus on learning agility, the concept has gained importance throughout the business world. A recent survey presents that learning agility is the most frequently used criterion to measure leadership potential, with 62% of the respondents citing the term (The Talent Strategy Group, 2015). Church, Rotolo, Ginther, and Levine (2015) demonstrate that more than half of the multinational companies they sampled are using learning agility as an assessment criteria for identifying high potentials (56%) and selecting senior corporate leaders (51%).

De Meuse (2017) adds self-awareness as the fifth factor in Lombardo and Eichinger`s (2000) learning agility model. Reilly, Dominick, and Gabriel (2014) also support this by saying that self-awareness must be a stand-alone factor since it forms the

development potential for all other individual factors related to learning and success. McCall (2010) discusses self-awareness in relation to its reflective potential. He highlights that reflection on the experiences and lessons learnt foster the learning potential. If individuals do not take steps forward to build self-awareness, they would miss out the opportunity to add something new to their repertoire. Consequently, becoming self-aware of one's capabilities and limitations would seem to be a vital component of being a learning-agile individual (DeRue, Ashford, & Myers, 2012).

De Meuse and Feng (2015) say that feedback responsiveness is related with leader`s asking for feedback, listening to it, and accepting it, considering its merits, reflecting on it, and subsequently taking corrective action for improvement. They offer that feedback responsiveness is as crucial as self-awareness so this may be discussed as the sixth factor for learning agility. Sheldon, Dunning, and Ames (2014) also highlight that self-awareness has a direct relation with feedback responsiveness. They demonstrate that high-performing leaders are much more likely to take corrective actions based on feedback than low-performing ones, who tend to question the accuracy or the relevance of the feedback and express reluctance to pursue various paths to learning and development on the topic of received feedback.

Reflection involves analyzing not simply what happened in a particular situation but making sense of why it occurred and what can be learned from the experience. The pace of leader development is related with the reflection ability of the leader. Cunningham and Hillier (2013) highlight that the ability to reflect should be the focus and the desired outcome of activities and processes in leader development. Reflection helps the leader to face openly with success and failures, to review alternative perceptions and ways of doing things, and to transfer received feedback into action.

These all have relations with self-efficacy, further learning to advance future performance, gaining new skills to close gaps and better leadership performance. Thus, they argue that leader development is capitalized when the ability to reflect is developed.

Ashford and DeRue (2012) state that leaders have broader learning potential and are likely to learn from their experiences more when they have high-conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability, and cognitive ability to analyze and to reflect. The authors also highlight the learning mode / growth mindset as the most important catalyst for learning. For them, leadership effectiveness are likely to come from leader's mindfully cycling through the following three learning phases; (1) approach, by embracing a learning orientation and setting learning goals, (2) action, by creating and capitalizing on learning opportunities via planning and conducting experiments; engaging in feedback seeking; and regulating their emotions, and (3) reflection, which includes capturing the lessons of experience via diagnosing cause-and-effect, considering counterfactuals, and distilling the lessons learned. If the leader goes through this cycle with a learning mode, they will gain more learning from the same experience. In learning mode, the leader goes through each element of experience, the learning gained and the process with more of a growth than a fixed mindset. The leaders in learning mode stems from salient mindset cues and guides whether they work through the experiential learning process with a self-improvement or self-enhancement motive.

Locke and Latham (2002) state that for leaders, the work environment is an achievement situation and therefore goal orientation is an important predictor of their learning. As part of the goal orientation comes the learning orientation. Goal orientation is expected to be positively related to leader development since leaders with a high goal orientation are attracted to challenging situations. Leaders with high learning orientation

are more likely to engage in learning because acquiring knowledge and skills will help them appear competent in leadership position, lead them to gain approval from others and be better in performance. They are more likely to reflect on their activities to identify weaknesses requiring improvement because they are intrinsically motivated to gain new knowledge and skills.

Learning how to learn, the meta-learning skills are discussed as one of the most important individual factors for leader development (Ehlers, 2020). Petriglieri, Wood, and Petriglieri (2011) study leaders and say that the learning capabilities and meta learning skills of these leaders differentiate this group from other workers. The scholars review the curricula of MBA programs and leader development programs and say that these programs focus on regressive experiences of participants and use reflection as an increasingly popular method of learning to build the basis of continuous, self-learning capability of leaders. They say that these programs contribute to the understanding that personal development as a leader is a self-initiated and owned process for further learning, experimentation, and growth. According to Cross (2007), meta-learning skills are valuable assets for the leaders and should be the major learning outcome of leader development programs. If the leader has advanced meta-learning skills, then s/he will have capacity to learn more and to improve individual and organizational performance.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore informal workplace learning experiences of gold-collar workers working as corporate leaders. The research basically explores what, how and why they have learned informally through work life, through their paths of becoming leaders. For this purpose, the research questions below guided the research:

1. How do gold-collar workers working as corporate leaders learn informally through the work life?
2. What are the factors, forces and dynamics leading gold-collar workers working as corporate leaders to learn informally?
3. What are the informal learning sources, processes, and strategies of gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders?

To answer the research questions, a qualitative research design was utilized. The data is collected mainly through interviewing with leaders, as a tangible part of gold-collar workers group. The participants shared some documents and tools they use in their practices, examples from learning materials and/or materials that enable their learning and referred to some biographical books written by different corporate leaders, interviews with other leaders in the media, articles and videos related to leadership. These are also used as a supplementary data. The data is analyzed through within and cross case analysis methods applied to interviews. Analysis of the shared documents and a text mining process are also conducted as additional methods in data analysis.

Based on this introduction, this chapter is organized to provide detailed information about the research approach and methodology, the research design, data collection procedure and interview guide, the participants, and data analysis.

3.1 Research design

An overview of the research design is presented in this section including the research approach and methodology, and the steps taken in determining the research procedure.

3.1.1 Research approach and methodology

This study follows the basic characteristics of a qualitative research. Qualitative research is an approach that is grounded in the experiences of people (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). It tries to discover the ways in which people interpret their experiences, construct their worlds and attribute meaning to their experiences. It is "intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions. Qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 2). Merriam and Grenier (2019) highlights qualitative research approach as the right one to understand informal learning experiences, constructed meanings of individuals, and interactions with their own contexts. Assumption behind these is that individuals construct their reality while interacting with others in their social contexts.

Deem (2002) states that qualitative research has an advantage over quantitative research in studying issues related to groups who are small in organizations, since it allows the researcher to dig deeper into issues. Qualitative research enables the researcher to hear participants' self-reflexive experiences and understand these, within their own

context, for identifying relations, definitions, expectations, concepts, and all related issues. In this dissertation, it is not the companies which I am trying to explore, but the gold-collar workers and their informal learning experiences. Thus, it is appropriate to use a research method that emphasize face to face communication, building rapport with the participants, making them describe their own experiences, reflecting on those and probing on meanings for understanding these experiences deeply in their own contexts.

Phenomenology as a methodology of qualitative research focuses on the study of an individual`s lived experiences within one`s own world and together with the meanings given to those experiences. It is a powerful methodology that seeks to understand the essence of a phenomenon from the perspective of those who experienced it. The aim is to describe the meaning of this experience in terms of both what is experienced and how it is experienced (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa, & Varpio, 2015). Informal learning experiences as the units of analysis are multiple, partial, contextual and may be being simultaneously produced and producing by the person describing those experiences. Thus, the method allows the researchers working in this field to focus on the informal learning experiences in their contexts and together with the meanings placed on those experiences (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Vagle, 2018).

Due to these highlights, I decided to use qualitative research approach for this study. The research methodology that inspired the study is phenomenological methodology which enables to focus on the experiences, constructed meanings of individuals while they are interacting with others in their organizations. The required data could only be grasped through making the leaders explain about their own learnings and transformations, re-evaluating their former experiences from the lens of informal learning, probing deeper into their developmental experiences and their reflections, and

associated meanings, perceptions, and feelings. Concepts, themes, and categories emerged in their narratives and, those helped me to understand the phenomenon.

3.1.2 Research procedure

After deciding that qualitative research is the matching approach for the purpose of the study, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with gold-collar workers to explore their informal learning experiences. The ambiguity with the gold-collar worker definition resulted with several steps back and forth to concretize the target participant group and to identify the criteria to select the participants. I will share the details in the later parts of this chapter. As a summary, to concretize the target group and to find the data – rich participants, two main criteria were used. First, leaders who are holding top- and high- level management positions in multinational companies over a size are decided to be chosen. These companies could be founded in Turkey or in a different country but currently all are operating internationally. The second criterion decided to define the target group was finding leaders who have at least 5 years of experience at the defined management levels.

Next, I started to prepare the interview guide, First, I wrote the demographic questions and the questions aiming to understand participants' roles and responsibilities in their organizations, and the contextual factors that may impact their leadership and learning experiences. Second, I added the questions to understand the lessons learned, the informal learning experiences that are developmental for the participants, factors influencing their learnings and their sources and strategies of learning. Since I was after the informal learning experiences, and these experiences are not always clear and conscious, I tried to ensure that interview questions focusing on the depth of these

experiences are added into the interview form. Thus, I added questions into the interview form which are prepared based on critical incident technique (CIT).

After finishing the interview form, I wrote the informed consent form. Following that, application was made to Institutional Review Board for Research with Human Subjects (INAREK) in March 2017 to get the necessary approval for the research. The research proposal, the semi-structured interview form and the informed consent form were approved. The INAREK approval is presented in Appendix A. Informed consent form in Turkish and in English are presented in Appendix B and C. Interview forms in Turkish and in English are presented in Appendix D and E.

After the preparation of interview form and the INAREK approval, I did a pilot study in April 2017. I tried to reach initial participants based on the defined selection criteria and conducted 2 pilot interviews. The pilot study provided justification for all with minor changes in the application of interview guideline. I will share the details of these changes in the later parts of this chapter.

3.2 Data collection and participants

It is difficult to observe and precisely explain what is learned through experiences, and how, when and in what context these experiences lead to learning and transform the individuals. As a result, many authors have suggested ways of overcoming these challenges inherent in doing research on informal learning in the workplace. Interviewing as a qualitative data collection method to draw out learner`s informal learning experiences is supported by some authors (Ali, Zengaro, & Zengaro, 2016; Fuller, Unwin, Felstead, Jewson, & Kakavelakis, 2007; Roberts, 2013). Designing and executing the interview itself as a reflective practice, making the participants recall

moments of learning and reflect on them help to transform the unconscious learning into conscious learning, and trigger further learning from these experiences. Therefore, interviewing is even more favored for informal learning research in the workplace (Bott & Tourish, 2016). Relying on these highlights, I decided to use semi-structured interviews as the major data collection method for the study and some parts of the interview form are designed with this reflection focus.

These processes, developing the interview form, defining the criteria to select the participants, details of the pilot study, sampling strategies and procedure, the participants of the study and information about interviews are shared in detail.

3.2.1 Development of interview guide

The literature review on informal learning, transformative learning, leader development and the examination covering the articles in newspapers and business journals, the interviews conducted with experts who have knowledge on the central phenomenon like consultants working in executive recruitment and practitioners working in leader development, interviews conducted with corporate leaders that are published in newspapers or in business journals, personal development or biographical books like the memoirs that are written by corporate executive leaders and videos / articles related to leadership and learning and my own observations in work life supported me in developing the interview form.

The primary approach for data collection procedure included an adaptation of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) and in-depth interviewing. Flanagan (1954) developed the critical incident technique (CIT) during World War II to gain understanding of the causes of airplane crashes. He included a set of steps which must be applied to capture a

detailed description of the incident: (1) setting the aim of an activity, (2) creating a tool to collect incident, (3) gathering data using either interviews or written observations, (4) analyzing data in an objective way, and (5) interpreting results and disseminating those that make significant impact on the activity. Ellinger and Watkins (1998) extended the use of this sequential method for collecting learning incidents by incorporating a constructivist approach in forming questions, which enables the researcher to look at attributions and to filter what shape the learning as well as those elements in the context that affect what is paid attention to and what is salient, to the learner.

CIT is promoted as a major tool of qualitative research in the workplace and relevant for learning related to leadership (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Collinson & Tourish, 2015; Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002). It provides advantages in reaching both positive and negative incidents that people make sense of their learning experiences, and people`s subjective impressions of professional / organizational life within a shorter timeframe like an interview. CIT is particularly useful as an exploratory method to increase knowledge about a little-known phenomenon and to provide a rich set of data therefore the most crucial aspect of it is the questions asked of participants (Gremler, 2004).

The critical incident questions (CIQ) should be formulated in a way to capture the specific time of the event and actions in experiences, to recall and reflect on these experiences and to reveal learner`s judgments and meanings of these incidents. These questions are particularly important for researchers targeting small groups in work life since people learn about their professional practices through reflecting on multiple experiences and perspectives. For research on leader development in today`s complex organizational contexts, critical incident questions have an advantage and contribute to analyze the concepts of both leadership and learning sufficiently (Bott & Tourish, 2016).

Using CIQs in the interviews encourages the participants to choose and to tell their stories that are most important for them (Cunha, Cunha, & Rego, 2009). It also allows participants to share their stories with openness and minimal researcher assumptions while making the participants and the researcher discover an understanding of participant`s learning and transformation together (Sharoff, 2008).

Considering these advantages of CIQs, its potential to analyze learning experiences and to understand the power of learning outcomes, I decided to use critical incident technique to formulate some of the interview questions. CIQs in the interview form focus on key worktime events, changes and challenges in the positions, situations where more knowledge / skill or new behaviors are needed, moments of change regarding values, perspectives, and mindsets and when they face unpleasant emotions and feel uncomfortable. In these questions, participants are asked several times to recall an incident they define as a learning moment, and to describe this incident in detail while providing answers to what is being learned, why it is learned and how it is learned, and how they become different leaders after these incidents. Asking the participants to recall these incidents, to make the participants explore them and to think on them is a reflective technique (Ali et al., 2016). They are asked to define these situations from memory and to reflect on these, consciously construct these as learnings while thinking on the lessons and, sources and strategies used while dealing with these situations.

There are three main parts in the developed interview form. First part is about demographic information and professional experiences. This part included 5 questions. Second part is about the leader responsibilities, the team, critical projects, daily and annual routines, and the organizational factors and dynamics like relations, decision

making mechanisms and governance structure that may impact learning experiences. This part included 5 questions.

The questions in the last part are formulated in relation to what, why and how is learning happening framework. There are questions that aim to understand how the participants conceptualize learning, what they learned, which knowledge, skills, and attitudes they developed to become leaders and which experiences are featured as developmental. Individual and organizational factors impacting the learning, motivations, sources, and strategies for learning are also asked in this part. Three critical incidents questions are added into this last part, which aims to make the participants to think and to reflect deeply about their most influential informal learning experiences, how they perceive themselves as leaders, and how they make sense of critical learning experiences through their career paths to become leaders. This last part included 10 questions that aimed to facilitate recalling, describing, and sharing deep information on the issue and the participant`s perceptions related to learning and leadership.

To the end of the interview form, I added the drilling questions to deepen ongoing dialogue and to ensure getting the full answers regarding the question. I decided to ask the participants to share materials and documents which they think as related, important, and supportive in their learning process. I did not intend to use this as a major data collection method but thought that it would provide a more holistic framework to understand and to analyze the shared answers. In this last part, questions to ask for these supplementary documents and materials are also included.

3.2.2 Defining the criteria to select participants

One major challenge for the research was to define a tangible and clear group of gold-collar workers in the workplace. Parallel to discussions in the literature, the term gold-collar worker refers to both economical means – as a labor group- and reminds that it is a differentiating group from the rest of white-collar workers towards the upper axis, through some characteristics and distinct forms of capitals like social, cultural, and psychological. Exploring theoretical discussions and reading related literature in this field, I understood that there is no clear definition of who gold-collar workers are that is widely accepted. This ambiguity in definition created several steps back and forth to concretize the target group and define the criteria to select the participants.

Gold-collar workers group is not a confined category but include varying members with different backgrounds, characteristics, expertise, hierarchical levels in the organizations and various job descriptions. They are featured with their higher level of education, higher salaries, decision making and strategy setting responsibilities, transforming, and restructuring capacities, flexibility in working style, rarity in numbers and being internationally connected. For concretizing the target group, and selecting the data-rich participants, I decided to use these characteristics as criteria and focused to spot a clear target group in the workplace that is having these features. Considering these common characteristics, corporate leaders who are holding top- and high-level management positions in multinational companies that are over a certain size (in terms of operating countries, number of employees, financial power) are tangible members of gold-collar workers group and therefore defined as the target group of this study.

Due to their leader roles and top/high level positions, these leaders are matching with the generally featured characteristics of gold-collar workers like being few in

numbers, being the decision makers in the companies, holding the intellectual capital for setting the strategy and direction of the organizations, managing large scope of tasks, operations, and people. As these leaders are recruited for these few and critical leadership positions, had advancing career paths, and demonstrated success in these positions, it was thought that they would already have higher levels of educational degree, and relying on the literature review, most probably in prominent universities. In terms of higher income, there are researches executed by business journals and some leading executive recruitment companies about the incomes of these executives[7] (Cooper, 2019; Page Executive, 2016). For me, this information was sufficient to understand the target group`s position in terms economic capital and higher income levels. International connectivity characteristic is complemented through choosing the leaders in multinational companies over a certain size, thinking that they have operations in numerous countries and leading through a global governance structure. Thus, by focusing on the leaders who hold top- and high-level management positions and who are working in multinational companies over a certain size, I expected to ensure finding the participants that match with the gold-collar worker definition and associated features discussed in the literature and therefore who are data-rich. The characteristics like higher income, higher educational levels, the responsibilities associated with the leadership levels they hold like decision making and strategy, and the structure / scale of their

[7] According to the salary review completed by Page Group in 2016; C- Level Executives of Turkey's biggest companies annually earn between 1 to 1.5 million TL (Due to currency changes, ranges between 300,000-500,000 USD) excluding the bonuses. Conglomerates, banks, and multinational companies are among the highest payers in Turkey. In 2017, Fortune Turkey also completed a CEO and Senior Executive Compensation in Privat Companies review. They reported that N level executives holding the top management levels, earn 1 to 1.5 million TL while N-1 level executives earn between 450,000 to 850,000 TL, excluding the bonuses. It is also reported that executive leaders in the affiliates of multinational companies earn more since these companies apply global approach in their compensation calculations.

organizations in terms of employee numbers, financial power and internationality of operations were fitting with the most highlighted features of the gold-collar workers in the literature. These corporate leaders are gold-collar workers, but it is important to note that they do not form the whole group itself. Thus, I use gold-collar worker, gold-collar leader, corporate leaders, and executive leader wordings interchangeably to refer and to represent the target group and the research participants in this study.

In the following step, I focused to clarify the criteria related with the size and scale of the companies in which the potential participants are expected to be found. To make the multinational companies over a size clearer, I went through several global and local ranking lists to see the commonalities and the criteria related to size and scale considered to form these lists. I reviewed several rankings published in 2016 and 2017 including Best Management Consulting Firms (Forbes Magazine, 2017a), Global 2000 (Forbes Magazine, 2017b), Most Valuable Brands (Forbes Magazine, 2017c), Top Multinational Performers (Forbes Magazine, 2017d), World's Best Employers (Forbes Magazine, 2017e), Global 500 (Fortune Magazine, 2017a), Fortune 500 Turkey (Fortune Magazine, 2017b) and Capital 500 Turkey lists (Capital Business and Economy Journal, 2016). These ranking lists are prepared annually by these business journals. It is important to underline that these ranking lists are only interpretation of the data prepared by the companies, who are required to share this data annually with the public. The results are not definitive, any change to the criteria would produce a different ranking. Thus, there can be questions about these lists' reliability and validity but overall, this research is not about companies but the individuals. Therefore, these ranking lists are only used to provide a consistent framework to start finding the participants and to

ensure some organizational standards such as employee number, assets, financial scales and/or operations in numerous countries.

In the end, I decided to narrow the ranking lists to Global 2000 (Forbes Magazine, 2017b), Capital 500 Turkey lists (Capital Business and Economy Journal, 2016) and Best Management Consulting Firms (Forbes Magazine, 2017a). These lists are chosen as the major ones since Forbes and Capital Turkey journals are reviewing similar and broader criteria to prepare their lists in the global scope and for Turkey. Their criteria include financial metrics (sales, profit, assets, market value), number of employees and number of countries in which the company is operating in. The data used to prepare lists are collected from the companies at the end of year 2016 and lists are published by May to August in the next year, in 2017. Thus, I have used the latest ranking lists available to frame the possible companies to find participants.

While reviewing the ranking lists and reading the analysis reports on them, I learned that the companies in the lists are having partnerships with wide range of management consulting companies to get support in the operations of certain functions and for the implementation of strategic projects and initiatives prioritized in the business plan of the year. You can find these partnerships published in the annual reports of the respective multinational company or in the reports / websites of management consulting companies. Since the leaders in multinational companies are seeing these management consulting companies as long-termed, strategic partners for their organizations and for themselves as leaders, I decided to include the management consulting companies into my framework to frame possible companies to find the participants. As the basis, I decided to use 2017 Forbes Best Management Consulting Firms ranking list. Different from the other lists, this ranking is compiled by surveying 7500 partners and executives

of management consulting companies as well as 1000 executive leaders who worked with such firms over the last four years. The 222 firms that received the most recommendations are ranked according to the star ratings – five starts for very frequently recommended, four stars for frequently recommended and three stars for recommended.

These multinational companies in these ranking lists are required to publish annual reports considering their performances in the last year. In these reports, organizational structures including management levels and titles can be found. Thus, after clarifying the list of companies to find the participants, I focused to develop a strategy to find the participants fitting with the criteria and to access them within a reasonable timeframe. As shared before, to find the participants, two main criteria are identified: the management level and years of experience in this level. Completing a literature review in management sciences and organizational design, I clarified my criteria about the management level. Top-level management positions are presented with Level N in the corporations and the leaders holding these positions are responsible for focusing on the whole organization, derive broad strategic plans, and execute tasks that require high-risk high-return decision-making initiatives. These leaders may have titles like CEO, general manager, president, and/or board member. High-level management positions are represented with Level N-1, mostly form the executive management teams in the organizations and responsible for determining long-term strategy, mastering in leading functions, getting the decisions in these areas, executing the business plans, and managing the stakeholders including the top-level management members. They are responsible for leading mid-level managers in the organizations. These leaders may have titles like Chief Operating Officer (COO), Chief Finance Officer (CFO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), Director, Vice

President (VP) and/or management team member. N-1 Level leaders report directly to N Level leaders (Bertrand, 2009; Useem & Karabel, 1986). According to scale and the size of the company, leaders at Level N-2 are considered close to high level management since they have strategy setting and decision-making responsibilities for their functions, they have considerable profit and loss (P&L) responsibilities, leading experienced managers and responsible for high number of employees in their functions (Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick, & Kerr, 2015). Regarding these highlights, I decided to target leaders holding N Level, N-1 Level and N-2 Level positions in multinational companies or in management consulting companies taking place in the chosen ranking lists. To ensure finding the N-2 level leaders that are close to high-level management, I decided to target leaders who are holding N-2 level management positions in the largest multinational companies, which are ranked among the first 300 in the ranking lists.

Since I expected to get extensive information from research participants about the informal learning experiences and journeys while they become leaders, no further differentiation was made based on the industry of employment, area of expertise or functional responsibility or individual characteristics like age and gender. The second criterion decided for finding the participants is having at least 5 years of experience at the target management levels in the defined scope of companies. Informal learning itself, thinking about this learning, reflecting on it and transformation take time. Considering this, by years of experience criterion in leadership, I tried to ensure to reach data-rich participants in the initial step, in a safer way.

3.2.3 Pilot study

After preparation of interview form and INAREK approval, I did a pilot study in April 2017. I tried to reach participants based on the defined selection criteria and conducted 2 pilot interviews. In this pilot study, convenience of the target group selection criteria, clarity and comprehensiveness of questions, applicability of the interview guideline in terms of time and space and, content of the questions were checked.

The Alumni Association of a private university helped me to find and reach my first participant. I shared them the criteria to select the participants and a short explanation about the research, and they distributed it to the alumni group of MBA and Executive MBA programs and asked for voluntary participation. Two people responded the request positively and I conducted the first pilot interview with the one who could provide some alternative time slots sooner for the interview. The participant was 39 years old and had a graduate degree. His total work experience was 17 years, and he was holding a top management position (level N) for 7 years in a multinational company. He was responsible for the management of Middle East and North Africa [MENA] region. Since it was suitable for my participant, the interview was made in the company's Istanbul office. He answered all my questions, and it took about an hour and a half to complete the interview. After finishing the interview, he said that it will be more practical if he had filled the demographic information part in the interview form beforehand. Thus, in remaining interviews, the participants filled the first part of the form themselves and shared with me before the interview. This suggestion was very helpful also for me, since it allowed me to gain more information about the management level, the position`s place in the governance structure and the existing leadership experience before the interview. Although I set the selection criteria to make sure that I

will be reaching the data-rich participants, still there could be discrepancies due to the organizational differences. Making it in the suggested way supported me to guarantee that the participants are fitting with the selection criteria.

The second pilot interview was again held in April 2017. My first participant helped me to contact with my second participant. He was 38 years old, had a graduate degree and had 15 years of total work experience. He was working in a high-level management position (level N-2) for five years. We have used the company's Istanbul office and he answered all my questions in about 55 minutes. He stated that all the questions were clear enough when thought in relation to the aim of dissertation and since the first demographic part was completed beforehand, the time allocation was just enough. He said that he would like to do this interview out of office since the questions trigger remembering, self-questioning and reflecting but in practical terms, this will not be possible due to his busy agenda. Regarding the target group's busy agenda and the difficulty of interview organization, I continued to use offices to conduct the interviews. This interview helped me to validate that Level N-2 leaders in the multinational companies that are ranked among the first 300 in the lists are close to high-level management and are the appropriate target participants for this study.

Regarding the intense and continuously changing schedules of research participants, my greatest challenge in these two interviews was finding available spots to set the interviews. Experiencing that at least one month as average is required to set interviews and numerous rescheduling will be needed, I predicted that the field study may take longer than I planned. Due to this reason, positive return ratio and willingness for making the interview were not high. Therefore, I decided to contact with as many people as I can from the target group to finish the field study within the planned time.

After the pilot study, I began to think about ways to enlarge accessing the potential participants in the target group as possible and invented some strategies. This has continued as the biggest challenge through all the data collection process. I had a lot of last-minute cancellations and lost some of the potential participants due to their agendas. Although my data collection step took still longer than I planned, I think that these strategies helped me to make it shorter since I could ask a wide group of potential participants for interview in parallel.

3.2.4 Sampling procedure and strategies

The purpose of qualitative research is selecting the information-rich cases and learning a great deal about issues of central importance. Small sample size and richness of the information in the same box make the sampling issue very complex in qualitative research as there are many variations, confusions and overlapping of types. Thus, setting the right strategy and finding the right technique for sampling form a key step for the realization of research aims (Merriam et al., 2009). There are several different strategies for selecting information-rich cases and the logic of each strategy serves a particular evaluation and research focus (Patton, 2015).

The outputs of gold-collar workers are not solid like a commodity or a product but intellectual ones like projects, systems, strategies, and processes. Leadership is highly related with the perspectives, values, preferences, behaviors, and skills of the person holding that position. These can all be grasped, understood, and validated through one`s own explanations about self, leadership, learnings, commitments, and responsibilities. To ensure this, my first criterion to select participants was their

willingness to give time to the interview, to tell their stories, to share informal learning experiences and to reflect on these experiences.

Considering these points, I preferred to use purposeful sampling and snowball sampling in combination. Reaching the initial participants matching with the set criteria, and later expanding the sample size were the challenges for this research. After clarifying the criteria to select the participants, and validating this through the pilot study, purposeful sampling solved the challenge to find the initial participants. But the potential participants were high-level leaders with busy agendas, and this reduced their willingness to participate. Therefore, I tried to enlarge the number of participants through various ways.

Primarily, I contacted with leaders from my former and existing companies who can be potential participants for this research. Then, I continued with the people whose names are given by these potential participants. Second, I contacted with friends who are working at communication agencies, management consultancy, executive assessment, and development, coaching and recruitment / head-hunting companies since these are the external consultants who are mostly working with the high-level leaders in the companies. I asked for possible names and contact information who will be willing to take part in this research. Third, I wrote to alumni groups of prominent universities and executed a search in LinkedIn groups -a widely used networking platform among professionals- to reach possible participants. I explained about the research via instant messaging or email and asked whether they would want to participate. I also asked my colleagues in the HR Function to make me meet with leaders, who they know from their former companies. Overall, I reached a sample size of 23 executive leaders and in the

last interviews, I thought that I reached data saturation since I have started to hear similar things and to see some patterns.

3.2.5 Participants of the study

Twenty-three participants are interviewed as part of the field study in this research. All the participants were corporate leaders working in companies chosen according to the pre-set criteria.

According to the organizational management level structure explained under "Defining the Criteria to Select Participants" title of this chapter, 7 participants were positioned at the top of their companies, working at N Level, either leading the executive management team in the company and/or acting as a board member. 12 participants were working at N-1 level, were responsible for one or many main functions in the organization and being a member of management team. 4 participants were working at N-2 level.

Participants` total work experience varied between 12 and 40 years while making 21,5 years on average. In terms of total executive leadership experience, they varied between 5 and 24 years while making 9 years on average. In terms of gender distribution, there were 11 females and 12 males. 12 participants had graduate degrees, and 11 participants had undergraduate degrees.

Regarding responsibilities, 15 participants had international scopes (i.e., responsibility in Europe, Middle East, and Africa [EMEA] region). On the case of expertise, the participants were managing 16 different, with 32 different functional sub-areas. Demographic details of the participants are presented in Table 6 below and can also be found in Appendix F:

Table 6. Participants of the Study (Alphabetical Order)

Name	Type of Company	Management Level	Gender	Age	Total Years of Experience	Years of Experience in Leadership	Education	Function
Adil	Local	N	Male	64	40 years	20 years	Graduate	Management
Ahmet	Multinational	N	Male	47	26 years	10 years	Undergraduate	Management
Ayfer	Multinational	N	Female	54	33 years	15 years	Undergraduate	Management
Bahar	Local	N – 1	Female	38	15 years	5 years	Undergraduate	Marketing and Communication
Banu	Multinational	N – 1	Female	39	18 years	5 years	Graduate	HR Internal Communication
Berrak	Multinational	N – 1	Female	49	26 years	12 years	Undergraduate	Communication
Burak	Multinational	N – 2	Male	35	16 years	5 years	Undergraduate	Sales
Cansu	Multinational	N – 2	Female	35	15 years	5 years	Graduate	HR Strategic Planning
Ebru	Consulting	N – 1	Female	44	23 years	5 years	Undergraduate	Project Management, Organizational Restructuring, Operational Excellence
Ercan	Multinational	N – 1	Male	38	17 years	5 years	Graduate	Management + Sales & Business Development
Feriha	Multinational	N – 1	Female	45	25 years	10 years	Graduate	Supply Chain & Logistics + Purchasing + Operational Excellence & Quality
Kerem	Multinational	N – 2	Male	38	15 years	5 years	Graduate	Marketing
Meltem	Consulting	N	Female	40	23 years	7 years	Undergraduate	Management
Mete	Multinational	N	Male	39	17 years	7 years	Graduate	Management
Necdet	Multinational	N – 1	Male	44	24 years	10 years	Undergraduate	Sales
Nur	Consulting	N	Female	36	16 years	7 years	Undergraduate	Management
Oktay	Multinational	N – 1	Male	36	13 years	5 years	Graduate X 2	Financial Analysis & Planning + Strategy & Corporate Development
Onur	Multinational	N – 1	Male	39	19 years	5 years	Graduate	Project Management
Sevim	Local	N	Female	49	29 years	20 years	Undergraduate	Management
Suna	Local	N – 1	Female	41	21 years	6 years	Graduate	HR
Tolga	Multinational	N – 2	Male	37	15 years	6 years	Undergraduate	Digital Marketing, CRM, and Media Programs
Yavuz	Local	N – 1	Male	63	38 years	19 years	Graduate	Management
Zafer	Multinational	N – 1	Male	53	35 years	24 years	Graduate	Finance + Operations (IT-Adm-Purchase-Internal Audit-Reporting) + Strategic Project Mgmt.

Since the company size was one of the criteria defined to select the participants, summary info on the companies of the participants are presented as below:

- 24 companies in Total (1 participant is the board members of 2 different companies)
- 14 companies take place in Forbes Global 2000 Ranking.
- 3 companies take place both in Forbes Global 2000 and Capital Turkey 500 lists.
- 4 companies take place only in Capital Turkey 500 Ranking.
- 2 companies are consultancy companies which have partnership with around 85% of Forbes Global 2000 Companies (according to their websites and annual reports).
- 1 Company does not take place in any of the ranking lists since it is the second company of a board member.

Overall, for confidentially reasons, a code system is developed to refer participants throughout the study. The code includes three parts. First part of the code includes the fictitious name, the pseudonym assigned to the participant. Second part is related with the company in which the participant work for. Multinational companies are referred to as “multinational”, Turkey-originated multinational companies as “local” and management consulting companies as “consulting”. Last part included the participants` management levels. For top management positions, N is used. For the positions reporting to these positions, N-1 is used. And the positions which are one level below, reporting to level N-1 leaders, is referred as N-2. As an example, a participant who holds a position at level N-1 in a multinational company has the code (Pseudonym, Multinational, N-1). Next, I will present the detailed biographical information of the participants and summarized company information related to organizational context (i.e., relations with leaders in other countries, learning opportunities) and leadership role (i.e.,

processes and tools favored by participants, routines) that may in general affect the understanding of learning experience:

1 - Banu, Multinational, N-1

She is the HR Director in a FMCG & Beverages company and responsible for strategy setting and excellence. She is based in Istanbul but responsible for all EMEA countries and reporting to both Chief HR Officer in EMEA and to the CEO in Turkey. Her team consists of 45 people, 18 of them are in different EMEA countries. Main responsibilities are strategy development for people management, engagement, change management projects for bettering the employee experience and ensuring the excellent delivery of all processes. The company which she is working for is operating in more than 200 countries and have more than 250.000 employees worldwide. Executive leadership development is managed mostly by the headquarter office and executive coaching is the widely used method. In addition, job rotations across countries are the feeding opportunities for executive leadership positions.

2 - Necdet, Multinational, N-1

He is the director of Sales Department in a FMCG & Food company. He is responsible for Mediterranean region, reporting to CEO and a management committee member for the Turkish affiliate. His team consists of more than 500 people, 27 of them are direct report managers and the rest is their teams including the salespeople in the fields. Major responsibilities are partner management, client management, business development, sales, and excellent delivery of all sales operations. Next year, he will be promoted as the Managing Director in one of the biggest countries in Europe, for a period of at least

two years. The company is operating in more than 130 countries and have more than 100.000 employees worldwide. The executive leaders across different countries have strong relations and connectivity with each other. The company has an international business academy and most of the executive development activities are organized by this unit. Executive coaching is provided to almost every executive committee member.

3- Burak, Multinational, N-2

He is the Director of Retail Management in a retail company. He is located in Istanbul but responsible for all the regions of Turkey. He is reporting to the CEO and responsible for managing all the operation in stores of the brand, delivery of processes in large stores, and managing the relations with partners. His team consists of 35 people, 22 of them are direct reports and 13 of them are dotted-line reporting which means that he is like an additional supervisor for these employees. There are three senior managers and two managers directly reporting to him. Next year, he will be assigned as the Retail Director in one of the Europe countries and will be responsible for all EMEA region. The company is in 45 countries and have more than 70.000 employees worldwide. Learning and development policy of the company is based on a blended approach; where 70% of the learning relies on the job, 20% relies on learning from other people and 10% of the learning on formal trainings. The company has a variety of membership to online platforms and tools so that employees can shape and plan their own learning.

4- Ahmet, Multinational, N

He is the general manager in a Hospitality and Services company. He is in Istanbul but also have management team roles in UK. He is at the top level for Turkey and reporting

to the Board Committee and the Global Chair. For his roles in UK, he is reporting to the chair responsible for EMEA region. He is responsible for strategic decisions, operational excellence and standardization, management, and execution of all services in Turkey. Operational excellence and standardization in the upper scale market segment are his roles in UK. There are more than 2500 employees in Turkey, reporting directly or indirectly to him. The team in UK is reporting dotted line to him. He always worked for the same company. The company is in 105 countries and have more than 250.000 employees worldwide. For the leaders, the development programs are organized by the business academy annually in a chosen location and leaders, as participants, meet there. The business academy has now more than 90 in house training professionals who visit the local affiliates routinely and develop online tools to reach every employee.

5 - Tolga, Multinational, N-2

He is the Chief Digital Officer in a Household & Personal Care company. He is in Istanbul but responsible for the whole EMEA region. His responsibilities include digital marketing, e-commerce systems management, client relations management, media information technology and big data projects. Starting from next year, he will be a board member responsible for the same functions globally and will be working in the head quarter. He has six years of experience in executive leadership. The company is in 80 countries and have more than 105.000 employees worldwide. It is generally assumed that the executive leaders can be successful in managing any field and function in any location since they are defined as global leaders. They can be offered any executive leadership position in any countries since the expectation from a leader is the mobility, flexibility and managing diversity. Job rotations across different functions and countries

are experience-rich developmental tools for the executive leaders and mostly managed by the head quarter office. Coaching and mentoring are the most used methods for executive leadership team. Since he is working related to innovation and building new systems and processes in different regions, self-directed learning and searching are embedded in his role definition and forming his routines.

6 - Adil, Local, N

He is the board member in a Telecommunications company and in an industrial and commercial conglomerate located in Turkey. In parallel, he has his own consultancy company working in the field of strategy setting, restructuring, and start-up creation. He is responsible for strategy setting, restructuring, and consulting the transformation projects. The company, in which he has the major input as the board member, has the main management office in Istanbul but works in nine different countries. It has around 16.000 employees worldwide. The company wants the executive leadership positions to be filled through internal promotions, from within the company. For the people in the leadership talent pool, MBA programs and reputable project management certificates are supported both financially and through the allocation of working hours.

7- Sevim, Local, N

She is the general manager of an information technology company who is a member affiliate in a local conglomerate; that is focused on food manufacturing, information technology, retail, private equity, and real estate operations. She also has the additional role in the conglomerate and works as the chief corporate strategy officer. She is responsible for all the operations of the IT company in Turkey and MENA countries and

for the strategy development and business planning for all 130 countries where the conglomerate functions in. She is responsible for a team of more than 1000 employees, eight of them are direct reporting executive leaders with whom she closely works in the IT Company, and she has a team of six direct reporting directors for the Strategy Function. She is now more focused on ensuring the productivity and growth for the conglomerate and following the market trends and opportunities, particularly new technologies in e-commerce and manufacturing systems, for the conglomerate operations. She is currently working on a new performance evaluation system which aims to better the productivity. The conglomerate started as a local company in Turkey but for now, it operates in more than 100 countries. Learning and development activities are planned and executed mostly by the HR function. For the leaders, peer mentoring among the leadership team, across different affiliates are highly supported.

8- Berrak, Multinational, N-1

She is the head of communication in a pharmaceuticals company. She is in Istanbul but responsible for all EMEA region. Her responsibilities include internal communication, external communication, and relations with national and local authorities to register the products. She has a virtual team; eight direct reports, only two of them are located in Istanbul and the rest are in the countries of their responsibility. She is directly reporting to the global head of communication in France, dotted line reporting to the CEO in Turkey. The company operates in 140 countries and has 68.000 employees worldwide. It has a business academy and trainings are managed by this academy centralized. Locality is not supported in leader development strategy since these activities are seen as opportunities for networking and bringing the virtual teams together. Learning together

is defined as one of the company values and for this, they aim to bring diverse teams together and organize team activities and events as much as possible.

9- Zafer, Multinational, N-1

He is Chief Operating Officer (COO) in a pharmaceuticals company. He is a management team member for Turkey, is reporting to the CEO in Turkey and also to a global board committee member. He is responsible for finance, internal audit, information technology, purchasing and administration functions. Strategic Project Management Office is also reporting to him, and the agenda items of this office is strategy setting, business planning, monitoring execution, restructuring if needed, and management reporting. His business priorities are digitalization and operational excellence. He is focusing on restructuring the technological infrastructure of the company, supporting operational excellence, implementing new tools in financial reporting and project managing and in parallel searching for new opportunities and solutions to respond better to internal clients' needs. He is responsible for Turkey. His team consists of 64 people; two senior managers and 11 managers are directly reporting to him. The company operates in 100 countries and has more than 106.000 employees. Transforming the whole workplace into a learning space is the major learning and development strategy of the company. All the teams, initiated by their leaders, help each other to create a stress-free learning environment in which asking questions is promoted and making mistakes is tolerated. The organization highly supports job rotations and mobility programs where employees can take short- or long-term roles in other countries. Office is organized as an open space, there are no rooms even for the leaders so that this is thought to be supporting the learning environment. The company has four

different leadership academies, each of them are targeting a different level of management. For the executive leadership development, the program focuses more on leading the leaders and planning the future. They discuss more on how to drive success for tomorrow, drive performance, and build leadership excellence. Reflective practices, different experiences, simulations, networking, and coaching are embedded into the program design.

10- Meltem, Consulting, N

She is a partner in a multi-national professional services and management consultancy company. She is an executive committee member for Turkey and has a global, strategic follow-up role for ensuring the transparency and legal compliance of partnership in EMEA region. She has a team of 72 people; a junior partner, three directors and four senior managers are directly reporting to her. There are nine managers in the team who report to these directors and senior managers. She is reporting to the Senior Partner. She is in Istanbul, responsible for all Turkey and works closely with the partners in the EMEA countries. For her line, she is responsible to complete the business plan, focus on business development and sales activities, build the team continuously through hiring and develop the current team members, execute, and monitor the business plan and finally to complete the performance evaluation of her own service line. The company operates in more than 150 countries and has more than 200.000 employees. Regarding the nature of consultancy business, people are seen as the major assets of the company for sustainable growth and success. Thus, learning and development is a major priority for the company for over a decade. On the job learning. bringing the senior and junior talents together in teams and rotation programs to build skills and expertise and

positioning critical projects as a learning source are the major strategies for the company. The company also has a global corporate academy, in which both global and local programs are delivered. Some of the technical trainings and most of the leader development programs are organized by the global academy and the rest is left to local member firms. The company is willing to mobilize the talents on project basis, on short- or long-term mobility programs. For the executive management levels, the company offers hot seat programs, where the leaders take both strategic and executive roles in different regions, in the executive boards and at roles with global responsibility. The priorities of executive leadership development programs are business development, client management and people management. Since she is providing a consultancy service, she defined learning as embedded in her role definition, and as one of the major responsibilities in her expertise field.

11 - Oktay, Multinational, N-1

He is the CFO responsible for financial analysis, planning and business development functions in an insurance and professional services company. His responsibilities include analyzing the existing financial conditions, planning the short- and long-term financial goals of the company and ensuring the realization of these goals in line with the business goals and expectations, managing the investments and savings accordingly, and leading the business development strategy and activities. His major challenges are identifying the risks and opportunities beforehand while relying on the trends, economic research, and analysis. In parallel, he also has a managerial role in a leading trade professional association. He is in Istanbul, has strong links with the finance functions in EMEA region and responsible for all Turkey. He is a part of executive committee, reporting to

the CEO and working majorly with the local executive board and frequently with the COO. On ad hoc projects, he is working with the global team of financial analysis, planning and business development function which is reporting to the global COO. The company operates in 120 countries and has more than 50.000 employees. Since talents are defined as the most valuable asset of the company, corporate academy is organizing a variety of technical, business, and soft skill trainings both in class and online. There is a strong partnership between learning team and communication team so that they are organizing gatherings to make employees share experiences and problems, think, network with each other and act together to provide solutions. Some examples of these gatherings are working parents, women executives, first time managers and digitalization in the company group. For the executive development program, the priorities are building self-awareness, helping leaders to develop resilience through stretch experiences and special projects, encouraging them to work in international projects with multi-cultural teams, and becoming engaged leaders who connect strongly with their teams and serve as a facilitator of learning for them, and supporting them to build a team spirit in line with company's purpose and mission.

12- Feriha, Multinational, N-1

She is the director who is responsible for supply chain and logistics functions in a conglomerate that manages global supply chain systems in energy, manufacturing, and agriculture industries. She allocates 25% of her time working in Istanbul and the rest goes to an ongoing project in Azerbaijan. She is responsible for the strategy and execution of supply chain and logistics functions for the conglomerate's EMEA region, and she is leading a project for establishing the supply chain, logistics, organizational

design, purchasing and quality systems of a new metal manufacturing facility that the conglomerate is building. She is directly reporting to the chief supply chain and logistics officer and the executive director responsible for projects in Caucasus Region. For her role in EMEA region, her team consists of 12 people including two senior managers and three managers, who are located in three different cities in Europe. In Azerbaijan, she is working with a team of three senior managers and 15 expert engineers. The company operates in 40 countries and has 4.000 employees. Until the higher management levels, the company is supporting mostly the technical trainings. Starting with higher management levels; project management, client management, negotiation skills, diversity and working in different business cultures are added to the curriculum. Since the conglomerate is working in different geographies and mostly on project basis; dynamism, flexibility, adaptability, and resilience are the promoted leadership capabilities in the company. Challenging projects and international assignments are highlighted as learning opportunities for leaders.

13 - Yavuz, Local, N-1

He is the Vice President and the board member of an energy company, which is operating as part of a conglomerate. He is responsible for the management of the manufacturing facility, human resources, communication, operational excellence and quality, contract management and technical purchasing, social affairs and union relations, and automation functions within the company. Due to fast growth, new regulations and ongoing restructuring in the company, transformation is an important executive agenda, and he is also responsible for the strategic change management projects. Including the blue-collar workers in the facility, his teams consist of more than

8.000 employees. He is reporting to the general manager, who is a member of the conglomerate's board of directors. The conglomerate operates in more than 60 countries and has more than 95.000 employees. Leader development is mostly lead by the corporate academy and in collaboration with prominent universities. Executive coaching is frequently used. Since the industry is a leading one in terms of innovative products and systems; technical learning to strengthen the production is always on the learning agenda of the leaders. International conferences, networking activities with the industry leaders and experts globally and locally are highly supported to retrieve this knowledge.

14 - Ebru, Consulting, N-1

She is the Senior Principal of HR in a multinational management consulting company. She is responsible from HR consultancy unit that is executing projects in workforce management, organizational design, effectiveness, corporate performance management and reward systems and executive leadership development. Since the company has gone through a merge & acquisition process last year and has grown a lot, an internal HR department was needed. She is also responsible from the internal HR function of the company. In parallel to her role as a consulting principal, she has founded the internal HR function from the scratch and prepared all the HR processes in line with global head quarter, EMEA region and the expectations of the local consultancy market. This role is like a career change for her since until this role, she has worked in business development and strategy consultancy functions. Her priorities for this year are focusing on the engagement of employees, development of executive leadership team and operational excellence in the HR processes implemented in the former year. She is required to make the HR consultancy service grow and keep the deliveries of projects with success. She

has a team of 1 director, 1 senior manager and 12 senior consultants in HR consultancy function and 1 manager and three senior employees in HR function. She is reporting to the CEO in Turkey and the global Chief HR Officer in UK. The company operates in 52 countries, with more than 100 offices and has around 9000 employees. Learning from colleagues, mentoring, learning through doing the job and delivering in the projects, through participating to formal training programs particularly online ones are highly supported. The company has a global business academy and learning activities are led mostly by the head quarter currently. The company is willing to mobilize the talents on project basis, on short- or long-term assignments. Thus, they built a database and collected comprehensive information on each employee to enable project-based rotations in the company. For the executive level, the company is promoting building self-awareness and learning agility as important characteristics so that the leader can establish the individual learning plan. Learning priorities for leaders are defined as relationship management, business development, and change management. Almost all executive leaders are working with an executive coach in setting their own learning objectives, preparing personalized action plans, and fostering an environment for dialogue and practice to apply the learned concepts. The company is hosting events to bring the leaders together with other leaders from varying industries and experts in consultancy sector. These gatherings are seen as learning and networking opportunities.

15- Suna, Local, N-1

She is the Chief HR Officer of a local conglomerate, working in hospitality and services sector. The company has gone through a merge & acquisition process with another company in France and due to this merge, the size of the HR team has doubled in the last

year. She is now responsible for all the people processes and acquisitions related to people, works in the head quarter located in Istanbul but visits around more than 35 affiliates regularly. Priorities for this year are setting the new people strategy, redesigning the people processes related to this strategy and restructuring the company after the merge. HR team is 230 people in total, there are four reporting corporate HR directors who are responsible for recruitment and employer branding, learning and development, performance management and reward processes and 1 group HR director and two senior managers who are responsible for different companies located under the conglomerate. There are 36 employees who are responsible for the HR function located in the head quarter of the conglomerate, in Istanbul. The rest of the team are working in the affiliates, located in different countries and cities. She is reporting to the CEO, who is now located in France. The company operates in seven countries, with more than 35 affiliates and has around 18.500 employees. For the executive leader's development, the company is using system coaching tools that trigger collective questioning, brainstorming, and collaborating to find solutions among management team and action planning tools to ensure learning experiences for the leaders, individually and as a team.

16- Nur, Consulting, N

She is the general manager of a consultancy company, working in advertising and communication sectors. She is responsible for Turkey and United Arab Emirates offices. Her responsibilities are public relations, marketing and communication consultancy, management of different agencies and event companies, operational and people management of the company for the regions of Turkey and Dubai. Activities related to project management and client management are the routines of her day. 45 people are

working for the company: 28 people in marketing and communication, seven people in advertising and four in client management, three people in operational management of agencies and events companies and three people in central support functions like HR and finance. There are four direct reporting directors to her and under them, there are two managers. She is reporting to the board member responsible for Middle East, Turkey, India, and Africa and who is in United Kingdom. The company operates in 80 countries, with around 130.000 employees. Learning and development activities are mostly managed centralized and formal training programs form most of these activities. There are mini-MBA programs for mid-level managers. For executive leaders, there are programs which are focusing on client management and strategic planning. These are opportunities to bring leaders of the company and making them share their own experiences and cases with each other. When they have promoted to top management levels, every leader went through a two years job rotation program aiming to make them gain more experience in different range of marketing and communication disciplines, unique projects with different scopes and in different cultures. Intranet and online tools are also used in the company for trainings and to share best practices.

17- Onur, Multinational, N-1

He is working as the director of project management function in a multinational infrastructure and communication company. This function is delivering projects to clients who are working in internet, technology, telecommunication, information technology and automation. He has dual responsibilities; responsible from the operational management and business development of the function and also has his own projects to deliver in Africa, Middle East, and rarely European countries. These projects

are either over large in size which can only be delivered through the contribution of multiple stakeholders and producers, strategic due to the existence of government relations and/or unique with no former data, knowledge, and expertise. In the last three years, he has worked and lived in five different countries within his scope. Currently there are seven experienced project managers in his own team but in the function, there are around 125 people working as project members. Each team is formed on project bases and thus the whole function is going through a continuous restructuring. Project members can work in multiple projects simultaneously, might be company employees from other countries, or responsible employees of the clients. He is reporting to two people concurrently, senior vice president responsible for his function and the head responsible for MENA region. The company is operating in around 180 countries and has 112.000 employees. Learning activities are organized by the corporate academy. In class trainings were the most used methods but since the company works project based and in different locations, online tools began to take more attraction. Technical expertise and business development mindset are the prioritized capabilities. For the leaders, the programs are focused on sales skills, negotiation, managing virtual teams and leading people in different cultures. Intranet and online project tools are also used worldwide to share best practices and failures, difficulties and facilitators, observations and significant knowledge gained through delivered projects. Networks of leaders are highly supported.

18- Ayfer, Multinational, N

She is an independent board member in a multi-national bank. She is responsible as the president of corporate management, governance, and audit committees. The responsibilities of these committees are setting the strategy and vision, analyzing the

activities and the results of the company, consulting the execution of the company in performance and risk management processes. Her responsibility is to advise the management team for making sure that the company has well operating financial control and reporting systems, and act in line with the risk management regulations. The company is operating in more than 60 countries and has more than 200.000 employees. For leader development, the company uses mentoring, job shadowing, coaching and gatherings that bring leaders with shared interests together.

19- Kerem, Multinational, N-2

He is the head of business marketing in a multinational company operating in Internet, Software & Technology Services sector. His function targets other companies and rarely individual consumers to use their infrastructure and solutions in their daily operations or for selling these to other businesses through them. In eight months, he will be promoted to a new role in the EMEA region and will work as the head of the respective function in EMEA region. Now, he has a team of nine people who are responsible for companies in different regions of Turkey. He is now reporting to head of function in Turkey, who reports directly to the CEO of EMEA region. The company is operating in 22 countries and has around 80.000 employees. Management team members are coming together monthly and sharing experiences and insights. They are in a way forming an advice group for each other. This is the learning and development approach of the company, for all levels. 80 % of the formal trainings within the company are presented from employees as internal trainers to other employees. Some of the popular trainings delivered by employees are negotiation skills, networking skills, and role related technical skills. Executive leaders are particularly called to share their failures and to

discuss the reasons for these failures which are presented as learnings for others. The other important items in learning and development are feedback and widely used company databases like corporate wiki.

20- Mete, Multinational, N

He is the general manager in a multi-national company operating in tobacco sector. He is now responsible for Turkey, and some of the countries in Middle East and Balkans. He is spending most of his time visiting the countries of his responsibility. Together with the functional directors, he is responsible for all the operations of the company for these regions. There are eight directors who are responsible for different functions and directly reporting to him. In total, there are more than 5500 employees working for the company in these regions, majority of them are blue-collar workers. He is reporting to the senior vice president who is responsible for Eastern Europe, Middle East, and Africa regions. He is responsible for strategy planning, budget planning, resource allocating, formulating operational policies, coordinating operations, communicating with authorities, managing relations with unions, monitoring the costs, and maintaining operational excellence. He is dedicating a lot of time to build a right team, influencing, and motivating the staff. The company is operating in more than 180 countries and has 80.000 employees. Due to a transformation project that is just launched, the management team announced that they will require new skills, different management styles and work practices soon. Entrepreneurship and result-driven culture are even more important now for the company. Majority of learning and development activities are organized in an online learning management platform. The company uses personality questionnaire, 360-degree feedback evaluation and peer review to create an individual development

report for each employee. Based on their functions, levels and the desired competences, employees have access to variety of learnings and prepare their own individual development plans. For executive leadership development, the same steps are executed but an executive coach supports these leaders in the preparation of individual development plans. The company is promoting job rotations, global mobility programs and task force groups as important experiential learning tools. Experience gained through different assignments are positioned as a requirement to excel in leadership positions. Executive coaching, cross-cultural coaching, peer, and reverse mentoring are also promoted learning opportunities for executive leaders. Intranet is also used as an experience sharing platform within the company.

21- Bahar, Local, N-1

She is working as the global brand development and marketing director in a local FMCG & Beverage company. She is responsible for Turkey and MENA countries. Business development to new countries, brand management, market research, advertising and all communication activities are under her and her team's responsibility. She is in Istanbul but regularly visiting the countries of her responsibility. Currently, there are six senior managers who are directly reporting to her and who are responsible for different categories of products and 28 team members in their teams. Since entrance of the products in new countries and globalization are major priorities for the company, she is working very close to the board committee. She is reporting to CEO. The company is operating in seven countries and has around 8000 employees in all countries. For the executive leadership team, executive coaching, and attendance to conferences in the specific field of responsibility are used. Since executive leaders are mostly working in

different countries, managing cultural differences is a prioritized learning agenda requested within the company. Currently, executive leaders are coming together with their peers who are also working in other countries and learning each other's experiences, approaches, and solutions.

22- Ercan, Multinational, N-1

He is the Deputy General Manager in an international manufacturing company. He is responsible for strategy planning, business development, partner management and sales. He has 42 employees in total in the team, three of them are directors who are directly reporting to him. Four team members in finance and administration functions, who are working close with his team, are reporting dotted line to him. He is reporting to the General Manager for the execution of Turkish market management. Since entrance to the new countries, globalization and global project management are priorities for the company, he is reporting also to the board committee for strategic business development. He and his team are mainly responsible for the market in Turkey but for the big projects in highly industrial countries such as Japan and US; he has roles in global management of projects. The company is operating in 40 countries. It has around 225.500 employees worldwide. The executive leaders are working very closely with each other. For the international projects, they are meeting weekly, mostly through online meeting platforms. For bigger projects, these leaders are forming task force teams and work collectively in global management of these projects. Executive leader development is organized by the global HR function. The leaders share their own ideas and needs with this global team and according to common highlights, the agenda and content are chosen for leader development in the respective year. These learning

activities involve discussion sessions, brainstorming activities, key talks from global leaders and experience sharing sessions with the peers. Moreover, the major aim of these gatherings – at least two times for a year – is bringing the leaders together, making them build networks and learn from each other/together. Executive coaching is also used frequently within the company.

23- Cansu, Multinational, N-2

She is the Group Manager, responsible for center of excellence and people strategy in a multi-national company working in insurance sector. She is responsible for two countries and managing the center of excellence departments specialized in performance development, talent management, organizational development, internal communication, and HR analytics. Her team consists of 25 members, there are two senior managers and three managers who are directly reporting to her. In Turkey, she is reporting to the VP responsible for the function. In the other country, she is reporting dotted line to the leader who is responsible for merge process of two countries. She is working with the peer executives in different affiliates of the company for taking benchmarks and learning about their experiences in the execution of specific projects and in the implementation of globally led priorities. The company is operating in 70 countries and has around 140.000 employees worldwide. Learning and development of the company is blended. They are asking for priorities and needs of every employee and, transforming these into annual learning and development roadmaps. For executive leader development, executive coaching, peer learning, and mentoring are frequently used methods.

Next, information about how interviews are planned and conducted is shared.

3.2.6 Interviews

The field research started in April 2017 and continued until the end of May 2018. All the interviews were conducted in participants' own offices, in Istanbul. I was open to conduct the interviews at places chosen by the participants both inside and outside the companies but due to their busy agendas, they all preferred their own rooms or a meeting room in the company's office. In general, the interviews were conducted in lunch breaks, after work hours or early in the morning before the work starts. While organizing the pilot and primary interviews, I understood that there will be difficulties to find available time slots, cancellations, and necessities to reschedule interviews. Therefore, I started to ask the participants about multiple, alternative slots and tried to be flexible in terms of arrangements. But, if we can`t reschedule the interview within a month again, I decided to eliminate the participant. 13 of the interviews were cancelled at the last minute, 7 of them is moved to an already discussed alternative time slot and 6 of them were rescheduled again in another time slot. I did not need to eliminate any of the potential participants which I could set an interview time. For not forgetting anything, I have kept written notes to document my observations, thoughts, feelings, and observations about the organizational contexts and my participant`s interactions with other people during and around the interview time.

After the agreement about the participation to the research, I sent the participants the informed consent form for sharing detailed information about the aim of the research, why they are chosen as participants, emphasis on the anonymity of the organization and the participant, and how the collected data will be used and information about recording the interview. I also sent them the first part of the interview form, the first 5 questions about the demographics of the participants and asked them to fill it

beforehand and sent to me. This provided me more time in the interview to focus on other questions and to check once again that the participant is fitting with the set criteria defined around gold-collar characteristics, in terms of the years of leadership experience and willingness to become a part of the research.

In the beginning of the interview, I gave the printed informed consent form to the participants, and they gave their confirmation to participate to the research by signing it before the interviews. Then, I continued with conducting the interview. Interviews lasted between 55 to 75 minutes. They were all recorded. 4 participants were not very comfortable with the voice recorder but after verbal explanation of the reasons, they approved its usage. I also kept notes with some reflections during the interviews. After the interviews, I sent the final transcriptions to the participants for approval, but this was done just as a responsibility without expectation since at the end of nearly all interviews, they have already mentioned that they would probably have no time to read and approve it later. Instead, they have delegated this to me as the researcher and said that if anything was unclear or missing, I should re-contact with them. After all, I did not need to do this.

3.3 Data analysis

Parallel to qualitative research`s evolvement in years, new approaches to data analysis also emerged. In all these approaches, the researcher is key to interpret the findings in accordance with one's own worldview, aim and positionality (de Casterlé, Gastmans, Bryon, & Denier, 2012). Although this is the strength of qualitative research, it is also one of the biggest challenges due to the possibility of not finding where to start analyzing or organizing the data into meaningful units.

Underlying the lack of practical guidelines for the researchers in qualitative data analysis process, de Casterlé et al., (2012) state that the researcher should begin first by thinking on possible causes that may lead to several problems during the data analysis. The authors underline over-reliance on qualitative software packages, being lost in overload of lines and words in coding, the dilemma of whether or not to perform pure inductive coding or coding with the help of pre-conceived notions, the difficulty in retaining the integrity of each participant's story, the lack of the touch with participant's world in interpretation and perception of the analysis as an individual rather than a collective process as the possible reasons that lead to problems in data analysis. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) state that obtaining the 'one size fits all approach' is the major cause creating problems for the researcher while analyzing the data.

One major problem with collecting and analyzing informal learning data is, some shared experiences and answers are like narratives through which the participants organize the stories, the position of one`s own and other`s into a meaningful whole while connecting and seeing the consequences of these intentionally and unintentionally taken positions, and the learning occurred over time (Chase, 2005). Informal learning is broad, imprecise and goes on while reflecting on multiple experiences just in time. The person may not be aware of the learning or does not interpret a definite experience as a learning until the moment of interview, or a question since learning may happen through longer times, very positive events and smoothly through routines in addition to sudden, dramatic moments, and in different settings including the workplace. In this context, the interview itself may also act as a moment where the unconscious learning becomes a conscious one, or the same learning is given the meaning from another point of view.

As I completed the transcription of interviews and started to read them, I realized that this complexity about informal learning will be one of the major difficulties in the data analysis part of this research. The data collected in this research was also about important past experiences resulting with learning and reflecting on those experiences from an informal learning framework. The interviews were like spontaneous reflection for the participants about their former learning events and experiences. They were thinking about their own learning and leadership, also conceptually as they were speaking. The stories and highlights shared were shaping the participants' current positions, decisions, perspectives, and actions as a leader therefore, they involved analyzing the past experiences from an informal learning point of view questioning about self, trying to organize the highlights into a meaningful whole and building some self-knowledge through these. Therefore, the participants described these in a very unstructured way, sometimes referred to the answers they provided in the former questions, sometimes changed those answers, continuously moved back and forth while answering and shared their awareness gained while describing. They also had difficulties to clearly separate what is the learning, how this respective learning occurred, and why it has occurred, and this brought difficulties in matching the answers with the research questions and while writing the findings. The answers provided particularly to critical incident questions were harder to differentiate into meaningful units.

Eraut (2004, 2008) says that studying informal workplace learning is not easy since so much learning goes unrecognized, and this requires thinking about learning experiences and differentiation between forms of learning when all are happening at once. This difficulty is also relevant for collecting and analyzing the data. Therefore, he frames his typology for workplace and describes informal learning outcomes, processes

and activities, and factors leading to informal learning in this typology. The typology is also helpful to simplify the complexity of data collection and data analysis phases. He identifies task performance, role performance, awareness and understanding, personal development, knowledge and skills, teamwork, decision making and problem solving, and judgment as major outcome categories of informal learning in the workplace. Work processes with learning as a by-product, learning activities located within work or learning processes, and learning processes at or near the workplace together with associated practices are discussed in detail in the typology. Likely, Hoggan (2016) adds the complexity and difficulty in exploring transformative informal learning experiences while having the direct impact over all the steps of research, including the data analysis. Underlining that transformative learning should involve a deep, structural, and permanent shift in the ways of being in the world; he also suggests focusing on the learning outcomes to start analyzing the phenomenon. He suggests worldview, self, epistemology, ontology, behavior, and capacity as the major outcome categories of transformative informal learning in the workplace. Both authors define subcategories and detailed descriptions and definitions under these major categories. For example, while Eraut (2008) defines role performance as a major category of learning outcomes; delegation, crisis management, accountability, prioritization, supporting other people`s learning form some of the sub-category learning outcomes related to role performance.

Bott and Tourish (2016) suggest that critical incidents questions provide learning outcomes, thinking, and reflecting about what and how one learned informally. Therefore, they offer three steps of analyzing and interpreting data collected through critical incident questions: basic interpretation, reflexivity and problematization. Basic interpretation is about getting familiar with what happened, where and when it happened

and what the immediate reactions and responses to these are. It provides understandings about the experiences. Reflexivity is about exploring how the participant interprets his / her own position and how this has been challenged and changed. It involves comparisons of former and current knowledge, skills, perspectives, assumptions, capacities, beliefs, and behaviors. It provides understandings about the reasons and sources of informal learning. The third step, problematization is about how the learner becomes a different individual through their learnings and experiences, how they reconceptualize the focused phenomenon and/or redefine their own identity. The authors underline that qualitative research has the benefits for CIT but requires a consistent approach since the important findings may be highly situational and contextual. The discussion about the consistent approach for analyzing the CIT data is missing, therefore they propose to use this structure while analyzing the respective data.

Keeping all these highlights in mind, I combined the points proposed by Eraut (2004, 2008), Hoggan (2016) and the steps of Bott and Tourish (2016) and prepared a structure to use through the data analysis process. It is important to note that, for not limiting the breadth and scope of findings, I did not specify all these components as a starting point and use them as pre-conceived notions. Instead, I used them as a helpful basis for coding that can be used through the analysis. The themes, dimensions and codes are built and finalized after multiple readings of the data collected and as analysis is completed. The themes, dimensions and codes frame is available in Appendix G.

First, I started the data analysis by reading all the transcribed individual interviews to familiarize myself with the whole data I collected. In this way, I tried to gain more insights about the critical highlights, some commonalities, and differences in the interviews. In the second reading, I primarily took each interview as a case and tried

to see the critical highlights, key phrases, and manners of explanations. I started to formulate the codes for the interviews and checked whether the prepared structure is a good point to start with or not in terms of reflecting the initial patterns and codes. In parallel, I did complete the first step of text-mining process, which will be explained in detail below, and compared the frequently used words with the initial patterns I found. In the third reading, I reviewed the interviews line by line and used different colorings to highlight the categories and respective subcategories of learning outcomes in line with Eraut`s and Hoggan`s typologies. For example, all the answers related to role performance as a learning outcome category and its sub-categories together with descriptions are highlighted with green. The red color is allocated to the highlights that I do not think that fit with any of these categories. At the end of the third reading, I prepared a matrix of participants/ categories and added the subcategories, what is learned and described into the cells. This matrix table provided a systematic way to analyze and to compare the data for further steps.

In the fourth reading of transcribed interviews, I focused more to analyze how these outcomes are learned. I analyzed the data in terms of sources and strategies of learning, and factors that led the participants to learn. I labelled the featured developmental experiences with E, strategies and activities with SA, individual characteristics with C, organizational factors with F, processes with P. I matched these with the related learning outcomes and progressed the former excel table by adding these into the relevant cells. Even after the excel table is prepared, there were still overlapping points of what is being learned, why it is being learned and how it is learned since the shared experiences were explained in way that is uniting all. The line-by-line reading,

coloring, and transforming these into the matrix helped me a lot to focus on multiple meanings at the same time or to differentiate these into meaningful units.

The already completed analysis and recording the findings in a structured way formed the basis for the reflexivity and problematization steps, to explore how the participants reflect on and interpret their learnings and how they explain about their changes further. Thus, the fifth reading was done through the interpretive lens provided by Bott and Tourish (2016) and particularly focused on the answers provided to CIQs in the interview form. I accepted these answers as separate narratives and wrote short notes about each of these involving two titles: reflexivity and problematization. The reflexivity part of these notes involved the participant`s interpretation of their own position in the incident, how this position is challenged and how their current positions have changed compared to the former ones. The problematization part of these notes included new conceptualizations related to leadership, redefinition of themselves as different/better leaders and reformulation of their leader identities. Thus, all these incidents are analyzed in relation to the retrospective meaning making process based on past experiences. Within the cases, these helped me to see the most critical experiences, the transformative ones, their outcomes, the changes of individuals as leaders and their linkages with more abstract concepts like leadership and learning.

In the last step, I compared each individual case with other cases in terms of findings and emerging themes. I tried to understand the homogeneities and heterogeneities among the individual interviews. For this phase of analysis, I used the matrix, my former colorings of learning outcomes, the letters and notes written for CIQs. These provide a basic, systematic way to compare the data cross the cases. These helped me to see common experiences, shared learning outcomes, featured sources, strategies,

activities, processes, and factors leading to learning, and joint conceptualizations and definitions. This was very helpful to obtain a broader picture, since "the combination of within-case and cross-case analysis techniques produces contextually grounded findings, retaining the integrity of each interview and taking into account the context of other interviews" (de Casterlé et al., 2012, p. 368). Parallel to this last step, the second phase of text-mining process, which will be explained in detail below, is completed. The results of it also helped me complete the cross-case analysis, provided a clearer picture of the relations between findings and demographics, and to control the completeness of my findings. After all, I linked all the findings with my research questions and finalized my themes and concepts. The whole process of data analysis is summarized in Figure 6:

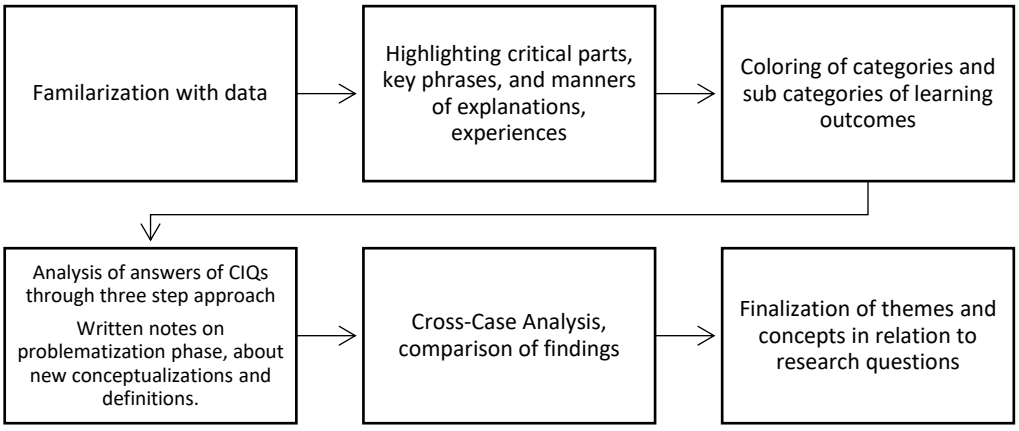


Figure 6. Process of data analysis

As I was analyzing the interview data, I also reviewed the documents and materials shared with me by the research participants. These included corporate and/or program documents like leader development roadmaps, annual reports, culture and transformation project communication documents, intranet site screenshots, coaching tools, project management and strategy analysis tools, content from leadership academies which they

save to remember, referred videos, social media accounts and books, and examples of their SDL practices. These data were supplementary and did not contain narrative characteristics. I applied coding phase just for the interview data. For the data collected through documents and materials, I only checked whether these have contradictory parts with the findings of the interviews or not. I considered my field notes, observations and in-between dialogues with the participants and made sure that no information was missed which could be evaluated as supplementary data. This supplementary data, to some extent, supported the credibility of the data achieved by interviewing.

Parallel to the steps of analysis explained above, the interview data was shared with a data scientist for the completion of a text-mining process. Text mining is the art of turning texts into numerical variables and then analyzing them with statistical techniques to generate common codes by writing specific scripts. It can be used to categorize or cluster answers to open-ended questions in surveys and to analyze transcribed interviews (Schonlau & Guenther, 2016). It contributes to qualitative data analysis in terms of reliability, facilitating more efficient, comprehensive, and transparent data familiarization and coding (Mayring, 2014). Text mining still requires researcher led interpretative analysis of transcripts for meaningful results but helps to retrieve information from unstructured text into a structured and visual format to view and interpret results (Huang & Zhang, 2009). Although analysis is made through scripts, text mining is like systematized content analysis which aims to extract common themes by counting words and presenting the interrelations between them (Kuckartz, 2019).

For the analysis, the data scientist completed a data driven content analysis the text mining process. Text mining process may include the detailed analysis about the frequency of words, bags of words/word associations, conceptual associations,

differential use of concepts or words. In the text mining process for this study, the frequency of words and bags of words / word associations that are extracted from the transcripts are analyzed.

The data scientist used Python programming language to write the scripts and utilized Natural Language Tool Kit (NLTK, www.nltk.org) as a framework for Python to work with language data. NLTK provides a broad library and guidelines to write the scripts like graphical demonstrations, sample data to explain the processing tasks that are impacted by the underlying structure of the language being processed and tips to implement the text mining steps explained in detail below. Depending on the tasks being implemented, NLTK supports various languages including Turkish. Since the Turkish Natural Language Tool Kit (TRNLTK) is still being developed by numerous data scientists as an open source, it provides very helpful but limited guidance to directly apply in text mining process. It helped the data scientist and me with finding stop words in Turkish, creating automatic rules for forming bags of words, stemming, and understanding the morphological structure of Turkish language better (i.e., attachments like -i/-e/-ler are added to the end of the words making the categorization under the root word more complex). But due to the ongoing development of TRNLTK, we also utilized NLTK simultaneously for the processing. This required more manual review work from me, as the researcher, like checking lists of words and bags of words/word associations provided through Python numerous times while implementing steps explained below:

1. The unique pseudonym name was assigned to the respective transcript to ensure anonymity and mapping of demographic features.
2. The data was prepared in two formats to initiate processing. First, each transcript was arranged by a standardized format in Microsoft Word. Second, the answers provided

to each individual interview question were separated from transcripts and consolidated in a participant – question number matrix in Microsoft Excel.

3. In the first step, all the words used by the participants were listed in separate excel tables for each interview question from 11 to 20. After this initial listing, the steps below are completed to prepare the data for further analysis. Through these steps, I reviewed these word lists manually in order to not to miss any merging or categorization requirements:

    A. Stopword and punctuation removal: Words with limited relevance to the content of interview and without any valuable information (i.e.: *bir, ve, ile*) were removed automatically due to TRNLTK.
    B. Stemming & lemmatization step involves merging words with the same root (ex: *deneyim, deneyimi, deneyime*) and/or tagging words with similar meanings into same category (ex: *tecrübe* and *deneyim*). Plurals of concepts (ex: *hata, hatalar*), different words with same meaning (ex: *müdür* and *yönetici*), same words used in English and Turkish (ex: *experience* and *deneyim*) were merged.
    C. Tokenization into n-grams: N-gram is a connecting sequence of n items from a given text or speech. After the completion of steps A and B, all the single words (i.e., *risk, kriz*) and bags of words (i.e., *terfi etmek, risk almak*) are tokenized into the list. Relying on the practical information noted from TRNLTK and NLTK and these merging / categorization steps, words related to each other and/or frequently used as bags of words / words association (i.e., *deneyim kazanmak, risk almak*) are tokenized and listed together. Finally, these with their frequency of usage and the number of distinct participants who used those words for the respective interview question were presented in tables. Overall, this first phase of text processing assisted me to get familiarized with my data in an effective and helpful way.

4. The presented excel tables for each interview question from 11 to 20 helped me to see the regularly used words, to clarify patterns and differences, and to check the alignment with categories and subcategories identified through my own coding. I analyzed the relations between the word usage by frequency and the distinct number of participants who used those words while answering the respective question. For example, there were some words which were used frequently, by almost all of the participants. On the other hand, there were some words which were used by less

participants, but in a very consistent manner, considerably high in terms of frequency. If the number of distinct participants was low but the frequency of the respective word's usage was high, then I looked at these parts in the interviews once again. For example, as a sub-category of learning through others, leading people from different generations is underlined by 3 participants, for two different questions. But these individuals used the word generation 32 times. Thus, I looked at these parts in the interviews once again. In this way, I could also see the rare but significant insights in addition to the common ones.

5. In the second step, I provided a research question – interview questions matching list to the data scientist. According to this matching, the data scientist presented three consolidated excel tables which involved the tokenized list of words and bags of words/word associations, their frequencies of usage, the distinct number of participants used the respective words / bags of words, and the distinct number of participants separated according to demographic features involving gender, years of experience, years of leadership experience, age, and managerial level. The most frequently used words / bags of words were presented also in word clouds as a visualized summary of the findings.

Based on the findings of text processing, categories and subcategories were seen for each research question, and common themes and concepts were formed. It was also possible to see differences and commonalities according to the demographic features of the participants. I compared the findings presented out of the text mining analysis with the themes and concepts of my own coding. The results of the text mining process and my own coding conducted in parallel were similar. This gave me the chance to assess

reliability and ensured that the data analysis is reliable. I became also sure about that there is nothing significant that is left out.

During the analysis process executed through the steps explained above, it was possible to work through a systematic structure where constant moves back and forth within each individual interview and between the interviews were possible. Coloring, providing letters, writing notes and the excel tables created made it possible not to lose the uniqueness and the wholeness of each case, while giving the chance to see the bigger picture, the similarities, and differences between them. I did remember all the leaders I interviewed with a clarity although considerable amount of time had passed between the interviews and analysis. Although completing all these phases of data analysis were time consuming; the process overall was very useful and valuable for me, as the researcher since it provided a holistic approach for data analysis. Moreover, using more than one type of analysis helped me to strengthen the consistency and reliability of the findings (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings simultaneously under four major sections. First part involves commonalities among the participants in terms of social and cultural capitals, lifestyles and routines related to their leadership roles. In this part, I also share the common features of the companies which the participants work for. The second part includes findings and discussions about what the participants learned through their paths of becoming leaders, how they excelled in terms of executing their tasks and responsibilities. This part involves external factors, forces and dynamics that yield the participants to learn informally. They learned to become, act, and behave as leaders while going through these experiences and responding to these external factors, forces, and dynamics. In the third part, I present the findings and discuss about what the participants learned as part of their role performance involving the mindsets, management values, principles, perspectives, beliefs, and assumptions. This part also involves the findings related to their conceptual highlights related to leadership and their own leader identities, how they transformed into the leader they are today. The fourth part is about the participants` sources, strategies, and processes of learning informally. In this part, individual and contextual factors that are influencing the informal learning in the workplace are presented.

4.1 Commonalities among the participants, their companies, and roles

Before the interviews, I collected some of the biographical information from the participants in written format. The interviews began with the company, work, and role

related questions. I continued with the learning questions that focused on how they perceive learning, what are the important lessons learned, and why and how they learned these. This part included questions specific to sources and strategies of informal learning in the workplace. The last part of the interviews focused on the critical incidents to explore the developmental experiences and moments through their work lives that contributed to their learning. As shared by the participants, answering the questions in the interview was a chance to think about and to reflect on their prior learnings, on self, relations, leadership concept and environments. So, the interviews themselves involved a potential for informal learning.

This structure has helped me to build quick rapport with the participants since all of them were very willing to share their learnings, personal histories, and transformations, to look at their companies and work experiences from the lens of informal learning and remember both the challenges they have gone through, the successes they have gained and the failures they have experienced. In this way, I was also able to collect information about their leader identities and some common features as a differentiating, unified work group.

I conducted 23 interviews and all the participants were corporate executive leaders who were working in multinational companies or in consulting companies identified according to the pre-set criteria. To ensure the size and international operations, the companies were chosen from top company ranking lists prepared by prominent business journals in 2017, according to the criteria of financial metrics (sales, profit, assets, market value), number of employees and number of countries in which the company is operating in. All participants were from different companies.

Seven participants were positioned at the top of their companies, working at N Level, leading the executive management team in the company and/or acting as a board member. 12 participants working at N-1 level were responsible for one or many functions in the organization and a member of management team. Four participants were working at N-2 level[8]. In terms of total work experience, they varied between 12 and 40 years while making 21,5 years on average. In terms of executive leadership experience, they have varied between five and 24 years while making nine years on average. On the case of expertise, they were managing 12 different functions with 32 different functional sub-areas. In terms of gender distribution, there were 11 females and 12 males. 12 participants had graduate degrees, and 11 participants had undergraduate degrees.

Through the interviews the participants referred the top/high level management leaders, and management teams / committees in different organizations as "us" multiple times, while referring and highlighting the various commonness among themselves as a distinct work group. Regarding these commonalities, all of the participants have undergraduate degrees from either engineering or administrative areas like business administration, economics, and public administration from the prominent public universities (i.e., Boğaziçi University, Middle East Technical University, Istanbul Technical University, and Istanbul University and so on) or private universities (Sabancı University, Koç University, Bilkent University and so on). 12 of the participants have graduate degrees, five of them have completed MBA or executive MBA programs and

[8] Top-level management positions are presented with Level N in the corporations. High-level management positions are represented with Level N-1 and these leaders report directly to N Level leaders (Bertrand, 2009; Useem & Karabel, 1986). According to the size of the company, leaders at Level N-2 are considered close to high level management since they have strategy setting, decision-making responsibilities, and profit and loss (P&L) responsibilities, leading experienced managers and responsible for high number of employees (Ashkenas et al., 2015).

four of them completed their degrees in US universities. Therefore, as part of their cultural capital, the participants have similar and profound educational background.

Related to educational background, there are some commonalities related to their decisions related education, and educational background of their families. In the interviews, some of the participants provided information about their private lives and families. All the spouses of those participants are also graduated from these universities and three of the spouses shared are working also at executive leadership positions. Some of these participants referred that their children are either going to or have been graduated from well-known private schools in Turkey. The participants are clearly aware about the cultural capital gained through education.

Competence in English is an important part of their cultural capital. All the participants are fluent in English. Since 15 of the participants currently have international responsibilities and teams, English is like the official, common language in their companies. All the data, information and knowledge that is produced by the headquarters of these companies, the reports that are prepared to be distributed on regional basis and sources that are prepared by the companies for sharing information are all prepared in English. During the interviews, I observed that while the participants were explaining about their responsibilities and daily routines, they used English words extensively. Leadership, technical and soft-skills terminologies dominating their work lives, and some daily routines are all used in English. As examples, words related to daily flow (meeting, call, brainstorming, collaboration) and words related to leadership (direct reports, management meeting, board, peer, business planning, Key Performance Indicator [KPI], presentation) and words related to skills (strategic thinking, networking, coaching, feedback) are widely used during the interviews. Moreover, English is the

preferred language for learning and information gathering among the participants. They are reading books, following journals, watching videos and TV series, taking online trainings, and participating to conferences and webinars all in English.

English is not only an indicator of their cultural capital, but what the participants accessed through English is related with their lifestyles, values, and leadership identities. Through their career paths in multinational companies, the participants have participated in numerous management trainings and leadership programs organized either in the headquarter or a target, foreign country chosen for that year. Trends in leadership, significant capabilities, and skills, globally discussed concepts, stories, and cases related to business practices and experiences of other executive leaders were shared in these trainings and programs. Leaders from all over the world participated these programs while an expected set of approaches and values of leadership, mostly Western, were promoted in these programs. In other words, through English, the participants accessed to a homogenized set of leadership expectations and transformed their values, beliefs, capabilities, behaviors, and lifestyles accordingly. To understand this transformation, it will be helpful to remember how Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2003) described it:

> Cosmopolitan in taste and usually Anglo-American in outlook, these are the people who attend business school weddings around the world, fill-up the business class lounges at international airports, provide the officer ranks of most of the world's companies and international institutions, and through their collective efforts, probably do more than anyone else to make the world seem smaller. (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003, p. 229)

The companies which the participants work for are multinational companies operating in between seven to more than 200 countries. The number of employees is ranging between 6000 to 265,000 worldwide. The ones I labelled as local companies mean that their headquarters are in Turkey, and they are originated from Turkey but the size they

reached exceed the national limits. In terms of governance structure, there are commonalities among these companies. Usually there are executive boards/committees on the top which are responsible for setting the strategy, assigning the local management committees / executive committees` team members, following, and evaluating the implementation of strategic priorities and taking decisions related to those, and completing the evaluation of affiliates and the local management committees / executive committees` results at the end of the year. Varying from company to company, these executive boards / committees are either globally or regionally organized. The members include the global/regional top management leaders, CEO and external members chosen and assigned for their unique expertise and capabilities. The affiliates` local management committees / executive committees involve leading top/high management levels leaders in the region/local who are responsible for main functions, one or more, in the company and the CEO. As the top management team, they are responsible for transforming the strategic plan into execution plans, foreseeing the possible risks and problems, eliminating those, improving the local processes, taking major decisions in the region to realize the strategic priorities, and overall ensuring that the annual targets are met. The management teams / local executive committees have monthly and quarterly meetings to review the status, to take decisions and to evaluate already taken results. Most of the companies have a matrix structure, in which leaders report to a country based and a global/regional leader. They usually have very close working relations with other members of management team / local executive committee and with the other leaders who are leading similar function in other countries of the company.

In terms of annual routines, major time and effort are allocated for strategy discussion workshops, brainstorming sessions, following the present trends, and

discussing about possible future ones, reviewing possible problems and changes that may impact the business, searching, reading, participating to conferences and so on. These are all done to set the right strategy and to transform it into the appropriate execution plan for their responsibility areas. These activities are intensified in around four to six months while intersecting with the execution of the approved plan. Following the current plan, making sure that it is executed, following the daily social and economic changes, and foreseeing their possible impacts on the business, building global and local networks, and communicating with regional and local decision makers impacting their business -like government people, policy setters, media, professional associations and so on – and exchanging information in the networks are routine practices.

The daily routines of the participants are face to face or online meetings with their teams, peers, bosses, and clients and contacting with experts and consultants, decision makers related to the projects. The participants are dedicating important time to follow the processes and implementation of the execution plan, listening to their teams, and taking actions to solve problems. Self-directed learning, networking, reading, watching videos are among the learning routines which are preferred. Travelling - mobility is also highlighted as a common, weekly routine. As a result of this intensity of the agenda, working hours are highly extended.

The routines of the participants are also shaped with the economic capital they have. The participants are representing the financial power of their companies and on behalf of the company, they are taking financial decisions which may have huge impact and managing the assets of the company which form considerable amount of the budget. For functions working mostly with external clients, like marketing and sales, the participants explained about annual objectives that are set in terms of precise, numerical

indicators. These participants defined their functions as the “core businesses” from which the company makes most of its profits from. For example, the head of sales function (Necdet, Multinational, N-1) takes his own objectives from global executive board, aligns with the management team in the country and distributes those to the other leaders in his function who are directly reporting to him in three layers: functional, team and individual targets. At the yearend performance review, the performance bonus of him as the function`s major lead – which forms 30-50 % of his annual income – is calculated through the successes of these three layers plus the company layer. To summarize; in addition to the agreed percentage that comes from the success of the company; his success is evaluated in relation to the success of his function, teams and individuals who are reporting to him. Thus, he is accountable for the performances of the company, his own function and teams within the function and the individuals within those teams. Even for the participants who are responsible from “support functions”, there is a precise budget which they should be in line while implementing the annual objectives. For example, the participant who is responsible from HR function is managing all the details about employee expenditures and therefore deciding on a considerable amount of company`s budget and financial assets (Ebru, Consulting, N-1). More than half of the participants discussed that their perceived value and importance for their companies are grounded on this accountability and decision-making power related to possible economic gains for the company. Moreover, success of their companies is directly tied with their personal interests, either in terms of further career progress / promotion opportunities or increase in individual economic capital like salary increase and / or high premium bonuses. Thus, executing the business plans, realizing annually set targets and working to objectify KPIs dominate most of their annual

routines and work cycles. Through these routines, they are forming the economic capital of their companies and of themselves.

By economic capital, I do not only mean the amount of money they earn but also the common economic interests, priorities, and the power of economic control they exercise. Fifteen of the participants have international roles and responsibilities so global and economic changes affect their businesses and objectives. Half of these participants highlighted that reading the newspapers virtually to learn what is going on and analyzing how can those affect their businesses are the first activity they do in the morning and frequently through the day. They are also following the experts of economy and business field on TV and social media.

Majority of the learning and development approach in the companies are shared to be blended supporting both formal and informal methodologies. For leader development, the programs are usually led by the headquarter and corporate academies. These programs are launched as learning and networking opportunities. Executive coaching, peer learning, reflective practices, and task force groups which are formed based on real problems in the companies are frequently used methods. Intranet, company`s social platforms like video bites, company Facebook, wikis, and magazines are also highlighted as important sources of learning. For their SDL practices, the participants follow online learning platforms which are supported by their companies. Reading, watching videos, asking for feedback, peer networking, surfing on the internet are highlighted as frequently used practices.

4.2 Learning to act and perform as a leader

During the interviews, the participants shared various informal learning outcomes gained through their paths of becoming leaders, how they learn to act and perform as leaders. They learned to deal with increasingly complex tasks, to analyze and solve difficult problems, to evaluate options and to make the most appropriate decisions, to foresee and to manage risks, to deal with crisis, to prioritize things, to build teams and to delegate, to build and sustain effective relations, and to monitor the ongoing execution and follow up. As Eraut (2008) described in his study, these are the informal learning outcomes in the workplace, which can be categorized majorly under both task and role performance.

The answers provided to the respective interview questions demonstrated that there are contextual factors, forces and dynamics that are not fully formed and controlled by the participants, but these shaped their informal learning outcomes, sources, strategies, and processes. The necessity to perform well and to keep delivering qualified results in different situations and conditions were underlined as strong motivators for learning and excelling in the role. The participants learned to execute different range of responsibilities while developing different knowledge, ways of acting, skills and behaviors required for these executions. To fulfill what is expected of them as leaders, more comprehensive awareness and understanding about the leadership expectations, and factors, forces, and dynamics shaping their contexts were developed. They looked for ways to better define their gaps and needs, found ways to learn more and to develop themselves, to build new capabilities and knowledge, to discover alternative and new ways of acting and behaving that are all required for excelling in the role.

The findings derived from the interview data are structured by organizing emerging themes, dimensions, and codes. These are recorded in a coding frame which is

presented in Appendix G. Table 7 presents the emerging dimensions and codes of the study associated with this theme:

Table 7. Dimensions and Codes for Acting and Performing as a Leader Theme

Theme	Dimensions	Codes
Acting and Performing as a Leader	Learning outcomes – Tasks and Responsibilities	1. Making decisions / providing directions 2. Solving problems 3. Communicating to get results (internal/external) 4. Building teams 5. Planning and coordinating 6. Delegating tasks 7. Evaluating the performance and outputs 8. Monitoring 9. Managing risks 10. Managing crisis 11. Analyzing needs
	Skills required	12. Communication and interpersonal skills 13. Emotional management 14. Analytical thinking 15. Dealing with ambiguity / unfamiliarity
	Knowledge acquired	16. Contextual knowledge 17. Management tasks 18. Organizational knowledge 19. Reservoir of knowledge for problems / solutions 20. Reservoir of knowledge for risks / preventions 21. Knowledge about teams / subordinates 22. Knowledge about how to access information

Under this theme, there are three dimensions and 22 codes. In the following sections, I will present and discuss these findings in detail.

4.2.1 Making decisions and solving problems

Majority of the participants described identifying and solving problems and making decisions around these problems as the essence of their role. They highlighted that these are mandatory knowledge and skills required to fulfill the leadership role. More than half of these participants discussed these as their routines, embedded in daily life and

shared stories about why they were required to learn these. They said that problems carried to the agenda of higher management levels are usually the ones that are either too complicated to be solved until that level or the ones that requires decision making which will affect broader scope, like multiple functions, in the company. One participant stated that although the number of problems on her table are not much in terms of numbers, solving them requires unique leadership skills and perspectives, dedication of considerable time and effort. She shared one of her favorite cartoons (see Figure 7) that demonstrates how problem solving is related to the routines of corporate leaders at different management levels (Bahar, Local, N-1):

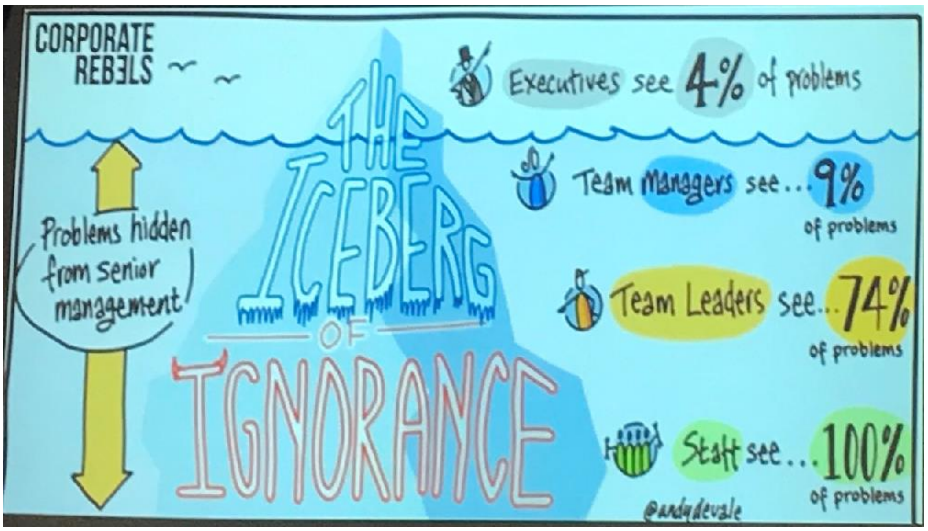


Figure 7. Iceberg of ignorance: problem solving for different management levels

Working on numerous problems in parallel, analyzing the reasons of these, enduring numerous other interruptions while dealing, searching for alternative and creative solutions while not losing the focus on quality and results, directing people towards the same solutions, and making decisions at every step which will affect different functions and people are mentioned as the knowledge, actions, skills, and behaviors embedded in the leadership responsibility. The participants learned to execute these better, advanced

in solving problems through having solid, sometimes transformative experiences in different management levels and by going through various trials and failures.

Half of these participants said that problems related to processes and workflows are key sources of learning and working on these specific problems contributed a lot to their knowledge and skills about how to solve problems. These participants highlighted that making sure that their teams are not facing any problems while executing these processes and workflows are their major responsibilities. This included clearing the way by eliminating the existing obstacles and/or foreseeing possible causes that may turn into problems and finding ways to avoid these. One of these participants shared the long diagnosis and analysis project he carried for finding the weaknesses in processes and workflows and revising these to ensure better performance and implementation. In his former roles, he also executed similar analysis and diagnosis projects and the knowledge and skills gained in those projects made him capable for a project with a broader scope, and requiring contribution of multiple functions in the company:

> My first task was going over all processes and workflows. I started from here because these malfunctions are affecting productivity and happiness. We started with the question of whether our workflow steps are right and looked at whether the technology we are using is up to date, have the employees trained on what they are doing why, are the KPIs right and reported effectively. We looked at these. On one side, the routine workload is there, it is continuing. How are we going to make improvements while we are continuing with things? These are seeming like simple questions, but it took six months of us, longer than I expected because there were multiple functions involved, we acted together with people actively working in these processes, we asked and got information from them. The solutions must come from those involved. At the end, we strained all the suggestions through a filter, we looked at how we can put these into practice. Here, we had two interesting findings. First one is that corporate sales and corporate marketing functions were acting as competitors, not like parts of a single company, there is no collaboration between them. Processes also supported this unintentionally. Second one is we (referring to leaders of the company) do not even use the technologies that are proposed by the company. Because they are not user friendly (Kerem, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 1).

Another participant shared an incident from her early career. After this experience, she began to make sense of problems as natural human practices, changed her perspective about solving problems and became more preventive. Her feelings of shame and guilt resulting from a mistake she did changed her perspective and transformed her actions and decisions as a leader. She understood the necessity to redesign the processes in a way to eliminate the emergence of possible problems and to avoid these from turning into big mistakes. Regarding this, she stated that being foresighted and preventive are important characteristics and behaviors set of a leader, while these are also embedded into her self-concept as a leader, how she saw herself:

> The service we provide has strict rules and regulations. There are legal sanctions for mistakes, so it is a risky business. We are working in a very competitive environment and with young people, they are learning the job here so they can make mistakes. Where do I know this? When I started, I also made serious mistakes. I prepared a report for the client by comparing stock and existing data. I am 25 years old, a senior specialist. My assistant manager noticed the error while checking the report. There were around 1 million differences between the actual and seeming stocks, huge, but the client has already signed the report. Relationship with the client relies on trust; when we say this openly, this would shake the trust, a chain of questioning will come. But my assistant manager must say it, this is not a thing you can keep to oneself. I cried a lot. First, I went to the manager, I said I would do everything to fix it. I did the same with the director and then the partner. I went to the client and told him that it was a mistake. The client was finally convinced of our sincerity. When I became senior manager in this line, I first asked for reviewing the processes and workflows. I looked at where mistakes may occur, risks may emerge, how we must redesign those parts. I added checkpoints in. For example, senior specialist, assistant manager, manager will review the report and the manager will send the report to the client. We added director and partner approvals for projects in large scope. We bought a technological platform where we can manage documentation and design workflows. In short, I tried to prevent the problems, the risks that may arise with insights and took precautions for these risks. The feelings I had in my own mistake and the efforts I put to reverse it changed my perspective. We are human beings, and we can make mistakes, but control systems, checkpoints must be there for not feeling like that again. This perspective is key, an integral part of leadership, and one of the features that brought me to today, to this level (Meltem, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 2).

Similar to this case, another participant defined the breakdowns in operational processes and manufacturing as the biggest problems that may happen in any industry relying on production. He highlighted these breakdowns as preventable problems and stated that through years spent in the same industry and mostly in the same company, he has both observed and gone through many breakdowns and resulting shutdowns. He solved many of these problems on his own or observed others while solving these. These helped him to learn and to build his reservoir of knowledge related to possible problems and personal database of solutions. Based on these he began to make better decisions to predict and to prevent some problems, and to find quick solutions to some problems and those from turning into big crisis. Overall, he defined the changes in his attitudes and actions as a transformation "from being reactive against problems to being preventive and proactive" (Yavuz, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 3).

Although shared to some extent in the former part, five participants underlined that they saw people and team related problems as an important learning source for leadership. They also discussed solving these problems as a part of their most critical responsibilities. Through the day, the participants mentioned that they are interacting with a wide range of people like their bosses, peers, direct reports. clients and other employees, government officials, consultants, other leaders from competitors, people from media and professional associations, and so on. Some of these interactions are not cooperative but challenging which require further attention of them. One participant stated that people related problems are his key source of learning and giving attention to these problems on time and not ignoring them are also important strategies for leadership. These made him more advanced in his leadership role:

> Problems! I spent most of my time on client and employee problems. I think I am better at people management now because I did not ignore these problems, pondered about them, and tried to solve them (Ercan, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 4).

Striving to solve any kind of problems may result with increased self-awareness and perspective changes about how one sees oneself as a leader and how s/he perceives leadership responsibilities. As an example, one participant described his own way of categorizing problems and solutions and discussed the decision-making value in this categorization as his responsibility as a leader. He is evaluating the problem and deciding on its criticality in line with the required focus and energy to solve that problem. This evaluation led him to develop different interpretation about himself as a leader, increased his effectiveness and performance. He left his former approach that all problems must be solved and replaced it with that not all problems should be solved no matter what but an analysis about the possible wins and outputs of solving that problem should be made by the leader before:

> Coping with a problem and solving that problem are two different things. Coping means leaving it behind in some way or agreeing to live with it. Solving means eliminating it. You spend time and effort for this. Is it worth it? I can dedicate these elsewhere. Opportunities come out of here. Some touches your values, for some you do not have enough energy, some will get chronic if left as they are... Regarding the possibilities, I decide to cope with or solve the problem. For example, the solution may require cheesy power struggles within the company from time to time. Then, I decide whether to go for or not to go into this struggle based on opportunities and achievements I might possibly gain. For me, approaching problems like this is balanced, win-win leadership. It brings efficiency and happiness (Ahmet, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 5).

Demonstrated in these narratives, the participants generally refer to the varying challenges experienced through problems and respective decisions required. These are discussed on a range from routine, daily problems to major, tough crisis that may end with bigger losses in terms of the business continuity and organizational success.

Accordingly, in the next section, I explore the crisis and risks moments which stand at the other end of the range.

4.2.2 Managing risks and surviving the crisis

Companies face variety of risks and crisis in the global economy. These may affect a company's achievements and even have fatal results to its survival. Around one third of the participants discussed crisis as external dynamics that are beyond their control but with possible impacts like high losses for their companies. Risks are discussed as both external and within company dynamics that may be predicted by the leader beforehand. In both cases, it is the responsibility of the leaders to predict these on time, to calculate and to take preventive measures for reducing the impacts to minimum, and to handle the situations with minimum losses for the company. Therefore, managing the risks and surviving the crisis are discussed as their learning outcomes but also the participants described those experiences as crucial sources of learning for the leaders.

Mälkki (2010) states that under the threat of chaos and crisis, people feel unpleasant emotions, and these emotions trigger the informal learning. The individuals who are going through a chaos or crisis primarily try to understand what is happening, to check one`s own knowledge and capabilities, and to find ways to deal with it. The individual confronts the specific situation through the sense of being overwhelmed and s/he may reconfigure a new understanding of what was wrong, why it did not work, what strengths and gaps s/he may have and what may be the new possible directions or pathways for growth. Therefore, he says that most of the informal learning occur when the learner is out of the comfort zone. Well-suited to this discussion, the participants discussed the experiences of crisis and risks as learning opportunities, as crucial source

of learning where they had the chance to validate their prior knowledge and skills, to evaluate their own capabilities and ways of dealing with it and went through a reflection about how they fulfilled the leadership role. These were self-examination processes of the participants about their capabilities to set the appropriate vision quickly, to make the right decisions for dealing with the conditions effectively, to obtain the required behaviors as a leader, to keep teams focused on required tasks and to get results in a shorter period. The experiences that are shared by the participants were examples of success, and therefore they ended with getting more confident, gained a clear perspective and knowledge about what they are supposed to do in those sudden moments and validated their leadership capabilities, behaviors, skills, and knowledge for these difficult situations. Their understandings about themselves are reformed with the beliefs and knowledge about being more competent and effective leaders. These experiences contributed to the participants` understandings about how they are occupying the leadership role and how they are fulfilling the expectations of them. Overall, they began to think and perceive themselves as better leaders after all is over.

Since the small problems are mostly solved by their direct reports, the greatest problems with bigger risks came to the agenda of the participants. They stated that being optimist in these conditions and being able to approach them positively enabled them to stay calm, control their emotions like stress and fear of making mistakes, built empathy with people and influence them to be a part of the decisions. As leaders, they were able to stay focused on opportunities and solutions instead of obstacles. Thus, the participants could make tough decisions, solve conflicts between people, rationally calculate the risks of making mistakes, make informed decisions and keep people`s motivation high.

Natural disasters affecting the company`s assets, political changes affecting the decisions in their industries, economical and legal shifts in different geographies of responsibility, mistakes leading to communication crisis and breakdowns in continuity of production were the shared transformative experiences. Although possible risks for the company are discussed and scenarios and plans of potential crisis were prepared before, the participants experienced these as sudden moments beyond their controls. In other words, the crisis was already there when the participants discovered them together with other leaders in the company and in the industry, so the only things they could do were analyzing the condition through pros and cons, preparing a plan to respond, making decisions, and taking actions to adapt the company to the new requirements and keeping people`s motivation and attention high. Through these experiences, the participants said that they developed knowledge basis to predict and control risks and new capabilities and behaviors to survive a crisis effectively.

Identifying possible threats and calculating the results, executing judgment, thinking about the well-being of all stakeholders, and obtaining a balanced approach, staying emotionally stable and calm when dealing with ambiguity, making appropriate decisions about which path to take, ensuring that required actions are taken immediately were shared as learning outcomes. The crisis and risks are discussed as learning opportunities for the leaders, since all these outcomes can only be gained by the leaders who have gone through these situations. Barton, et al. (2012) defines crisis as the new, permanent leadership context now and underlines the transformative potential in the crisis by saying that the ability to lead effectively before, during and after a crisis are not the same. Similar to this, the participants stated that they developed behaviors to stay emotionally stable, calm, optimistic and giving hope to their peers and teams since they

believed that these are the right behaviors to take as a leader in those experiences. The participant, who is the director of sales department, highlighted that having the knowledge that he already survived a former crisis with a minimum loss for the company made him more competent and confident in crisis management. Ability to change the mindset and adapt the tasks and actions, managing the stress and staying calm, awareness about dedicating adequate time to decision making before taking actions were shared as important learnings for him:

> In my previous job, we survived through two major crises. First, the economic crisis in Turkey has impacted the sales more than we expected. In the second crisis, the fact that the brand was a French one, the political tension with France at that time caused us to go to the bottom in sales, we failed. That is why I know how to handle crisis. In economic crisis, you need to change and adapt the mindset. You should think saving rather than growth and this mindset should be effective in your decisions, in planning the tasks. Additionally, you must stay calm. You must avoid making quick decisions with stress. When you did these in crisis once, you start doing them better. So as a leader, you should never miss crises as opportunities to learn (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 6).

While answering a different interview question, he referred to risks and crisis again, and underlined that big proportion of learning for the leader happens in hard times and some lessons can only be learned in the time of these crises by the ones who are optimistic:

> There are things you can only learn at the exact moment of crisis. Conflict management for example or empathy. Knowing in theory will make no use for you, if you can implement them in the crisis, then this means you learned. If you can get a positive approach and do not look for scapegoats, then you are learning at that moment. Otherwise, people will disappear and run away from you. Even in the moment of chaos, I am energetic, continuing with a smile on my face and trying to understand (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 7).

Similar to this case, another participant highlighted that presence of former experiences in crisis management widened his perspective and knowledge about the things he will be experiencing and how he should adapt himself. Now, he has more optimistic beliefs,

attitudes and behaviors required to get over a crisis and more confidence in his capability to renew and build things from scratch, if required:

> Insecurity, fear, powerful stress, cramps, helplessness, loss of self-esteem ... I am struggling for a while ... Still, even now ... This is a normal situation resulting from your mood. There is a crisis there, you are living through it, but like an implicit moment. You cannot catch the connective elements. The fog cloud is coming, and everything is blurred. You can`t increase speed. Concerns about the future, demonic images are coming in front of your eyes. Now, in such moments, I am saying stop to myself. Look, brother, take a look, but look by removing this cover. How many times it has happened before, we completely solved it in the way as it should be, properly. There is nothing to be afraid of. If necessary, we will get the harm, lose some money, but re-learn, refresh the team, we will be result oriented more sharply, but it will be resolved. I have done this before. I learned how to adapt myself, how to deal with this situation (Adil, Local, N, Appendix H, 8).

The participants underlined that they are valuable for their companies because of their judgment capabilities in predicting and preventing the risks beforehand and taking actions on time to reduce the impact of those risks to minimum. In each annual cycle of business planning, they are using structured tools like SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) analysis to evaluate the risks for their companies and for their functions, and to decide on what to keep and what to eliminate. These risks are not similar to problems discussed in the former part, which may be prevented through rules and control points embedded in processes and workflows, but through a company-wide risk management and compliance approach embedded in corporate culture, assigning responsibilities to every employee. Thus, it is the leader`s responsibility to create and to make this mindset stick within the company. The participant, whose expertise is in risk management, said that effective risk management reduces the probability of risks turning into negative results and therefore enables company`s achievements. She defined successful leadership as being good at perceiving and managing these risks:

> Effective risk management, organization of the team performing this and ownership of the outputs by senior management are important. When you look at many of the scandals, failures; there is always a lack underneath related to risk management. This business is a part of the corporate culture but must still be managed by an independent unit. But on the other hand, that unit should be controlled and be brought to account. Besides digitalization is important for measuring the risk and making the reporting quick. We are discussing artificial intelligence now. These methodologies should be as guiding principles, mentors for senior management. There should be no margins for errors and must be applied without compromise. Which risks will you take and which ones not? If you are good at perceiving and managing risks, taking calculated risks, you will be successful as a leader (Ayfer, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 9).

Another participant, the COO in a Pharmaceuticals company, highlighted that his value for his company came from his ability to predict risks and to manage them strategically:

> I am here for the restructuring project. Our goal is operational excellence and digitalization. We are trying to change the habits of the company, but if we do not keep going and proceed, we cannot change. On the other hand, we are required to keep up with the competition and stick to the marketplace, the economic conditions are not good, and we are always talking about economic crisis scenarios. In this environment, there are three points that I see as risks: progress of project process, technology, and training people. I think making people learn is the most problematic one, I do not know how to transform habits and how to solve this permanently yet. But I know that problems may arise in this area, and problems in this area will affect the sustainability of the project. Everyone in the company is learning these restructuring issues recently. I had a consultancy company working on this field before, I saw a lot of problems, I prevented risks, and this is providing me a space of freedom like it will be as whatever you are doing, bringing a trust in me. I know what the risk might be, I have an idea about how I can prevent it. These make me valuable for this company (Zafer, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 10).

Managing risks are not always associated with the company level, but also with the individual level while excelling in the leadership path. The participants experienced risks related to their own careers and managed those for themselves. As an example, the participant evaluated his movement to China as an individual and family risk he has taken that may end with negative results in his career. This decision and later experience were transformative for him since he became more confident and open to changes:

> I saw the position in China. I have already told my manager that I wanted to work in a different country, but China was sudden, not something in mind or planned before. It is far, I will go with my family, children were around two years old. I did not even know how to tell my wife. A few days, I went home and came to work without saying anything. If I go and fail, I will have no future in the company. If I am successful, I will learn new business models and technologies. I will have living and working experience in another geography. This is valuable in our company. Going to China was a risk. For both me and my family. The gains were huge, the losses were also huge, but these were still substitutable. Despite, I said it will clearly be a good experience, a good learning opportunity. I trusted my family, of course, they supported me a lot. It ended good for all of us. China was an experience that changed us all (Tolga, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 11).

Next year, the participant and his family will move to another country. He will be working in the global headquarter, promote as one of the global chief officers of the company and will be a member of the global executive board. He is thinking that taking the risk to go to China, having the international experience in a faraway geography have transformed him. He became more flexible, more capable to manage diversity and more culturally intelligent that he can communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds effectively. These capabilities have a role over the promotion, his assignment to a global and upper role.

4.2.3 Communicating with results

Another important finding related to task and role performance was the communication. Thirteen participants shared that their advancement in communication skills has a crucial impact over their paths of becoming better leaders. The participants learned to build effective and productive within and outside company communication strategies, to develop their own and alternative ways to lead the communication, to negotiate, to lead discussions and conversations in an efficient way so that they can get the desired results, and to deal with hard people surrounding them when necessary. The participants

established their own ways of behaving, questioning, listening, and facilitating the dialogues with other people since without these interpersonal skills, it would be difficult to fulfill leadership responsibilities and to achieve what is expected of them.

As leaders, the participants are responsible for understanding, synthesizing the complex information into simpler versions, and communicating these to different stakeholders in a way that enables them to understand the same message and act on it. The conversations are fluid since those involve continuous thinking about whether the messages could be delivered, whether it is understood the same by the receiver and if the expected outcomes out of the conversations are achieved or not. First, the participants discovered the significance of the communication skills for the leadership roles. Second, they understood their impacts as leaders in these conversations and tried to invent alternative ways to communicate. Through some experiences, mostly failures and losses in some important dialogues, they discovered and found out alternative ways to get better results out of a dialogue. They developed their own patterns and knowledge to communicate with every stakeholder, to negotiate and to convince others to take actions towards the common direction, and to influence people around. Third, the participants learned to start the conversation with a purpose, with an end goal in mind which were crucial for them to ensure that they got the desired outcomes out of these practices of communication. They learned to adjust their strategies and ways of communication according to the end goal and desired outcomes in mind. These learning outcomes are associated with the awareness about one`s own impact in the communication and with taking quick and effective results related to their sense of responsibilities.

The participants stated that there are majorly two areas of communication which require different set of actions, behaviors, skills, and mindsets. First area is within the

company, this is where they have the power and control. Simplifying the strategic and execution plans, having different sessions and talks to explain the direction and objectives clearly, delivering these messages with impact and influence, convincing other people in the organization to act in line with one`s own ideas and desired outcomes, organizing activities to foster interaction and collaboration within the teams are shared as the internal communication tasks and routines which they implement quarterly, monthly, or daily. Second area is outside company, in where the participants do not have the power and control but are communicating with numerous different stakeholders to get results timely and efficiently. Negotiating with clients, dealing with various authorities at different levels, speaking with media and press and managing the service delivery companies are listed as the major external communication tasks and routines. For both areas, the leaders are required to perform well to get the desired results, in a quick and efficient way. Thus, the participants discussed these tasks and routines as their major responsibilities but moreover, as enablers for their further growth and success. As one participant highlighted communicating with results, effectively and productively is an important learning outcome for him, but it is also a distinguishing feature for all leaders, particularly the ones in higher and top management levels. He described leadership as truly a communication job and defined the leaders as "the masters of communication":

> Our main job is communication. It is a matter of whom, what, how, when to say things. Every relationship is a negotiation, a bargain. Client relations, team relations, even father-son relationship is like that. If you can do this well, you are a successful leader. You have results. If it does not work, you say it is a communication failure, an error, and are trying to do in different ways, by other strategies. After all, you are getting someone to do the desired things, you are not doing all those by yourself. (Kerem, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 12)

Similar to this case, another participant highlighted that as one goes upper through the leadership path, one is required to get better in communication strategies, to structure a communication plan for the year, and to find different ways of communicating with employees. As he became responsible for multiple important functions in the company, more people in the organization began to watch him and wanted to know what he will do and how he will do it. Similar to most of the research participants, a major challenge for this participant was that his teams are distributed across different geographies, and he is required to explain about the mission, strategy, and objectives to all of them, He needed to communicate the expectations, to make sure that everybody received the same messages while keeping the motivations of the subordinates high. He understood that things are getting even more complicated for higher leadership management levels. For him, communication involves a range between being tough and persuasive. In this complexity, the leader is required to obtain a balanced stance on this continuum:

> If we brought the CEOs of 30 years ago to our day with the time machine, we would clearly see that the necessary skills had changed. When I became manager, I was trying to be tough and authoritative. Putting my foot down seemed to be the right way. This has changed by time. Employees' expectations, company structures, speed, everything changed and are still changing. In this change, it would be absurd for the leader and the leadership energy to remain the same. I discovered, understood the miracle of communication. I started to prefer using a more persuasive, more diplomatic, more influencing way of communication, trying to negotiate and to convince people. I am regretting to learn these so late; it would be much more painless if I could do them before. Employees are watching me. They are waiting for me to explain what and why I did. Insisting, using power and authority to make someone do something now require more efforts than communicating effectively. Naturally, you will not insist on doing something that is more bitter. For example, leader communication plans are now prepared with internal communication expertise and in parallel to company`s tone. This is done by most of the companies now. Of course, it is either being tough and authoritative or being an influencer, persuading people, or combining both, standing somewhere in middle. For sure, this requires a balance. Actually, as a leader first you learn to do all and then balance them, find your own way. (Ahmet, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 13)

Confirming this another participant, who is a professional in communication area and working as a consultant in this field, underlined that she is preparing yearly strategic communication plans for individual leaders at higher and top management levels of her clients. She stated that practicing the communication itself is the only way to get better in this, and described the failures and losses while practicing it as transformative learning sources for the leaders:

> You learn communication by doing it, practicing it. There is no resource that you can open and read about it and learn it. You change while you are doing it! You learn to design people interactions, and this is the only way to get better in this. After a while (gaining the work experience), you can position a client to a place even in the first meeting. You are having patterns to behave towards the clients, particularly positioned at that place. Mathematical in a way. The same is relevant while providing consultancy to the clients. We are explaining the leaders that communication is a strategic business, it must be planned, it must be practiced so that at some point they can do it without failures, possible losses. Priorities, what the messages should be, who is the critical audience, what should be changed according to the audience, which channels would it be told… We are planning together. Client wants something, you say that it does not work like that in their market. With examples, you must explain the failures without giving other client`s name, so the leaders will be convinced. This is also a learning method to get better in communication, looking at what happened to those who did it with that strategy, in that way and failed (Nur, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 14)

As the participants gained awareness about how having strong communication capabilities can contribute to their roles, they focused more on developing themselves in this area. The same participant stated that the significance of communication in leadership role is clearly recognized now, and therefore they recently started to support their clients in establishing leadership communication units under the CEO offices (Nur, Consulting, N). These units are aiming to support leaders in analyzing their own communication styles and understanding the strengths and weaknesses, to provide guidance to make leaders develop better knowledge and skills and to prepare individual communication plans in line with the strategy and annual plan of the company.

After experiencing numerous errors, failures, and losses in communication; the participant, who is leading the communication function and teams in different regions, understood clearly that different styles and tones are required for facilitating communication practices effectively with different people like bosses, peers, teams, clients, workers, media and press and authorities. Although the essential messages delivered to all these stakeholders must be similar; the tone, the style and the method chosen should be varied according to the stakeholder. She defined this as the major challenge for all leaders. Specific to her own company, she stated that speeches that are "more strategic and persuasive" are required for "head quarter office employees" who are mostly knowledge workers; while speeches that are "more powerful and binding" are required for "production employees". The differences in educational background, cultural background, economic, social, and cultural capitals of these audiences make adaptation of the tone, the style, and the method hard and complicated. Therefore, exploring who the audience is, understanding the characteristics of the audience and adjusting the constituents of communication accordingly are the greatest knowledge and skills that one needs to learn to become a successful leader. She defined and summarized this exploration and adaptation as "speaking in the language of the audiences" (*onların dilinde konuşmak*). This meant deciding on the suitable style, tone, and method for that audience, trying the communication, reflecting on this experience, and evaluating outcomes, adapting, and trying again if required. This strategy is like a long, nonlinear process which ends when she feels confident about that communication and achieved results. She said that requirement to deliver same messages to various audiences and getting the same results out of each case are among her challenges as a leader:

> Currently, for example, I am responsible for the Middle East region. There are many stakeholders outside the company that we manage, like agencies, media, etc. It is difficult to get the work done, to produce outputs on time and as expected. Especially for female managers. Although I do not have that style, I am proceeding with a tougher, stricter language to make them receive my messages and do the tasks. There are also moments where I take a step back so that communication is not constantly tense and opposing, but there is a great lack of time and resource problem. Thus, I have to speak mainly in their language (Berrak, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 15).

Very parallel to this highlight, another participant stated that conversations and negotiations with the unions are a very challenging communication experiences for the leaders in her field. The hardship is based on the requirement to negotiate with people who have completely different lives and backgrounds than her, and the expected outcome of these conversations is reaching a consensus:

> Meetings were held with union representatives twice a year. I have to agree and reach a consensus with them in some way so there won`t be any problems. While discussing whether the increase will be three or four percent, strikes may happen and then production stops completely. On the other hand, four percent increase may be million dollars in terms of company budget. I must consider the interests of the company and understand their lives and expectations all together. I know that my world is very different from theirs. My language, sayings do not have a counterpart there. Education, expectations, preferences... Everything is completely different. Sitting at that table as a woman is also different than sitting there as a man. As these meetings approached, cramps would be in my stomach. Then we understood each other. I can`t say a common ground, but we were able to meet on a basis. We learned to communicate through a lot of discussions and dialogues. I think these experiences I had at that time has now brought me to this point. It is difficult to find HR leaders, who can communicate with the unions and negotiate effectively (Banu, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 16).

Based on these narratives, it is clear that communication skills are forming a major component of participants` role definitions and leadership concepts. They perceived communication as part of their responsibilities as leaders and discussed it as a major ground enabling leadership effectiveness and increased performance. This finding is in line with the findings of a broader research conducted by Chief Learning Officer Magazine (Prokopeak, 2018) about leader development in the workplace. Asking more

than 25.000 corporate leaders about their own learning needs and goals, the research presented that developing the communication skills is forming a consistent part of leaders` learning goals. As also demonstrated in a research conducted by LinkedIn Learning (2020), communication skills are shared as the third highest priority in organizations` leadership skills development plans by 40%. In the next section, I share and discuss the findings related to building teams, delegating these teams with confidence and comfort, and monitoring the tasks that have been delegated.

4.2.4 Building teams, delegating, and monitoring

Eighteen participants stated that building the right team, delegating tasks, and monitoring outputs are among their important learning outcomes while they are excelling in the leadership path. These outcomes are primarily acquired through getting results for their tasks and responsibilities that are increasingly larger in scope, experiencing challenges and solving complex problems, and the increased awareness that as the leaders, they cannot do everything alone and achieve results. As a leader, one needs a strong, and competent team so that s/he can delegate tasks and responsibilities with comfort. In relation to that bringing the people with the required expertise, experience, and skills together and making sure that they are working well as a team are discussed as the only possible way to be get qualified results and achieve objectives, and to excel further in the leadership path. Therefore, the participants discussed these as their major responsibilities but also as necessities for them to be successful. Exampling this, the participant described building the right team as a major mastery of the people at top management levels. His self-concept as a leader is based on this mastery:

> I am defining myself as the chief team builder. Team building master... My former boss here used to say that even if I have not learned anything, I learned building the right team since this is the most important thing for leadership success. I am saying that I learned to build teams and to keep them developing. Everything is changing so fast that it is not enough to just build it (Mete, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 17).

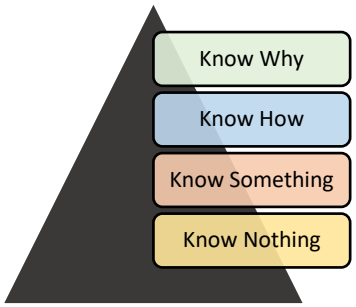
According to a survey completed by the research firm Gartner (2018), talent shortage is the top emerging risk faced by the businesses worldwide. Although there is the strong hiring demand of global economy, open positions can`t be filled by the desired talents due to changing skill requirements like adaptability, collaboration, innovation, communication and so on. Thus, building the right team and spotting good people are major responsibilities of leaders which they require to analyze the external factors like the job market and expectations, to provide solutions for problems related to not finding the right people, to adapt their criteria in recruitment and to transform their companies in a way that they can keep attracting talents. Thus, the participants underlined what they learned while dealing with these challenges. Second, some of them stated that their awareness about the significance of bringing the right people together was a perspective change for them. When the participants understood that they cannot do it all alone; they adapted their priorities accordingly. One participant criticized leaders for not acting with this awareness, focusing on the hiring process by being open and inclusive:

> Recruitment processes are taking long time, but you must build the right team in one way or another. Let us make self-criticism, the leaders are not updating themselves about the things they are looking for, looking one sided. We want the candidates to be like us, but this is not right. Leaders must be open and understanding against different people, different generations. They (new generations) may not approach things in the way we used to, values can be different. You must understand this well. Having my own child is an advantage, I am practicing what I learned from her unavoidably. I am trying to look without judging, to understand them, to imagine them as part of the team, and to focus on what I can learn from them (Yavuz, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 18).

As part of their adaptive strategies, half of these participants highlighted that they developed their own approaches about building teams since this is something very important for their success, that needs to be structured. When the participants were at mid-level management roles, they were more hands on and working together with their teams. As they promoted to higher management roles, their scopes expanded and building the right team, particularly finding the good leaders who will directly report to them and delegate the whole execution of the respective business plan with comfort to them, with the trust that the desired results will be delivered, became the requirement. They are expecting that the leaders who are directly reporting to them will distribute the plan and objectives to their own teams, execute the tasks, eliminate the risks, and solve majority of the problems, make proper decisions, produce results on time and with quality, and keep the participants informed enough while doing these. Exampling this, the participant responsible for project management function discussed that building the appropriate teams for every single project as his only choice to execute his tasks through delegation and to deliver good and qualified results. Being aware of this, he built his own approach and structure to ensure that he is doing this in a qualified way:

> They must have the ability to work in uncertainty, on issues above a certain complexity. One must be aware of that s/he must learn over and over again so can move forward through different levels of maturity. This is a job requiring constant travelling, should be prone to this lifestyle. There are not many people with these features. What I call the levels of maturity is a framework (showing the table). I am looking at this table when I am creating a project team and hiring. Since we are setting up teams from zero for each project, I created this with the intention to have a common approach. This is a coaching tool, I learned it from my wife, with little changes, it just fitted us. Different levels are required for different tasks. It must mostly involve employees at know-how and know-something. People who are at the know-why level are needed more in complex projects. Those who are at know-nothing are new graduates, eager to work in the sector, and those with hunger for learning. There may be simple tasks for them, but their primary goals are learning (Onur, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 19).

The approach he is using for team building in projects and in his function is in Figure 8:



Know – Why: He has knowledge, work experience and ability to guide in wide range of topics. Can work on industry standards and lead working teams. One can trigger disruptive - revolutionary changes within the industry or carry out separate initiatives together, in parallel to achieve common results.
Know – How: He has deep experience in one or several related subjects. One can manage teams and lead in these topics. Can advise other companies on these topics and directly transfer experiences.
Know – Something: He has on-the-job experience in one or several related topics. One can repeatedly deliver projects on these issues.
Know – Nothing: New Graduates. No work experiences. Have basic technological and theoretical knowledge but no on the job experience. Willing to learn.

Figure 8. Planning knowledge and skills in building project teams

Another participant also shared his own perspective and strategy to build his teams. He is using a model to map team members, analyze what he has in hand, decide on further structuring of team, and define actions to contribute to the development of team:

> I am looking at the 9-Box grid, placing everyone on the grid according to performance and potential dimensions. Then I am looking at what I can provide for whom. If one is positioned low in both, then not a right fit for the team or that project. That one must be oriented to another job in the company, or assigned different tasks, or in another project maybe. Luckily, this does not happen much in the management levels reporting to me. If one is good at both, I am assigning a big task, to delegate a challenging responsibility like the management of an important project, connecting a new unit, organizing a global rotation or maybe a hot seat for that person. Thanks to this tool, I am seeing the shortcomings in the team. What do I need, what do I have in hand? For example, if the team is involving too many doers, then expecting a ground-breaking transformation, emergence of a new strategy or creative solutions, an innovation from there is not realistic at all. Because these people are solid performers, who delivers what you provided to them, not contribute additional things on it. So, this means I would need new people (Zafer, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 20).

The participants frequently said that as long as they knew the right team is established and started to work well together, then they began to delegate tasks with trust and comfort. They distributed their responsibilities by making direct reporting leaders and teams accountable in running the respective part of the plan and operations. For the next steps, six participants underlined that delegating with trust and comfort is related with having working monitoring systems. They stated that effective monitoring systems and processes are required to follow the ongoing operations, the results of their delegated tasks and responsibilities in a systematic way, and to make sure things are done to their standards and expectations. These are helpful to lead through teams, to execute multiple projects simultaneously, to ensure that wide range of tasks and responsibilities are delegated accurately among teams and individuals, to ensure the flow of information on problems and urgencies, to get updates on time, and to follow the progress. Monthly meetings with subordinates, meetings with task force groups, random visits to team meetings in reporting functions, developing organizational touch points to exchange information, requesting KPI reports, to ask questions and to push for outcomes through tools like WhatsApp, emails, instant messaging were mentioned by almost half of these participants. Few participants were using project management and task assignment tools like MS Project, Jira, and Mural to plan, to delegate, and to monitor tasks and outputs.

Two of these six participants mentioned frequently that monitoring / follow-up in top management is different from the one in their former roles with more limited scope of people management, projects, and operations. Although they could monitor the operational and routine tasks through some micromanagement methods, they said that follow-up regarding the implementation of strategies are more complex and require time like a stand-alone process on its own. These systems are not mentioned as only

operational, but they are related with the meaning of being a leader for them, developing a clear picture of the desired future, aligning actions and goals consistent with this vision, and later ensuring that everybody is going in the same direction. In other words, monitoring / following up is a part of what leadership is for the participants.

This monitoring / follow-up process starts by explaining the strategy and the direction to all stakeholders and making sure that they are all aligned on the same ground. Second step is delegation, making people accountable for their own parts. The participants saw this as the most critical step so that every stakeholder, including teams, employees, and direct reporting leaders, can exercise their own judgment, solve problems, and stay focused to the plan in the moment of execution. As one participant underlined, he is working with his leadership team to discuss, to set strategies and objectives, and to get aligned about the directions. After this is done, it meant joint responsibility and consensus, keeping each distinct leader in the team on the road. This is a clear, systematic, and trustful way to monitor and follow up:

> Consensus, full delegation, and follow-up… My driving principles. Every year, we (leadership team) come together and run through long discussions about what we need to head for. These discussions are at top level importance. It is about making the right choices about where we will go. It differs if we go to Beijing, to Rome, or New York, completely different three directions. The second important thing is consensus. If members agree on something, this means they are accountable for it. We have the joint responsibility to do it. After consensus, every team member will know where to move to, how to move on, what to say no and what to accept, how to balance things and make decisions. They are also, they must be accountable for these. If you agreed on something, you need to stand for that, you need to do what you can to realize that. Otherwise, you need to say something than, like no to Beijing and push for Rome. You had the chance to influence the decision then, not now. In this way, I trust both in the journey, the people, they will take the responsibility, and we will arrive where we have decided to go. I delegate with peace of mind and then, they are accountable. I have to know that as soon as we agree, we are heading in the same direction. We'll get there somehow. (Burak, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 21).

This is very parallel to what Barrett (2014) discussed as leadership shifts from 'I to We'. In “we” version of leadership, the leader distributes the authority, power and decision making to all key stakeholders across multiple systems and geographies. The root of this participative style is that the leader tries to create a sense of engagement and belonging so that all subordinates will be part of the solutions, decision making and operations.

The business plans are finalized in annual cycles, but they are reviewed and if needed adjusted at least quarterly. In parallel, the results for the respective objectives are also evaluated. Since some objectives require longer periods to implement, final evaluation is completed at the yearend, when all results are taken. These evaluations are initiated through using corporate initiatives like performance management and compensation systems, and a decision of reward or a punishment is executed. Between the plan kick off and evaluation, the participants are more focused on keeping the people on the track of business plan, eliminating the barriers, spending time with them so not to lose the feeling of what is going on, acting as enablers of execution, solving problems, and supporting people in their needs. As summarized by one of the participants:

> I would not take the numbers or the business performance as the only KPI. I would look for the qualitative pieces. Like potentials, team performance, matching with values, how they achieved results and so on. I mean, we look EBIT (Earnings Before Interest and Taxes) at yearend and say, that team is the best one because they have the best numbers in the report. But that is misleading. These are gray areas, and you need to be careful also while evaluating high performing teams or individuals. The cost of that performance, sustainability should be the major question. Results may contribute to your business, but at some point, I believe team will not deliver sustainably forward. If they don't trust each other, share values, have a positive atmosphere, treat respectfully, or feed from each other, then they soon turn into an empty room from a successful team. So, observing them throughout the journey, establishing routine monitoring systems, communicating frequently, staying on target, and asking what I can do for them, for them to achieve results. These are very important in delegation, execution and while evaluating (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 22).

As in this case, although these are discussed as distinct but highly related activities, overlooking the complexity of what needs to be considered in evaluation, and finding better ways for monitoring may be the source of new problems. Therefore, the participants underlined these learnings not as already acquired ones but emphasized the need to consider and develop them constantly through their career paths. In next part, I present and discuss the findings related to leadership thinking, mindsets, and identities.

4.3 Learning to think as a leader: Mindsets and identity

During the interviews, I realized that the informal learning experiences shared by the participants are negotiated and reflected together with their conceptualizations of leadership, and discussions about how to be a good leader. The participants learned to act and perform as a leader, and developed the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviors required to increase their performances and to fulfill their responsibilities. In parallel, they also constructed their leadership styles and values, built their self-concepts as leaders, discovered the meaning of being a leader, and developed themselves to stay up to date and aligned with their beliefs, ideas, and assumptions about ideal leadership.

According to Ashforth (2001), occupational roles and the question of who am I in the role facilitate sense-making by providing a framework to locate oneself and others at work. Roles are not fixed but their meanings are negotiated by the individuals holding those positions. The identification with a certain role means that the individual perceives oneself as belonging to a certain group, and begins to assume certain behaviors, characteristics, actions, and mindsets of that role while making meanings, building images and perspectives about the kind of professional one is, and one should become. This is an identity-based view of leader development and discusses the need for

reflecting and practicing new possible selves including new learnings and making numerous trials and errors (Snook, Ibarra, & Guillen, 2010). Similar to these, the research participants shared insights about what leadership is, what kind of leader they want to be, how they enact their roles, how leadership is changing recently, and how these are all connected to their current and future senses of leadership, and identities. They reviewed their professional experiences, responsibilities and commitments, priorities and actions while making sense of what leadership role is all about.

Leader identity is related to both being the leader now and thinking of oneself as a leader in the future. Basically, this refers to an ever-changing transformation on multiple selves, from being someone to being another as a leader in personal, relational, and collective terms. The future selves include the possible and / or desired ones that interact with one another to create a working self-concept appropriate for different times, places, and contexts (Lord & Hall, 2005). Matching with this, the participants shared the journey through which their leadership styles, behaviors, capabilities, management values and mindsets changed. They reflected on themselves as leaders, explained about how they transformed into the leaders they are today, and learned with the motivation of becoming a better leader. The participants shared their increased and/or altered understandings and awareness related to leadership mindsets and identities, organizational dynamics, priorities and strategic issues, and employee expectations as important learning outcomes. They also shared experiences and incidents through which they formed their management principles and values around their own visions of great leadership, integrated themselves and their roles, and focused to develop themselves towards the leader they want to become.

In this section, I present the findings related to who the participants are as leaders, how they evaluate themselves and which knowledge, capabilities, actions, and skills are featured in relation to leadership mindsets and identities. Learning to think as a leader is an emerging theme derived from the interview data. Table 8 presents the emerging dimensions and codes of the study associated with this theme:

Table 8. Dimensions and Codes for Learning to Think as a Leader Theme

Theme	Dimensions	Codes
Thinking and Behaving as a Leader	Learning outcomes - Mindsets, understandings and capacities required to fulfill the leader role better (reflexivity)	23. Strategizing 24. Prioritizing and setting the direction 25. Executing judgement 26. Leading transformation and change 27. Adapting organization / self to stay up to date 28. Fostering the organizational culture 29. Managing diversity and differences 30. Engaging people 31. Empowering and developing people 32. Representing the organization
	Worldviews and perspectives about leadership	33. Reflecting about how to be a good leader 34. Reflecting about how to conceptualize leadership 35. Changing views on expectations out of leaders 36. Problematizing and revising leadership styles, behaviors, and attitudes 37. Understanding the significance of leadership values and principles 38. Revising leadership knowledge and skills
	Awareness and understanding about self as a leader, and relations with others	39. Defining the purpose and commitments as a leader 40. Discovering own values and principles 41. Practicing new ways/strategies of being a leader 42. Modifying styles, behaviors, and attitudes 43. Developing new knowledge, cognitive capacities, and skills for increasing role scope and complexity 44. Shifting perspectives and worldviews 45. Building self-knowledge/ self-awareness 46. Getting more confident by observing the impacts created / results taken

Under this theme, there are three dimensions and 24 codes. In the following sections, I present and discuss these findings in detail.

4.3.1 Strategic thinking and judgement: Becoming more discriminating

Being active in a regular process of strategizing is a quarterly routine for the participants. Almost all the participants shared their routine annual cycles as pre-discussions for strategic business plans, finalizing them and transiting into execution plans, ensuring the continuity, regular monitoring of results and taking actions if there are failures or problems in executions. Heracleous (1998) says that the purpose of strategic thinking is "to discover novel, imaginative strategies which can re-write the rules of the competitive game; and to envision potential futures significantly different from the present" (p.485). Thus, each thinking and activity taken for strategizing empower the participants` thinking as a leader. Exampling this, one participant explained about his own routines of strategizing, defined major qualifications required for strategic thinking and how these are related with his self-concept as a leader:

> The people who are successful in management have active sports life, either currently or in the past. This is not a coincidence because leadership is very similar to sports in terms of strategy development. With discipline, you are continuing to progress step by step, but the question of whether I am progressing with the right strategy always is keeping your mind busy. I think the important thing here is to ask the right questions on time. There is the same discipline, questioning and timing in the flow of sports. If something is going wrong, understanding it on time, determining your step and progressing with courage…Considering competences; questioning, foresight, strategic insight, and design thinking… (Oktay, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 23)

The purpose of strategic thinking is related with the possible directions to go. Thinking and playing out different scenarios, reviewing options, and working on problems via alternative solutions are embedded in strategic thinking. It is a learning experience through which the participants understood their perspectives and actions, thought about alternative scenarios, and if needed altered the ways and directions to go as leaders and for their companies. The participant stated that strategic thinking is related with the

nature of leadership and defined it as an ongoing process of constant questioning and reviewing of alternatives including the ones related with leadership concept:

> I work in a structure where I am like one of the owners of the company. I am responsible for strategic decisions concerning the whole company. I am also responsible for the decisions I make for my own service line, against other partners. This responsibility is accompanied with constant questioning. Is my strategy right? did I lead the team correctly? What about the targets? Are KPIs achieved?... living with millions of questions like this in mind, I guess, is the nature of leadership. Moreover, questions which I cannot find the answers of are important. In which I asked why s/he is not seeing what I see, or what I am missing in here. Not sure if every manager leaves the same experience with the same output. I gained insights, made predictions about what may happen to me from my former experiences. But there might be things which I miss, I did not see. These made me who I am (Meltem, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 24).

Another participant discussed that setting the right strategy and transiting it into solid plans depend on the leader. The leader deals with uncertainty and complexity, reviews past and present practicalities, the culture in the company and proposes a direction out of these. All these steps are highly related to who the leader is and what s/he does:

> Determining the strategy and dividing it into applicable steps are leaders` roles. What will happen and how we can prepare ourselves to it... This is strategic thinking. I look at trends and search what is changing, read about those and try to see what might be coming next. But judgment is very important here. And assertiveness. These are drivers of fruitful strategic thinking. Will those that pass through my mind and my heart fit to the company? Will the culture adopt this? What does the company need? It may be something very important for me, as a leader, but that same thing might be very contrary to the current culture. Not a good fit. For example, to implement reverse mentoring in a very hierarchical, rigid company culture. Or ad hoc projects that I must ensure budget allocation. How do I sell them to others and convince them? How do I make it happen? Judgment is about what I have brought up to that time, the reasoning required to say this thing is necessary and this is not... Assertiveness is about who I am. Why I am here, what I want to do (Banu, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 25).

Matching the highlight about judgement, a few participants frequently pointed out that their positions require exercising judgment more than any other role within the organization. These participants discussed searching for novelties, thinking on possible scenarios, calculating the risks and opportunities for each scenario, and finalizing the

decisions as the essential leadership commitments of their levels. In any decision-making moment, the participants are still left with many possibilities, and this is where they underlined becoming more discriminating and then exercising judgment as the ground of strategic thinking. Exampling this one participant stated that after long years of experience and holding a position at N level, he is relying on his own judgment and advising on the steps that seem to be right for himself and his companies. The extent he is discriminating the right thing out of ambiguity, executing judgment, and making informed decisions are what distinguishes him as the executive leader. As the participant discussed, top management level leadership is all about doing these and helping the organization survive (Adil, Local, N).

Goldman (2007) defines three major practices that are identified by strategic thinking and exercising judgement; (1) asking questions about the issue from various points of view to gain perspectives, (2) applying a rational planning framework to determine actions to take and (3) reflecting after acting to determine what could be done better in the future. The highlights of the participants are fitting with these practices. Additionally, these practices are not only related with what the participants do but also what they expected from themselves. If a potential gap between being and doing related to the capabilities of strategic thinking and judgment arose, then the participants started to feel frustrated and disoriented in terms of not recognizing themselves as good leaders. As an example, the participant shared an incident which she went through with a headhunter responsible for top management level positions. The last step of the recruitment process was an assessment center application, in which one major focus was evaluating her strategic thinking and judgment skills. She worked on a case, prepared a presentation, and shared it with the assessors. The questions which were asked by the

assessors and the final evaluation report made her question the target company's expectations of this role and how they position it within the company. She did not see a match between the company`s and her own expectations in terms of these capabilities:

> Someone referred me for this role, and they (the recruitment consulting firm who is executing the hiring process on behalf of the company) called. I had no active job search then, but it was a firm I knew and liked, again a C-level position it was. The change could have been good. In the first meeting, there were the Sales and HR heads. In principle everything was ok. They said that after this, there will be an assessment center, and the last step will be the meeting with CEO. There were already successes visible. They knew that I survived the same crises in the same sector, my decisions and the successful results, concrete ones were obvious. After all, there is a market report going to everyone. They are almost predicting the market shares of your products. While there is so much tangible data about my results and achievements, working on an artificial case in the assessment center and making a presentation… I mean I found these ridiculous ... My focus is not execution, it is more strategic because this is what I think is expected from me. People who are working with me also are saying that this side of me is strong, so I am appreciated for it. That should also be the reason why I am wanted by that company. The questions in assessment center exercises were so superficial, so detailed that I began to question the company and this role. I questioned what is expected of me, the role`s positioning in the company. I also shared this comment with the people I interviewed, after all, this could be a problem with the assessor, or it could be what was really expected of this role. I do not know. But in the end, I could not match my wishes with what is expected of me. I would not be a good leader for them. I became cold for the position (Bahar, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 26).

Overall, strategic thinking and judgment are capabilities that are integrated with the participants` leadership concepts and self-concepts as leaders. In the former part, I discussed decision making as part of leader`s actions and performance. While decision making is a fundamental task, the participants mentioned that they are required to make sound decisions to navigate the business environments and organizations characterized by increasing complexity, competition, uncertainty, and change. This requirement differentiates strategic thinking and judgement from decision making and makes them discuss these capabilities as ways of thinking, part of their mental models associated with the leadership role. What made them better leaders is the process of examining and

analyzing complex dynamics, reviewing of alternatives, drawing the accurate conclusions through good judgment, and choosing the right alternative among many. These are the interplay between experiences, commitments, knowledge and skills, assumptions, ideas, and assessments of the participants.

4.3.2 Leading by values: Building credibility and authenticity

More than half of the participants referred varying management values as building blocks of their leader identities. Behaviors, decisions, and actions are guided by values and building awareness about what these values are helped the participants in becoming better leaders. Having these values and leading accordingly viewed as important factors which are related with who they are and who they want to be as leaders. If who they are and who they want to be matches, then the participants see themselves good leaders.

The participants shared incidents in which they were challenged to act against their values and not true to themselves. In these moments they felt disoriented and frustrated and through those feelings, they developed the understandings about their own values and these grounded for their leader identities. Exampling this relation, one participant said that values are not the tools of leadership but in fact the constituents of it. He learned to be clear about his values, to base his actions always on these so that he can maintain a high degree of integrity and self-respect. This is how he identifies himself as a leader and how he wants to stand:

> We need to live the values like they are the target, the goal itself. Regardless of what happens, giving the priority always to the values without any compromises. I do not mean leading by values, this is seeing values as tools. I do not like those wording. Instead, leading to keep the value alive. This is a much better sentence. The value you give yourself and people's trust in you as a leader are all related to this (Ahmet, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 27).

When personal values of the participants do not align with the corporate values, then the participants knew that they are not good fitting leaders for those contexts. The former dis-alignment experiences taught the participants that when there is a gap between how they wanted to lead and how they are forced to act, this would lead to frustration and unhappiness for them. Furthermore, they experienced that these conditions jeopardize their credibility and authenticity as leaders. Leadership is affected by context, but the participants learned that no matter what happens in this context, there are some values that are absolute for them. They wanted to be projected as living examples of these values. Through various incidents, the participants learned that acting against those values are threatening in terms of how they see themselves as leaders and how other people project them as leaders. In the wider picture, their credibility as leaders is put at risk and this was irreversible. Being consistent and predictable, acting with integrity, being open to everyone and taking accountability for all the decisions in the unit of responsibility are discussed as the visible actions relying on these values. The participant shared an incident in which regardless of his values, he took action to terminate a manager's work contract and how he suffered afterwards. After this experience, he knew that sticking with his personal and professional values, protecting his leader identity no matter what are far more important than short term gains. Acting against his own values triggered him to question his own worth, his internal fights with himself continued for a while. He also learned that acting against one`s own values make people lose trust and respect in you as a leader, threatens your influence and impact in the organization and throws your projection of leadership to negative. Then, you need to work hard to repair these perceptions and to build your credibility as a leader again:

> When I became a director for the first time, I was working with a very experienced boss, and the company also had a very experienced HR director. They asked me to fire a manager reporting to me. And I did it despite I thought that he was successful and a good fit for the company and he needed to stay. I did not internalize their decision, but I did not question it either. Afterwards, I could not sleep for quite a long time, I fought with myself and thought about if I said that maybe they would be convinced, I could do so etc. I also questioned myself, what kind of leader I want to be? Now if something that do not fit my values is expected from me, I definitely don`t move. That is it right now. It was something that I thought I could not handle at that time, I did it because I thought I had to do it, but I now know that I should have fight for it. The issue here is values. When you take a step despite yourself, your self-esteem and confidence are shaken. You can`t forgive yourself. In this role, I learned how painful it was to take responsibility for other people. There will be no compromise from respecting people… This has something to do with how you are seen as a leader. It was something that people did not expect from me. I am also sure it was talked a lot later, too. Why do people trust you with such a reputation? It costs a lot more to repair it. For this example, maybe you should have 10 anti-stories demonstrated to erase this perception of you. I understood that as a leader, you are loved when you are sincere (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 28).

When personal, leadership and corporate values are in harmony; then the leader is a good fit for that company. This means that what is important for the leader is also valuable for the company, increasing the possibility of productivity and achievements. Providing an example for this relation, one participant stated that after completing the professional coaching training, she discovered the true meaning of values for leadership, and she began to reflect some of her negative past experiences by this mindset. Being clearer and more mindful about her values empowered her in discovering the moments when she is threatened by something not in line with her values, in understanding her emotions better and in regulating her responses accordingly. She reflected on herself about understanding the true impact of values on leadership so late:

> The moments when you fall to the bottom and sink are very informative. In my previous company, I was only able to work for three months. My personal values and the company's values did not match, I lost my passion and realized that I will not be able to contribute to anything in this environment. I did not want to fight either. When I left, I was unemployed for a while and found the opportunity to get professional coaching training. That was a complete reflection phase, a great

> awareness for me… Even after so much professional experience, long years I have ... You start dealing with yourself, you are questioning, trying to understand yourself throughout the training. One module was about values, we are talking about the values all the time, but I am not sure we are understanding their true meanings. Let me say I got it very late. When I looked at my old experiences through this new mindset, I noticed different things. You are not becoming a leader on your own, you are becoming a leader through your environment and their reactions. This is exactly related with the values. The expectations are exactly about the values. The questions of who I am, what I want, what my values are, where I can create value with them were very important. Some moments that I went very angry for example, I perceived things as an attack on my identity. Do your values match with the company you go in, there are values that make you, will the environment provided to you allow you to live them. Yes, we are in the same place, this is easily and shallowly said. But we are not talking about the values through the scenarios in fact, what is true, what is not, what is worth the effort, what is not, what do I fight for, what do I spend my time with, what I can spare. When you fit, you can contribute very good things, be very productive (Suna, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 29).

Similar to this highlight, another participant also underlined that his significance as a leader for his company comes from his own personal and leadership values. Values of the leaders must serve and guide the company in terms of daily actions like communicating goals, decision making, problem solving and delivering results. He shared an incident in which his own values of collaboration and transparency were unexpectedly challenged in the company. The participant insistently stood by his values, did not step back and constantly reminded the management team, his peers that these are also the corporate values. In his perspective, who the leader is directly linked with what values s/he has since values are leading the decisions and actions of the leader. If individual values of the leader do not match with the company values, the decisions and actions of the leader would not satisfy expectations:

> Peace of mind, respect, transparency, and collaboration. These are my personal values, my must-haves. Transparency and cooperation were also the corporate values, at least it was hanging everywhere in the office as posters. My first top management role, I was like the central bank of the organization. I was managing a function responsible for budget planning, operational data, incomes and expenses data, a unit where all these came together. These data are very

> critical because they show the actual performance of the organization. Relying on this data, very critical decisions are made. With a long planning and project, we established a reporting system that showed all the performance of the company and the performance of individual units. At that time, the CEO warned me that this data sharing might be a problem, but I still proceeded with it. Now I saw that my mistake is to think that the values of everyone would be the same and to continue sharing information with this naivety. Otherwise, I would not be comfortable with it but continuing to share the data also put me in constantly difficult situations. These reports have been used by some leaders as tools to outmaneuver other departments. It has turned into a report containing sensitive information, through which the competencies of different leaders are publicly questioned. When we were saying transparency and collaboration, we ended with a completely different place. I worked day and night to avoid this situation, it was definitely easier to stop the reports, but I thought it was against the company's values and I was not feeling right for this. As a result, we established a great reporting platform. We provided departments, and leaders at different management levels, the opportunity of getting reports with different access levels. We focused on individual, customized reports. I felt satisfied and happy for the result we got; it also met company's expectations. If I had taken the warning of the CEO into account at first, we would have all less headaches, but at least some of the leaders demonstrated, claimed, and protected the values of the company. If the same data is not considered with good intention and respect, everybody drives something different out of it, then it does more harm than good. Being able to exist in a company as a leader is about your personal values living and being respected there (Oktay, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 30).

Four participants discussed being consistent and fair, acting with integrity, sharing power and engaging people to make decisions, caring for teams and individuals, and being transparent in communication and taking responsibility in failures as indicators of being an authentic and credible leader. Sharing an incident, one of the participants stated that he gained the awareness and understanding about the clear link between how he is perceived as a leader and how the company is perceived by employees. He learned that by being a loved and respected leader, he could gain the trust of the employees, motivate, and convince them more easily to take actions:

> I think very mathematically. I would say what I said without considering its impact on the audience. This is a fact, numbers are obvious, so this is the case. I used to think that these should be accepted by everyone, how they are affected and how they would feel were not important for me. When I became manager first time, I understood that what people think about you as a leader is highly

> related with what people think about the company, and vice versa. As a manager, you are the company itself for many people. This was a hit for me, one of the shifting points in my life. Starting from here, I learned managing people. I learned to touch people. I realized the requirement of touching them, let`s say. I learned this as follows, one day the HR manager came to me and said that you are known incredibly bad. Everybody hates you; they know you as someone you are not. I was shocked, of course. I started visiting the regions myself. Talking to people, listening to them. Then I understood that it is very important for people to love and respect you as a leader. Very important. Particularly in this geography, it is even more important in the Middle East culture. When people love, they communicate, everything becomes easier, from the beginning they believe that you will fulfill your words, they facilitate what you are trying to do. I realized that this is a driver, a value for leadership. I understood its importance early, but it was too late for me to really do it. My character has made me fail a lot of time, even later. This happens through your instant reactions, through your behaviors. For this, you need to change your perspective, forget about what you know and learn again. So clearly, you need to change to get results. This takes time. I got coaching, I paid constant attention to what I said, I found trainings and participated. I put a distance between myself and numbers. Despite this distance, I became a CFO (laughing). I learned through trials and a lot of errors. If I say this, and in this way then how can it be understood, will that work or not. There are expert people in leader's communication, following them has contributed me a lot (Zafer, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 31).

Another participant highlighted that trust is reciprocal and can only be built through trusting your own team, encouraging them, and sharing the power with them. He learned that actions demonstrating trust in team will strengthen trust towards him as the leader:

> There is sharing of power. It may be a simple thing like someone organizing meeting agenda and following or confiding someone about a very strategic project. Let one decide and we will do it… I am seeing every employee as a talent. I trust in what they can do, I am trying to create opportunities. This approach is related to respect, our company value. For example, check-in and check-out times, this is not an issue we are paying attention at all. If we are moving forward, if there are obvious results; it does not matter whether one comes or not to the office, the hours one has worked. One took the responsibility and did it. Trust is reciprocal. Even if it is very simple; if I trust them, the team will also be trusting me (Kerem, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 32).

The participants discussed that consistency is the ground for gaining trust, respect, and credibility. Consistency in actions, behaviors and expectations are indicators of trust and respect, leading to leadership credibility. Exampling this understanding, one participant

shared a negative incident with her former boss, which she defined as the demonstration of opposites. These are key for her conceptualization of leadership and her leadership commitments to the company and to her own team are based on consistency:

> I cannot remember even a single week that has passed fully positive. I could not predict how she would come that day. The decisions and actions were constantly changing. I think this is unfairness, disrespectfulness. You are not using energy and effort of the person in a right way; you are throwing his/her time away. It is also emotionally corrosive. Success, pride, happiness; these emotions do not exist, expectation for these emotions even do not exist. I started to postpone everything and that is not me at all. Because I had no faith. Somehow it will change tomorrow, what will happen if I move forward. Behaving consistent increases trust. It is respect. People will want to work with you if you do these. I want to be that kind of a leader (Bahar, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 33).

Some of these participants stated that being a good leader is related with the values of transparency, openness and taking responsibility, particularly for the failures. As stated in the narrative of a leader who is working as a board member:

> It is hard to be a trusted person for everyone. It is difficult to remain a loved, a trusted and a respected one, especially while making difficult decisions. I made decisions that people did not like, but my charisma about being honest, transparent, and fair was never drawn over. No one ever said they did not want to work with me. I did not do favors, but I provided chances to them. When I made mistakes, I asked and listened. When one of my team members made a mistake, I stood beside them, I clearly took responsibility, I did not leave them alone. I shared the information I have. Lack of information is producing gossips. Therefore, I clearly explained to my leaders why I made some of those difficult decisions and supported them to share them with their own teams (Ayfer, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 34).

Based on the narratives shared in this part, the participants featured respect, transparency, credibility, authenticity, and collaboration as their leadership values and building blocks of their leader identities. Although the leadership values featured by the participants varied, the value in leading with values was a commonly accepted learning outcome and leadership strategy. The importance of coherence between individual and organizational values are underlined. When these two folds of values are fitting together

without conflicts, the participants lead with greater clarity, less stress and with more success. Overall, they perceived themselves as good leaders when this happened.

4.3.3 Being an engaging leader

Frankovský, Zbihlejová, and Birknerová (2015) discuss that in the current global business environment, satisfaction and loyalty are not enough to secure the desired relationship between performance and positive business results. For a well-functioning organization, it is important to have truly and fully committed staff, and this is something that can be achieved only by the leader. Behaviors and social intelligence of the leader are the driving factors to secure the desired relationship between company and employees, and between performance and positive business results. If an employee is engaged then s/he is more passionate about the work, has an emotionally bonding relation among the team and towards the company and takes positive actions to make the company a better place. Parallel to these highlights, nine participants stated that understanding the significance of engagement for both leadership performance and company results was a very important awareness, a mind shift for them. Via their own experiences and observations, global company surveys on engagement, and reading recently conducted researches on the issue, they started to perceive engagement as one of their key responsibilities and developed themselves to become a better engaging leader. Through their awareness and further learning, the participant added being an engaging leader into their own conceptualization of robust leadership. Defining it as part of her leadership ideals and commitments, the participant stated:

> You are building the right team by finding the right people one by one. But this is the easy side. It is difficult for them to learn working together, to start believing in each other. I am talking about situations where the team does not require any manager. This is related with their engagement to company, to their ownership, dedication. If things are going well even when you are not around, then it means the team done (Banu, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 35).

Being an engaging leader is described as a transformation through which leaders first obtained a different mindset and then began to act differently. As an example, the participant explained about her and her peer`s paths of being more engaging leaders. First, they faced and accepted their failures resulting from not taking engagement into consideration and not being engaging leaders. Second, they changed their perspectives and defined engagement as a key leadership objective in the company, it is embedded in each leader`s scorecards. The participant said that there were other key objectives like profitability and growth and, since they focused on those too much, they forgot about caring about employees, considering their needs and expectations. The resulting losses were important learnings for the leadership team. Similar to other members of the leadership team, she understood the value of engagement in leadership:

> Engagement is about heart bonds of employees, related with trusting in the company and being proud of it. Six years ago, all the rules and regulations of our industry have changed. We focused on growth and financials to be able to stand the competition, acted aggressively all together that we all bypassed the issue of engagement in the meantime. Of course, the entire management team has faced the results of this failure first. Turnover rate was above 30 percent, results of global engagement survey also felt by almost 20 points. We got an engagement result under 60. We are trying to fix this for the last four-five years. We accepted it as the result of our own actions, and we said it is our responsibility to correct it. This is an important awareness and change, our discovery about the value of engagement for us (Meltem, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 36).

As another example, the participant who is additionally leading conglomerate`s strategy office, defined engagement as a strategic people priority for the conglomerate. She defined her role as making sure that each executive leader in different affiliates has the

awareness about engagement, obtained action points to implement throughout the year and clear objectives related to engagement for their own affiliates:

> Engagement positively affects performance. There is a lot of research showing this relationship. Therefore, engagement is a strategic priority for many companies. We are conducting engagement survey for all holding affiliates every year. What employees think about the company, how they feel about it, what they expect from leadership. We are analyzing every part in detail. We are seeing where the problems lay. Then, we are preparing plans to get over them. Lack of information and poor communication were last year`s focus areas. Actions related to these are added into the goal setting forms of all managers. Informative sessions on business plan, sharing the quarterly results and town hall meetings, etc. were put in the communication plan of every leader. The agendas of these meetings are also set. Explaining about the holding`s strategy, objectives of the affiliate, results of main functions and status of quarterly targets. We want these to be surely explained. We are of course expecting a motivating tone. I am preferring to make these informative meetings more frequently in X (she is the general manager in this company), I am publishing monthly newsletters for example, I am trying to participate in away days of functions. I am expecting my own directors to explain about the bigger picture of the company in every opportunity (Sevim, Local, N, Appendix H, 37).

The understanding and awareness about engagement guided the participants to obtain new knowledge and skills, to find new ways of behaving and to develop their own strategies required to become an engaging leader. For the whole organization, communicating a clear vision, aligning all the employees with the broader picture and direction of the company, and making them understand the impact of their own teams and roles in realizing this vision are discussed as impactful strategies for engaging employees. Events in which the leaders explain about company`s purpose and strategies, share the business plan and objectives, inform on the actual achievements, and discuss the failures openly were stated as engagement related items that are added into individual leadership communication plans (Nur, Consulting, N). Majority of the participants defined performing these events to execute these strategies as their quarterly and sometimes monthly routines. Explaining stories and leadership experiences related

to the purpose of the company, sharing visuals (i.e., presentations, company videos) for explaining strategies, goals, and achievements in simple ways, establishing links between individual actions and progress of the company through recognizing individuals and team's success, implementing reward programs are shared as examples of engagement actions. Pondering the power of these events in engagement, the participant who is responsible for the internal communication function, stated that she is seeing these events as a priority for herself, her managers, and the other leaders in the organization. But moreover, she underlined that in addition to these events, the leaders should change their ways of behaving and try to establish deep relations with their teams. In her team meetings, she is focused to encourage the participants to ask a lot of questions. She observed and learned that if the leader answers these questions with an engaging mindset and awareness, that will help the team members move away from personal agendas, and bring them closer to the team agenda:

> I added the goal of making monthly, quarterly communication events, as many as they can do, into company`s internal communication plan. Our team's expertise is communication, so we do these without skipping. Because I am aware of their strong impact on engagement. In addition to these, specific behaviors and actions are good to develop. The most important thing I pay attention to in my team's meetings is letting the team members ask questions, they should talk more than I do. Because, thanks to these questions, we actually talk about who we are as a team and why we are here. If you, as a leader can answer these questions by linking them to the broader picture, then it has a lot of impact on engagement. Beyond discussing who you are as an individual, who am I, and what are the individual priorities; you should talk about what is the place of each one of us in this team. (Berrak, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 38)

In addition to their engagement related responsibilities for the whole company, the participants are directly responsible for the engagement of their direct reports, their own teams. The participants explained about their shifts as a transition of capabilities and perspectives primarily from being an individual contributor to managing teams, then

leading through teams and other leaders. Demonstrating the relations between organizational and team levels, creating a positive and learning oriented atmosphere, emotionally connecting individuals to the company through caring for them individually, asking and listening about their needs, and showing the impact and meaning of their works for the company/function, and recognizing achievements in different ways are underlined as effective leadership strategies for engaging teams and direct reports (Banu, Multinational, N-1). One third of these participants stated that if they can create a trustful and positive environment, help employees to develop themselves and support them to reach their potentials; then engagement will follow. As highlighted by one of the participants, the responsibilities of leaders are "not only delivering the best results but getting the best results out of the team while helping them to grow" (Ayfer, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 39). She stated that this is a strong awareness that can truly be understood and built after years of experience. Once she gained this understanding, it became a constituent of how she defined herself as a better leader.

Three participants underlined generational differences among the direct reports as a challenge impacting engagement levels. They underlined this challenge as a great source for learning since trying to engage employees from different generations provided them totally different lessons, even in their current positions after long years of leadership experience. Discussing this differentiation as a recent change in the workplace, these participants tried new ways to contact and influence, to implement innovative practices for responding the needs of different generations in the workplace. They learned how to make different age groups more engaged to the company. They transformed their leadership orientation and commitments while trying to influence these generations and engaging them. They said that millennials, the people who are

born between 1980 and 2000, are different from other generations in work life in terms of values, expectations and priorities and now forming a major part of current workforce, including the managerial levels. One of these participants stated that things are getting more complicated since generation Z – people born between 2000 and 2010 – are increasingly becoming a part of work life and their values, expectations and priorities already started to shape workplaces in terms of digitalization and work-life balance (Cansu, Multinational, N-2). Trying to find ways to access and understand these generations, to respond to their priorities, to find new ways to work with them and to engage them have been important learnings for the participants. Northouse (2019) says the role of the adaptive leader is assessing the current situation by viewing patterns from a distance, developing a perspective of the environment, discovering new ways to work, and providing direction, protection, and development to the subordinates throughout the change. As leader becomes aware of the problem they face, they work to change themselves, to learn and to mobilize people around to tackle and to make necessary adaptations in the direction of their goals. The participants also defined themselves as adaptive and stated that they need to shift according to changing needs and expectations of their subordinates. The awareness about this adaptation necessity and former experiences about doing it in different cases led the participants to be more self-confident, empathetic, open, and tolerated. One of the participants stated that having a young workforce taught him a lot even he is a very senior leader now. Although there are few millennials directly reporting to him, he is trying to come together with them in the company, cultivating an open atmosphere for thinking collectively and reflecting about existing structures and ways of doing things in the company, sharing ideas, and gaining honest insights about how his leadership reflects:

> New generation is looking at things out of ordinary. While you are speaking, you are feeling it. They are as courageous as none of us were at the beginning. They are looking for their rights within the limits of respect, among them there are those who express themselves very well. A young person, very good, explaining intensely, with confidence, without losing the eye contact. Inside, I said I chose him for this project. Open, honest, narrating without losing control. I do not know that, but I can learn. I am hearing this a lot, and this is a very important answer. They are very good in digitalization and meaningful use of social media. They are particularly comfortable with giving feedback to top management. They are openly sharing it as how they are perceiving it. Our culture is not a culture that is very suitable for receiving feedback, I am willing to listen myself from them, to see how I look from their viewpoint. I work in this organization for more than 25 years now, so I may be blinded, biased, have a narrow mind. Whatever they say is a gain for me. So, I really enjoy coming together with them. I am learning a lot from them. It is enabling me to stay updated and to be renewed (Yavuz, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 40).

Together with this awareness about the significance of engagement, the participants discussed the challenges associated with being an engaging leader. The first challenge discussed is the mindset and defining engagement as a prioritized strategy and objective in the management team. The second challenge was related with the insufficiency of existing communication channels in the organization to facilitate the intense communication activities required for engagement and to get the attention of different employees. In this context, being transparent about the existing conditions and decisions in the company, having a leader strategic communication plan and acquiring the knowledge and skills required for inspirational leadership were discussed as the initial solutions to take. Building settings and environments to explore issues collectively, making sense of these issues and developing the solutions together, including everyone to the decision making were discussed as commitments by the participants. These commitments required different habits, mindsets, and behaviors which are associated with obtaining more inclusive and transformational leadership styles. Thus, the third challenge is getting the directly reporting leaders focus and alignment on the right track

about engagement and triggering them to develop the knowledge and skills required to become engaging leaders themselves. In the next section, some findings related to this third challenge will be presented.

4.3.4 Empowering leaders, developing teams

The participants discussed empowering directly reporting leaders and developing teams as critical priorities for them. Particularly when they are leading the leaders, the participants defined this not only as a set of activities but a mindset that is shaping their decisions, behaviors and actions shaping daily dynamics and interactions. This emphasis is matching with what Bass and Riggio (2006) discussed as mindset related to being a transformational leader. They stated that the leaders focus to empower their subordinates by engaging them in an idealized influence, providing inspirational motivation, triggering intellectual stimulation, and learning, and individually taking their development needs into consideration. While focusing on these, the leader also learns to become better leaders. For the participants, being an empowering leader and developing teams are about embracing a shared journey among leaders through which they are building a supportive and positive environment for the teams to learn and to perform, celebrating the achievements, reflecting on the things that did not go well together. These approaches involved not recognizing the results and outcomes, but also what happened through the process. These also contributed to the increase levels of engagement in the team. One of the participants stated that leading leaders is different in terms of empowerment and engagement requirements that needs to be fulfilled by the leader. He stated that he is leading very competent and smart leaders that may even know better than himself. This understanding led to a perspective change about

leadership, and he started to build different ways of demonstrating leadership and learned to lead leaders in an empowering and engaging way. He also defined this as a chance for him to reposition himself among other leaders, who are reporting to him, and also as part of the management committee. In his new role, he saw himself not as the only leader within the team but as the enabling one for the others. He defined his responsibilities as providing other leaders the required resources, authority, and opportunities to develop as well as empowering them by holding them accountable for outcomes of their actions. This positioning will increase their engagement:

> I am asking their dreams about themselves, how they imagine themselves as leaders. If I understand what they want and can do, I will look at the things in my hand through this lens. What opportunities can I create? Which projects can they lead? Are they willing to do this? We even can open a non-existing function because that leader has the capability to do that job, to lead that function. This point of view is making the company fit them, adjusting the company according to their needs, not them to the company. In this way, all of us will get more. I will step aside, they will do their best, be better and we will all be happy and honored to be a part of this management team (Adil, Local, N, Appendix H, 41).

The participants defined being subordinate centered, caring about every individual in the team, knowing their strengths and weaknesses, and challenging them in a constructive way as the major strategies and actions to be a developing leader. By implementing these, the participants could stretch their direct reports, coach them to find their own ways themselves and gather opportunities for them to elevate their performances. One participant defined empowering team members as an indicator of value driving leadership. For him, the extent of value created by the leader guarantees the development and engagement of the talents in the company. This value is created by asking the employees what they need for development, trying to gather resources and provide opportunities to respond this need, being accessible and available when needed and motivating them to take responsibility. Regarding this value creation, he pointed out

a gap between globally designed talent management approach of the company and his own approach. Company`s global process is more focused on identifying the talents through a pre-defined criterion, setting a quota / a percentage for the number of employees who can be positioned in the high potential talent category, and allocating resources primarily to these talents in the organization. He did not think that this identification process is the right way to dedicate a leader`s energy and efforts. Instead, he preferred to dedicate his energy and efforts to do as much as he can to interact with employees of the company, coach them to grow, and to provide opportunities for them to reach their potentials. He wanted to be identified with these contributions:

> I can`t know that someone can manage a crisis before the crisis happens. These would be assumptions. Sometimes the situation does not occur, and that person then will not be defined as a talent. This is limiting. Instead, it makes more sense to focus on what is under my control. So, the ones I recognized as talents and the ones who I think might be talents, what difference it makes? I prefer to think all as talents and ask what I can do for them. For example, those who were appointed as the first-time managers in that year, obviously they are successful, I must spend more time with them. I can assign objectives to the leaders in my team about team development, if they do this, I can provide them differentiating supports like bonuses. For that year, I can come together with the teams which I know that working on complex objectives, strategic projects or with problematic clients more. I can share my suggestions, provide guidance and advices for them, or just be there for them. We can make mistakes and failures visible and discuss them. Everyone will learn from them. I can work with HR to make coaching a living part of company culture, I can dedicate resources to this. If I devote energy and time to these activities, then I know that engagement will be naturally increase (Mete, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 42)

In their functional areas of responsibility, the participants strived to reach talents from every level of work and ensured that they are getting the resources and opportunities to develop themselves into their full potentials. Development and engagement of these talents in the team, particularly the ones in management levels, were underlined as a very critical, strategic priority since it is related with preparing the future leadership pipeline of the company. It yielded to upcoming success, achievements of strategies and

business continuity of the company. As some solid actions, they stated that they provided leadership programs of prominent business schools to these talents. Second, they tried to ensure higher salaries, premiums and / or recognition incentives for these talents. The participants thought that although these actions are costly, they were helpful for engaging and developing these talents in the company. But since these participants thought that experiences are the best way to build leadership skills; they assigned challenging tasks and problems to these talents, so that they could get the experience required for upper positions. Particularly for the succession candidates, they tried to find challenging assignments, rotations, task force groups and projects so that the talents would learn through experiencing, observing different parts of the organization, and solving actual problems. While supporting these, the participants were also aware of potential loss of that talent like s/he may not come back to the original function or leave the company. Thus, in return, there was no guarantee for the talents to stay long-term in the company. Exampling this, one participant shared ideas about these risks and stated that she would still take these risks and support development of the talents since not supporting the strategic leadership pipeline of the company is a greater risk:

> I had a director. Very smart, with strong technical knowledge and good relationship skills… His own position was kind of narrow for him, he was the successor of my role but in the talent committee, it was discussed that he is requiring around 3 years to be ready. Seeing the whole, being responsible for everything in a company is something you will learn by experiencing. When you say ok, now he is ready, you are not promoting that person to the role, do you? Instead, you are giving him what he deserves, there is nothing developmental about this. Until you say ready, maybe he will go somewhere else, and you will lose. You must give the opportunity. Two months later, one of our general managers decided to retire, he was in a slightly smaller affiliate of the holding. I proposed him to that role. I explained it to him that I saw it as an opportunity for his development. It is accepted. After all, is there a risk in this, yes there is... But these risks need to be taken for the future of the company and for increasing the engagement of the talents (Sevim, Local, N, Appendix H, 43).

Another participant defined supporting succession pipeline of the company as an investment. She underlined that these would also support her own career path for the future. Taking these steps made her a valuable leader for her company:

> To succeed, I must guide and develop people. They must learn and get better so I can delegate. I was never afraid of having good managers, with high potentials, in my team. To be honest, majority of the leaders are afraid of this. They think that those people will take their place. I know that I need a backup to proceed. Because of this, I care about engaging these people, developing them, empowering them. When I leave the company, I want to be remembered as a leader who has created differences for people, who worked together with them, coached, and taught them a lot. This is an investment that I made both for the company and myself (Banu, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 44).

The participants highlighted that for being an empowering leader and developing teams, they required new leadership skills and knowledge. Understanding the subordinate`s strengths and weaknesses better, challenging the weaknesses of people in an encouraging way, coaching, and giving constructive feedback, inspiring people to take developmental actions for themselves and setting better SMART (Specific, Measurable, Accepted, Realistic, Timely) goals are highlighted as the skills and knowledge required to be better leaders. One participant stated that developing her own coaching skills was always a priority for her, but she is also expecting her team to get better in this, too. She thought that coaching would positively impact the empowerment of team members, and the organization. She stated that leadership roles are more required in bad times where people are not performing well, and things are not going as planned. These are transformative and how a leader lived through and learned from these were related with one`s existing knowledge and skills:

> I really mind a lot about the development of my leaders, their directly reporting managers. I am still trying to develop my coaching skills, I am going to trainings, I am reading and practicing. I am expecting from my subordinates to be good at this, too. Last month, I had a performance meeting with one of my leaders. Her weakness is not being able to say the bad, the clear weaknesses to

> the people with low performance. Nothing changes if you do not explain those points well and do not provide feedback and guidance to do it better. The man is thinking that everything is going well, and I think this is unfair to him. First, this needs to be named and that means a confrontation for her, it would be a difficult conversation, so she is running away. Another reason is the goals. Setting a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Accepted, Realistic, Timely) goal is much more difficult than it is thought of. There is such a gray area that you cannot make everything measurable. But somehow, she must say that he is not doing well by explaining why. Then you are punishing the good. These situations in the team are creating unbalances, to compensate you are giving too many things to the managers with good performance. You are giving every task to the good managers because working with the good is easy. This time, that manager becomes overloaded and is reacting against. S/he is also right. You must show that bad performance has a negative sanction and good performance gets an award to your team. Coaching skills are therefore very important (Bahar, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 45).

Another participant highlighted that he sometimes got lost between urgencies and priorities while discovering that he needs to be more selective as a leader. Engaging and empowering people are strategic priorities, but both have the risk to be lost and forgotten among the urgencies. If a leader fails in those at a point, then the results will be unhappiness and disengagement of talents. To avoid, he evaluated his own skills and decided that he is required to be better in time management:

> I have my own projects, the team has projects which I need to involve, the role of management, plus there is the home, kids, travelling ... It is intense. There is a matrix table of priorities and urgencies used in time management trainings. In my life, this is going unstable, and I am seriously unhappy about it. The day is passing by completing urgencies, managing crisis, solving problems and then the priorities are postponed. What have remained at the end of the day is nothing. This table for example (showing the table shared before). Both the team and its members have a path going from know-nothing to know-why. Contributing to this path is a priority, you need to move every team member towards know-why step by step. But a loop here. Unless I spare time for this priority, I will continue to do the tasks because I will not be able to delegate. This means dedicating the time to that urgency, instead of a priority. As a result, I am unhappy with the fact that I continue to do the work, and the team is unhappy about not being able to learn it. Therefore, I am trying to use this table of priorities and urgencies and plan the week, accordingly, eliminate the unnecessary parts and create time for the important parts (Onur, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 46).

Based on this narrative, it can be said empowering leaders and developing teams meant further learning requirements for the leaders. While the participants were searching for ways, strategies, and sources to help and develop their subordinates, they also grew their own leadership knowledge, perspectives, and capabilities simultaneously as leaders.

4.3.5 Leading transformation, change and adaptation

The participants discussed leading transformation, changes, and adaptation as the building blocks of current leadership requirements. This perception is shaping how they see themselves, which leadership style they are trying to obtain and to locate themselves as leaders. Powell (2007) names these leaders as transformational leaders and describes three major responsibilities for them in the organizations. First, they create awareness about the points that require change while urging people out of status quo towards openness and action. Second, they create a vision by involving different views of their subordinates. Last, they realize these visions by building plans, structures, and processes. The participants also defined their responsibilities parallel to these highlights. Considering the responsibilities, they highlighted that their operational delivery roles are limited, and they are dedicating considerable time for working on the vision, strategy, and business plans of the organizations throughout the year. They are mainly analyzing existing conditions and solutions in terms of whether there is a better way to do and need of change or examining whether any adaptations are required in strategies, structures, methods, culture, and capabilities in the organization. Clarifying this through an example, one participant highlighted that his expertise is in restructuring projects, and this means transforming the organizational structure, changing the processes, and adapting the workforce. He said that once the leader drives change and completes the

phases of transformation with success, s/he gains new perceptions and learns to look at things through a different mindset, leading to shifts in leadership mindset:

> Quick and dirty learning and asking questions... It is necessary to ask every kind of questions, even the silly ones, by saying I do not know this and need your patience. As you talk; important points and what needs to be paid attention to came to surface. Asking what is going on outside, asking what is going on at benchmark companies. Asking questions, discovering areas of improvement, and making notes, as if you never knew that company. Outside in perspective. What do you see when you look in from the outside? It is not like I live in this world; but through the questions of what should change, what needs to be adapted, what kind of relationality is there. It is kind of a gossiping about the company. You were put in there to change the company, and you know it should change. I have a high potential to bother people by asking questions, but now I know that if it bothers, it means there is something to monitor in there closely. If you leave it untouched, it can come to your table as a bigger problem. For seeing these on time, you should always be on the field, next to the people, and asking questions. If there is a discomfort, you should go over it. I learned these with experiences. I have always dealt with restructuring jobs. I always had to shake, change, adapt and rebuild in my jobs. Then, I learned how I should think as a leader (Adil, Local, N, Appendix H, 47).

Avolio and Gardner (2005) highlighted that transformational leader`s self-awareness and organizational awareness deepen and broaden a continuous learning process and a growth mindset situated in the workplace towards improving and adapting individual and collective performance. Corresponding to this, another participant highlighted the transformative and adaptive mindsets by saying that leadership is about going through the scenarios, considering options, understanding strengths, and evaluating weaknesses and making choices today with a projection about how things might and should change in the future. She stated that her company was going through problematic times and those were deeply related with the ongoing culture and processes of the company. There was a gap between the existing perspectives and actions of leaders with the one required to transform and adapt the company towards the vision. Although leaders seemed to advocate collaboration and knowledge sharing as principles, individual performances

and successes were highly promoted and rewarded. Solving these problems required radical changes in organizational culture and values, leader`s beliefs and actions, and adaptations in roles, relations, and workflows. Although the leadership team seemed to agree on these, resistances, step backs and mismatching actions were there even from them. Since it was long years spent through the existing dynamics and there were solid achievements, setting transformation and change as new strategic priorities were not easy and resisted by some members of the leadership team. After long discussions, they agreed on a change project which required participation of different functions of the company, changing roles and responsibilities, shifting the culture and values, modifying workflows, and changing the used tools. Collaboration was defined as a corporate value, and communicated through some identified positive, supportive behaviors. Finding the right solutions, implementing them, adapting the existing ones, and making the agreed solutions realized were tough and took long time. Overall, the participant underlined that change projects in companies at larger size provides transformative learnings for all involved, but particularly for the leaders guiding it:

> Partnership company has some problems due to the structure. So, this is also similar in our office in UK, in Germany or in Canada. What is this problem? As a partner, you are responsible for all the financial, quality, people, and business development issues in your own service area. Another partner is responsible for his own area. Everyone is trying to achieve their own objectives. But client needs are not so clearly apart; they want to receive a holistic package of services. You will deliver your own service, the other partners will deliver their own services, but the client will perceive us as an only consulting company. But our financial tracking systems did not allow this. We did not have a knowledge sharing platform. There was no shared approach in business development that brings everyone together. We did not even know who did what and delivered what services. The client wants something from me, I say I do not give that service, but another partner in the company provides it but I do not have information about it. We realized that we do not meet the expectations of clients, we cannot continue like this. We are being laughed at in front of the client, partners of the same company are getting each other's clients, they are not aware of each other. I and a few other partners expressed this problem and requested a

> meeting. Coming together and agreeing on change as partners were painful. Everyone was ok in principle, but not very willing to change. Finally, we created a three-year plan. The marketing team was restructured, became a gatherer, set goals. They explained the company what the problem is. As supporting partners, we told our stories and shared experiences. There emerged an awareness about the issue. After that, we updated the performance management system. Acceptance of this was hard, there were resistances and after long discussions, it happened. At the end of the day, a significant part of our compensation is coming from the bonus and profit sharing. These are calculated by your performance. Marketing objectives were shaped, sales targets were prepared through a centralized approach. For example, we have taken cross-sales and knowledge sharing goals. We increased the weight of these parts in the final evaluation. Partners made presentations about what services they provide, wrote informative articles, prepared internal communication materials like magazines. Since we started from scratch, we had to add these into the performance system, otherwise no one would own it. We are still working on this. This is the adaptation and transformation of company`s culture. This happens step by step. Everyone learns from a change process of this size and scope, but particularly the ones who do it (Meltem, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 48).

Some of the participants discussed the mindset and capabilities to realize transformation and adaptation as distinguishing parts of leadership from management. Leadership is not just managing people and delivering tasks but coping with the complexity, detecting adaptation requirements and relationships between different dimensions, and fostering organizational change as a whole. Each of these steps are transformative for leaders. In addition to their cognitive, analyzing, and reflecting skills, transformation of a company requires employees to take collective responsibility and to act. To ensure this; the participants underlined openness, positive and optimistic approach, acting with empathy, and making people a part of the decision-making process, questioning, coaching, building trust and acting with confidence as the leader`s must have behaviors and characteristics in change times. Speaking about the gaps between the way things are and the way things should be, one of the participants underlined that it is the leader`s role to identify these gaps, to increase people`s awareness about their possible results, convince them to change and make them accountable in decision making and finding solutions:

> Questioning about what I have in hand and what I want. I am asking every necessary detail; I am planning and programing. Being open to innovation and giving chances are what differentiate me. I am taking the team with me; I am not moving despite them. People are wanting to work with me because of this. People`s habits, thoughts are not changing from day to night. There will be resistances, this is normal. But it happens slowly. You will take the necessary steps and wait patiently. Also, if you have market knowledge, then you adapt. First and foremost, you are feeling that you need to change. What is happening in the market? Following social media, reading books, newspapers, magazines, blogs, spending qualified time on the Internet. I am good at these issues. Since I am good at these, I am good at determining the corporate strategy. You need to be awake while everyone is asleep, and if you wake up, then you wake up the company, the client, and the team. You need to have sense of urgency, and energy to push (Nur, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 49).

Summarizing the whole process, Watkins et al. (2012) underlines that transformational leadership is the most discussed one in relation to transformative learning. Their model presents that transformation and learning in the organization go parallel to each other and this includes two dimensions: change in system perspective touching organizational culture and strategies and change in individual perspectives touching employees. In this context, the leader is responsible to generate strategic planning, direction setting and social learning to challenge the system and to generate group and individual learning to challenge the employees. Likely, one participant summarized that first his perspective change about driving transformation as being his major role as a leader, then he gained the awareness about which perspectives, behaviors, characteristics, and actions are valuable for becoming this kind of leader, and last he became better in these through experiencing, building new knowledge, skills, and behaviors. He underlined that shared responsibility and collective learning in the organization are vital to change the daily habits and ways of thinking in the organization, starting with the leadership team. But this involves risks for leaders who lead an organization through transformation. He himself has learned that these risks are emotional and related to authority since the

directly reporting leaders within the management team sacrifice things that they hold dear in exchange for nothing, but a promise of better future presented by the leader:

> 50 years ago, it was year by year change, today it is day by day change and uncertainty. So, everything is new to everyone. One man-based leadership understanding is no longer living. I know everything, I know it right, the decision is mine kind of stand in leadership does not work anymore. Multiple voices, team, collaboration, collective learning, coaching, shared, joint responsibility are important. Not just one solution, but different solutions and combinations are important. I am caring about the participation of different functions, people from every level, from every country. Diversity and synergy… This multivocality is the strength now. They can tell me that this is wrong, instead this is the real problem. Overall, they are all very experienced, senior leaders, they know their fields better than me. We are on the same boat, it is my responsibility to set common goals and make sure we are proceeding with them, we are changing, but this is also their responsibility as leaders. There are complex components, everyone must catch it from one side. We must explore it together. But even you do these things, it does not happen sometimes. Because this is a risk. A risk related to leadership position and power, an emotional and ego related one. You are just selling dreams to employees when you say come, let us do something else, just leave your habits aside. As a promise against this, you are saying that this is better, we need it, or we will need it. They need to trust you so that we can collaborate and change, I must empathize. I need to understand them. Afterall, all the supervisors will think about where their roles will be in this new structure and ask what I will be. But we (leaders) all know that change is needed, and we have the very apparent, major role in it (Mete, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 50)

The participants learned that positive and optimistic leadership approach is essential for learning and achieving the expectations of the change process. They observed that in these times, the organizational atmosphere and employees are mostly under stress and pressure, with a lot of conflicts and ambiguity going on simultaneously. Thus, people lose their attentions and motivations about the change initiatives and turn into obstacles before any adaptation. The participants are also affected by these negativities, but they underlined that they must control their stress, emotions, and responses in daily interactions. They are the ones who must stay positive and optimistic while expanding this mood to the organization. One participant stated that leader`s key position in driving

change is “to stay positive no matter what, deliver optimistic messages, inspire hope and synergy within the team” (Bahar, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 51).

By being positive in communication and optimistic in approaches, the participants could hold an inclusive environment in which everyone was empowered to speak openly, stay committed to the change and foster the conflicts with dialogue. If people working through these times lost their belief and motivation, then the project would step back more than expected. Thus, the participants wanted to locate themselves as inspiring role models to keep everyone engaged. As one participant stated:

> Purpose project impressed me a lot. The work I do has a meaning, notice this meaning, and reflect it back to the work. This is it. This is a perspective shift. Thus, it will touch every function in the company, behaviors of the managers, culture, and all processes. Phase by phase. We started the project with a project team consisting of leaders from every function, but since internal communication function is reporting to me, most of the tasks were my responsibility. I embraced the project. We reviewed what other countries have done, translated the materials into Turkish, and designs are prepared. We dressed every corner, open space of the office. In the kick-off meeting, a keynote speaker explained our goals with a lot of fun. Everyone was influenced that day. Then, we had a contest to raise the awareness about corporate values. We continued with executive story telling sessions. It was important for the leaders to review their former business experiences from this perspective and share them with employees. But we cannot transform the culture with only processes and communication events. There must be a commitment, a spirit of collaboration. I discovered looking at work differently, this project has touched my identity and personality. Of course, it was not the same for everyone. No matter what, staying positive was the key for me. While doing these, there were moments when I felt very tired and wanted to throw all the things to the winds. Sometimes no matter what I did, I could not get results with the same passion. Negative communication spreads very quickly. If even one leader does not believe in the project, or we have a crackling voice in the project team, any criticisms, then this affects all. Of course, I asked these questions to myself, but I did not say these out loud. If I had mentioned these as the leader, then it would go all upside down. Everyone would get slower, conflicts would begin, and excuses would come out. Motivation of everyone is very important. I am the one who should provide this. When my mood went down, I disappeared and did not go to work. I did not contact with people. If I did, my body language would reflect my mood. If I do, everyone would do even more. No matter what, convincing people to take the positive perspective and inspiring them are important (Banu, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 52).

Wang and Zhu (2010) also argue that these leaders are frequently named as transformational leaders in the literature due to the change necessities identified and change goals set to make their organizations better places. The authors underline that in today`s rapidly changing contexts, the transformational leadership style has its benefits over other leadership styles like increased engagement, formulation of new visions and better strategies, and efficient management of transformation, communication of change and encouragement of subordinates / teams to learn and develop. Regarding the narratives shared in this and former sections of this part, it can be said that majority of the participants are attaining the mindsets, knowledge, behaviors, actions, and capabilities associated with transformational leadership style. In the next section, I present the insights shared about fostering organizational culture, which is also contributing to this highlight.

4.3.6 Fostering organizational culture

Cross (2007) says that organizational transformation is the major responsibility of the leaders, related with making an organization a better workplace and is only possible through building beliefs, shifting the culture, and ensuring these through operational change. For him, what is learned in work life by the corporate leader should be identified in relation to this organizational transformation. While leading through a transformation, every employee including the corporate leaders acquire head, heart, and hand related learnings and each of these require a specific method that should be supported in the organization. Head related learnings cover processes, abstractions, understandings, and technical knowledge; heart related learnings are beliefs, emotions, soft skills, abilities, and values; hands related learnings include procedures, hard skills, facts, and memories.

Although learning occurs in each of these domains, transformative informal learning is fundamental for particularly heart related learning and elaborates the ways of making sense of the environments and shifting the ways of understanding the experiences. Corresponding with these highlights, some of these participants underlined the heart-related part of the change processes as transformative for themselves, and their conceptualizations of leadership. They learned about their organization`s atmosphere and culture, explored relations, factors and dynamics shaping it, evaluated it in terms of their own ideals and expectations, and tried to adjust it into a constructive one that values collaboration, learning and joy.

Learning culture and matrix organizational structures are discussed as positive enablers for; existence of silos and lack of collaboration were discussed as negative obstacles before a supportive organizational culture. Nine participants shared that fostering the positive enablers into the organization`s culture and eliminating negative obstacles were very valuable learning experiences that made them better leaders. Through these experiences, the participants gained different understandings about their impacts as leaders in the organizations, reflected their own leadership identity and capabilities, thought over on their beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors.

Three participants stated that they constructed their own leadership concepts and commitments in relation to fostering a learning culture, since they had years of experience in the companies with a strong learning culture, moving through management levels in this culture. Seeing the positive impacts on their own careers and on themselves, they obtained the mindset that they are responsible to build, foster and to own the learning culture in their organization. They became more open to learning opportunities, strived for different learning experiences, and supported the learning of

others through making these opportunities available in their companies. A participant explained that learning was the most distinguishing character in his company, forming a major part of organizational culture. It was the common ground for people to work together, defining the expected actions and desired behaviors for every employee. He learned a lot in this company, became a leader through long years of experience in this organizational environment so that fostering learning and creating the supportive culture for learning became one of his key leadership values and principles. As a leader at top management level, he defined fostering the organizational culture and ensuring the continuity of this learning focus in the company as his commitments and set strategic objectives for the company around learning outcomes:

> Learning culture in this industry and in my company are very significant, and this must be in this way. Let us say that we go to any energy producing facility in the world, people and cultural habits will be very similar, independent of the dynamics of the country. Because you are risking your own life relying on someone else`s experience and knowledge. In the line of business, we are in, your career and future depend on teaching others. The basis of the willingness to teach is that someone else will learn and take over so that I will go somewhere else. This place is built on the logic of letting someone else take my position, so I can go to another role and learn new things there. Learning is the most precious point of this job. That is why learning is always there when we are discussing the company strategies. No matter what, among many projects proposed, I will prioritize a project that will support the learning culture. While I am building my team, I will look if the person has the curiosity for learning, is there a desire to teach as a manager, does s/he have the vision to share and support this culture. I look at these (Yavuz, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 53).

Malik and Roberson (2014) underlined about leadership and learning culture today. They stated that the leaders must develop and empower anyone in the organization to be a better leader and to improve the company performance. Referring to the concept of learning organization (Senge, 1990), they said that when everyone leads, everyone learns; when everyone learns, the organization becomes a learning organization and its performance increases. Learning culture means that the organization has the potential

and capability of creating permanent changes and improvement. Similar to this statement, another participant said that in his former companies, he benefited from the learning culture in terms of richness of learning opportunities presented to him, support for empowering experiences and to discover new things, and toleration when mistakes were made. He became a better leader through this culture, learned a lot and understood the advantages and essence of it. These shaped his perspectives and turned into forming blocks of his leadership orientation. For him, learning culture means enabling the organization to change together and permanently:

> I am lucky to work in multinationals. Learning opportunities were very common, so many options were offered. Some companies have these, but they are there just for display, so no one supports when you want to participate in. My companies were ones with strong learning culture, supporting you to try new things and tolerating mistakes more. Now, I am standing at the role who must provide and own this environment. As the management, we are all responsible for learning culture and the survival of these principles in the company. Learning is a value, and it initiates long-lasting change and success. For example, I have a regional manager, his results are very good, but he is not interested in his team at all, does not encourage them to learn, and results regarding development part in engagement surveys are at the bottom. I interfere into this. He will adopt this culture and make it survive. Or he will go… I am very clear about this, because in the long term, organization`s continuity of learning is as important as the results (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 54).

Four participants shared matrix structures of their companies as valuable learning opportunities. International teams, working with many people simultaneously, being autonomous in decision making, self-management of tasks, and alternative ways of working together are expressed as opportunities in matrix organizations. These shaped the participants` perspectives about teamwork, sense of belonging, and leadership orientation. Exampling this, one participant said that matrix structures prioritize flexibility, accountability, and collaboration so that culture and processes are shaped in

line with these priorities. His leadership commitments, self-evaluation and learning targets are shaped through fitting into this organization as a good leader:

> This structure is a complicated one, but I think it is richness. If you approach flexibly, it is a pleasant learning environment. You have the chance to work with many people from different cultures and see different leadership styles. You understand how much leadership is related to culture. We are coming together as general managers and discussing the issues important for us. A precious brain storming session. Different viewpoints are put forward, and then we all proceed with our own decisions. Decision making initiative is in countries. Matrix and autonomous. Remarkable. (Ahmet, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 55)

Two of these participants also shared negative obstacles before a supportive organizational culture and provided examples about how they learned to reverse and replace these with positive factors. They stated that facing the results of negative factors of organizational culture made them question the present leadership values and this reflection influenced their self-concepts as leaders. Going through this questioning and reflection, these negative experiences contributed to the awareness of the participants about their own values and led them to execute their powers for fostering a positive, supportive organizational culture. These participants concentrated to overturn and replace these negativities with the right ones and triggered transformation processes in their companies. One participant defined lack of collaboration and working in silos as the biggest problem in his company. He shared an incident demonstrating the tension between teams that ended with obstacles before the execution of a very critical, global project and unhappiness among the team members. There was a miscommunication between the sales function whose objective is to sell the project and the project management team whose objective is to deliver the project with quality. The differences in the objectives resulted with increased tension between the functions and as a company, they ended with a very unpleasant situation before the client that affected their

reliability. Regarding this experience, the participant understood that collaboration is one of his leadership values that he cannot ignore or put aside. In order eliminate the negative factor, he expanded his knowledge about the company to examine the reasons of these negativities and used every means to replace this factor with a better alternative:

> There were issues we could not agree on with the sales team. They used these issues in bargaining with the client. This has damaged both our and the company`s reputation. We had to stand behind the promises made to the client. But we could not close the project with a profitability as much as we headed for. We shifted people from other projects and broke the teams of other projects. Everyone's life was affected, not only the project, but also the personal plans were impacted. It is not clear whether the man will go to Jordan or Nigeria. Time plans of the projects are also different; one will go and when will be back. Everyone was with right unhappy. The internal elements can do more harm than the external ones, it has been a lesson for us all. Collaboration is very important to me. I did not leave this issue aside after the project was over. First, I went to the sales director, I explained the effects of his actions on the project and team. People may not be able to make accurate predictions about jobs they do not know. Then I used the internal escalation mechanism for this. I brought the issue to the board of directors. It will not happen with every function trying to save itself, we had to fix it. My suggestion was to trigger a change process about collaboration. It was looking at the processes, the workflows through this lens, and creating awareness for cross functional collaborations. After the annual business plan is made, it is difficult to put these types of issues requiring resource allocation into the agenda, but it was accepted by a large majority of votes. Specific for our works; it became indispensable for the project and sales teams to act together on every client contact and at the last phase of the sale. With the signature-approval mechanisms, we arranged this in such a way that it is not left to chance. Cross functional teams are started to be created for large projects. We updated the workflows in the tracking systems we use in project management. Some systems have been purchased to provide healthy digital documentation. As we spoke, other cases surely emerged. With communication activities, we underlined quiet a lot that collaboration is considered important in the company (Onur, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 56).

For another participant, leadership meant adjusting and correcting these negative factors of organizational culture. She defined herself as a better leader to the extent that she spotted these factors, understood the root causes of those, and could replace those factors with the positive ones. As she became a senior leader, she understood that first she is

required to understand the results of her own action, to hold a mirror to her peers and started to feel more powerful to create that change:

> I-you, my team-your team, my success-your success… A team that is always in the fight about these. Everyone is constantly criticizing, constantly searching for mistakes. A constant your fault-my fault debate. But all of us without exception… because culture is something created together. Everyone's values and understandings are included in this. I said these explicitly in a meeting. I went crazy that day and started to share okay I observed this and this, these are the examples… I asked if this is normal, what do you think. Of course, not so calm like this (referring the mood she had in the interview, laughing.) A long silence, then confessions. In other words, we, as the management team, faced each other and with ourselves first. This was a bit of pain, of course. Changes like this are not easy, small steps… and must start with the management team because probably the root of the problem lies somewhere in there. I think we had like 20 team coaching sessions, in two years. Most of us participated to the majority of these sessions, did whatever are suggested in there, I am still in favor of continuing these sessions as a team. It is not easy at all to do this step by step and not to go away at some point. I understood my own point of views, my values, my influence. The impact is important here, it is important to face my impact and accept it as a leader. For example, I ask a lot of questions. Actually, I do it with a protective reflex, so if I ask, the employee will not face these challenges when the s/he goes to the other manager, we will be prepared without them questioning those points. But in doing so, I actually tried to also protect myself from criticism. Asking questions is not perceived as such by others, but what they see is I ask a lot of questions because I do not trust them, or after a point, even as I criticize them. Building block was my own team. When I discovered something in the coaching session about myself, I came back and asked this to the team openly. So, this is my awareness, not a good one of course, but do you think that's the way it is? When I continued to do this for a while, the team started to say openly yes, no you are wrong, actually it is like this, etc. As a team, we started to spend more time together and talk. Of course, I feel stronger, powerful than where I started. Personally, and as a leader. Because there is something changing, going better now (Bahar, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 57)

As discussed through the narratives shared in this part; turning things around, formulating and designing alternate company cultures are not easy but empowering for the leaders. Fostering organizational culture is a transformative learning process since the participants understood their leadership influence on individuals and the company cultures, challenged the existing cultures and replaced those with cultures conductive of learning and development, contributed to the development of their subordinates through

collaboration and support, and improved their own knowledge, skills, and confidence as leaders. In the next part, the question of how these learnings are acquired is presented. The sources, processes, and strategies of the participants to acquire the learnings required for effective leadership are shared and discussed.

4.4 Sources, processes, and strategies of informal learning

One research question of this study was about the sources, processes, and strategies of learning informally. In this section, I present and discuss the findings related to this question. During the interviews, the participants answered the respective questions through featuring experiences, other people, self-directed learning and associated practices, dialogue, networks and a set of characteristics and behaviors as essential sources, processes, and strategies of informal learning. Some of these learning processes are discovered spontaneously based on need. Although the participants did not intentionally seek for these then, after understanding the learning pattern, and seeing the benefits of these; they started to trigger the processes on purpose. Intentionally, the participants started to use these as learning strategies.

First, the participants underlined that they learned from their experiences. Second, learning from other people is emphasized by the participants. Last, a set of behaviors, skills, knowledge, and actions were underlined as individual factors which influence and accelerate the informal learning. This fast-paced learning was very valuable for their career paths, for them in becoming the leaders they are today. As long as the value of these characteristics and behaviors are brought into consciousness, the participants started to use these purposefully in fostering further learning. The participants were not equipped with everything they require to execute their roles and

responsibilities but focused on to build new capabilities, knowledge, perspectives, approaches, skills, and behaviors which they thought as necessary to become the leaders they imagine. Thus, they stated that practices, behaviors, and actions embedded in daily routines, as habits, are important to build self-knowledge and to increase self-awareness. Doing this, they had the chance to identify their gaps with respective to the ideal leaders they want to be and planned their learning processes. Self-directed learning and required meta-learning skills are shared as essential for planning self-learning process. Last, dialogue and networks as communities of practices are shared as important sources and strategies of learning. The emerging themes, dimensions and codes related with factors, forces, sources, processes, and strategies are presented in Table 9:

Table 9. Dimensions and Codes for Factors and Forces, Sources, Processes, Strategies

Themes	Dimensions	Codes
Factors and forces influencing learning	Individual Factors	47. Learning agility / growth mindset 48. Curiosity 49. Passion 50. Flexibility 51. Adaptability 52. Optimism 53. Success / result orientation 54. Meta-cognitive learning skills 55. History of learning 56. Self-evaluation 57. Self-management
	Contextual Factors	58. Matrix organizational structure 59. Availability of learning resources / opportunities 60. Sharing knowledge and expertise, collaborating 61. Cooperating with others 62. Attitudes of managers for learning 63. Support and tolerance for trials and mistakes

Themes	Dimensions	Codes
Ways of learning in leadership	Sources	64. Early work experiences 65. First managerial role 66. Challenging assignments 67. International experiences 68. Project groups / assignments with limited time 69. Bosses 70. Clients 71. Consultants / experts 72. Peers / colleagues 73. Other leaders 74. Direct reports / subordinates 75. Sources to read (Books, journals, blogs, articles) 76. Sources to watch (serials, videos) 77. Social Media 78. Company digital platforms / tools 79. Company processes 80. Conferences 81. Virtual learning platforms 82. Networks 83. Stories 84. Executive Coaching 85. Failures, Mistakes, Errors 86. Trials, Practices
	Strategies and Processes	87. Using company digital platforms / tools 88. Allocating time to social media 89. Asking questions 90. Assessing and evaluating self 91. Being coached / mentored 92. Designing and using company processes 93. Experiencing, trying things out, practicing 94. Fostering conversation / dialogue 95. Generating and examining alternatives / scenarios 96. Getting expert help / consultancy 97. Getting information / monitoring 98. Listening 99. Networking / being a member of the network 100. Observing 101. Participating in programs, conferences 102. Presenting 103. Reading 104. Reflecting 105. Reviewing data and experiences in other cases 106. Searching the internet 107. Self-directed learning 108. Listening to stories 109. Surviving the crisis and tough responsibilities 110. Watching 111. Working with other people, other leaders 112. Mind mapping

Factors and forces influencing learning and ways of learning in leadership are two major themes. Under the theme of factors and forces influencing learning, there are two dimensions and 17 codes. Under the theme ways of learning in leadership, there are two dimensions and 49 codes. In next sections, I present and discuss these findings in detail.

4.4.1 Necessity to deliver results: Excelling through experiences

The participants featured early career events, first managerial responsibilities, challenging assignments, immersion and leading in other cultures, and sudden business changes and shifts as the most developmental experiences. They learned to perform in and to lead cross-functional, out-of-expertise tasks and projects and, to lead multi-cultural businesses and to navigate cultures and new countries as different contexts. They highlighted that through experiencing, trying things out, experiencing failures, and/or getting successful results in these experiences, they changed from novice to advanced levels in the ways they understand, interpret, lead, and perform. These experiences were primarily on the job learning sources for the participants. In addition to these, the participants learned to manage and to handle several relations, to work as part of a management team, to collaborate with peers, to lead senior leaders and to work alongside more experienced colleagues like clients and bosses. They are either supported by these relations or challenged, but overall, these relations are used of as positive and negative role models to discover what to do and not to do. These yielded to new ways of interpreting and acting, building new capabilities and knowledge, gaining self-confidence as leaders, conceptualizing the desired leadership, and altering the self-concepts accordingly. The findings of this part are highly corresponding with what Ratanjee (2018) presented as the most developmental experiences in leader

development. They are also in line with what Eraut (2008) discussed as major informal learning processes and activities at or near the workplace.

All the participants have substantial educational backgrounds. They are the graduates of prominent universities, but they all highlighted that learning required for advancing in leadership is gained through experiences. Although they stated that their educational background provided them vision, knowledge and skills that are important, they pointed out that what they did in work life was more important for becoming leaders. Early work experiences, first managerial responsibilities, challenging assignments, participating, and leading task force groups, rotations to other functions, and international positions were highlighted as significant sources of learning. Regarding the novelties, challenging nature of these experiences, the pressure associated with the requirement to deliver results and to fulfill expectations, learning was not something nice to have but a necessity to perform and to succeed. While describing these experiences, the participants discussed also about their failures, reflected on their performances and effectiveness, and shared the expectations from their roles and the required knowledge and capabilities to fulfill these responsibilities. These were described in relation to the framework of becoming better, more effective leaders.

4.4.1.1 Early work experiences

Nine participants highlighted their early work experiences as important source of learning. These first interactions with work life factors and dynamics led the participants to face with their individual gaps, particularly in terms of knowledge and skills. It also resulted with new perceptions of work life since they questioned their preconceived ideas and assumptions about the way things are or should be. Regarding this awareness

and understanding, the participants started to think about how their personal and professional frameworks, knowledge and skills should change. They were successful students in university and started their careers from big, mostly multi-national companies but they have discovered that work life required different things other than academic knowledge and intellectual skills. The participant shared that she has examined her technical knowledge gap in her first role and had very challenging moments for delivering results. As soon as she has delivered the results all alone, her self-confidence has increased. She defined that building self-confidence at the beginning of her career was valuable for her advancement towards her future leadership roles:

> I started working in a family business. I entered as a sales engineer in there. My manager at that time asked me for a software. He was also the owner of the company. I was required to create a tracking, ordering system for the usage of sales team. This has become my nightmare. I only took one or two software lessons; I had no idea how to do it. I was overwhelmed a lot. Then I said to myself cowards die many times before their deaths, fear is no use to death. I learned programming, I learned software from books. Asking my friends, through trials and errors. But I was at the office day and night. My manager started to say that, ok I understand your enthusiasm but please go to your home. I did that program, and it was used. I did it all by myself and of course I became more confident. The way I look at myself has changed. After that, I always said that sometimes your inner voice says that you cannot do it but ignore that voice and continue in your way. I learned that somehow, I would make it happen, get it done (Feriha, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 58).

In the early work experiences, there is the sharp transition from student to employee and facing the “realities of work” in terms of unfairness and unrealistic expectations. Looking from current position, the things she learned in her early job such as time management are now obvious for her. But for the time she was going through all those experiences, she learned to respond great expectations, and discovered that business life is not always fair. Those lessons were valuable and mind-shifting for her:

> After the pleasant and comfortable environment of the university, it seemed like another world to me. Stressful. Constant time pressure, days and nights are mixed. All the incoming tasks are both urgent and prioritized. I cannot even ask about which one to start with. I worked hard. I know the days when I almost woke up in the office, got up at four on the morning and went to the office. That company was like introduction, business life 101 for me. What happened in the end? I had my wedding on Friday, I was still working on Wednesday evening. They politely fired me on Thursday. With this rip off for sure; I learned that business life is not always fair, so I must take care of myself more. Over time, you are setting a certain order, you are learning to manage time and prioritize things. With less work, you start getting more results. That is like this for every new and bigger role you get (Bahar, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 59).

Cranton (2016) states that the recognition of former experiences makes individuals understand their meanings and values for today and lead to new awareness. This awareness triggers exploring options for actions, developing competences, planning actions, and making decisions for the current contexts. In line with this highlight, two participants said that although the early work experiences were simple in comparison to today`s complexities; these helped them to discover what they wanted out from their careers. This awareness provided them a purpose in work life, helped them to set their career goals and to build a focused, developmental course of actions towards these goals and to realize these actions with passion. Exemplifying this, one participant discovered about values and dynamics in the workplace that are significant for her:

> It (referring to company) was a place that was caring about knowledge, researching, and learning, valuing expertise, and aiming reverse brain drain. I worked with very good people in a joyful, wonderful environment and discovered a lot about myself. What makes me happy, which environment is good for me, what I want from life. Academic knowledge and business world are considered dissociated from each other, but I do not think so. This is about how you combine theory and practice. Two worlds must learn from each other, constantly feed each other. I learned that workplaces with this perspective are suitable for me. I discovered that I would be happy where people respect knowledge, have learning culture, focused on working and learning together instead of having aggressive relations. Such places are suitable for my values. My subsequent choices have always been this way. As a leader now, I am caring about creating this environment (Cansu, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 60).

Demonstrated in these narratives, the early career experiences were developmental and transformative since their impacts, lessons learned and gained awareness are still noticeable for the participants. These experiences contributed to the participants` paths of transforming into the leaders they are today.

4.4.1.2 First role in management

The participants highlighted their first managerial roles as significant sources of learning for themselves. Six participants stated that by being assigned as first-time managers, they discovered the significance of interpersonal skills as a manager, tried various strategies out, experienced both failures and successes and learned how to direct people, how to work with people, to persuade them to act towards common goals. They are exposed to new circumstances, unfamiliar environments, and expectations where adjustment to self-concepts and professional frameworks were needed. Through their negative emotions like fear from failures and stress of things being ambiguous and complex, the participants compared themselves with others at the same and/or upper levels, and relatedly defined their capability gaps, took actions to close these gaps and built their own strategies to respond these conditions. These participants commonly highlighted that seeing the business from a broader perspective and taking the responsibility in solving problems to get results were the major challenges they faced in these first roles. One of these participants shared that in her first managerial role, she found out that there is more to managing business than being technically good and delivering results. She figured out the linkages between her team`s, function`s and company`s results and began to grasp the broader picture of a company. The learnings of her first managerial role transformed her into a more strategic thinker:

> I became an executive first in X (international, retail company). While working there, it was said that all HR will now be connected to the headquarter and the local HR departments will be closed. I must convince the headquarter not to be restructured like that, but how? I looked at different companies and cases. Articles, blogs, forums, research about centrally managed HR functions. I read whatever I can find. I formulated my strategy and theme with the information I collected. Through examples, I explained that this decision will create chaos for Turkey and instead we require a simpler approach. I demonstrated that we would not be able to catch the desired speed through the new structure. I explained the problems that may arise in relation to the bigger company picture, not only as a HR person but more like a strategy person. They were convinced and our structure remained the same. I learned that communication is a strategic issue; how I say is as important as what I say. As a result, success is persuasion of one of the two sides and ability to make one`s own wish the other`s wish (Banu, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 61).

Becoming aware of and sensitive to psychological needs and expectations of subordinates were highlighted to be a major learning for first time managers. Some of the participants, whose expertise were in finance or sales, said that they have discovered not "to see their employees as numbers". They found out that technical know-how and knowing the procedures were not enough to persuade and influence people to act. Instead, they said that new interpersonal skills are required to make them listen to you, to direct them and to execute the work. One participant stated that in his first managerial role, he learned to become more sensitive to people within the team and start to perceive team spirit and happiness as a requirement to get results:

> People management is the weak point of everyone who becomes a manager for the first time. You succeed in managing an operational business and then become a manager. But you have no people management experience until then. I was very tough and thought it was a must for doing well. Number of people who found me tough and ropes were broken due to something I said were not few. I discovered a lot about myself from their reactions. Clearly, I changed but first I accepted that I need to change. I read books, tried to establish systematic approaches while managing people, learned coaching, to give feedback. When I talked about only numbers and results, I observed that I killed the spirit. I started to allow them to make mistakes, let them take some risks and to monitor without overwhelming them with details. So, I gave up with micromanagement. You must go to the results by establishing the right management relations with the right people (Burak, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 62).

The same participant highlighted that his first managerial role made him discover that companies are living with their own dynamics and unwritten rules. These form an important part of company culture, and if the leader does not learn how to interpret these indicators and to act in line with it, then s/he will not be a good fit for that organization. As he is now a member of executive management team, he has the power to challenge corporate culture and to transform it. But still, this learning is helping him to determine and decide about where to stay stable and where to challenge. He defined this as a transformative learning since it is key for success at his current management level:

> Companies have their own culture. Unwritten rules, relationship dynamics ... Some understand this in a longer period, some in a shorter time. I also understand the culture of a company in one to two days, at most a week, I will have ideas. But I am not in the approach of adapting immediately. I mean, I am not anymore. I now have facts that I believe in their accuracy. I have my own ways of doing things. I have sine qua non values. I try to impose these; I have such a side. If something is wrong, I will not be sorry to say that this should change. Why would they bring me from outside if everything is superb at that company? I think changing those is what is expected from me. You have the authority, experience, and power to change something now. Adaptation to the culture and fitting into the organization are important for success. In my first years, I learned to understand the dynamics and act accordingly. It should be lived like that in those positions. But now, I say I should not get caught in this. So, this skill is still valid but with a different dimension. It is now important for me to understand the dynamics so that I can use this power and authority correctly and create change (Burak, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 63).

Overall, it can be said that the research participants are shaped irrevocably by their first management positions. Even after years in leadership, they recalled the first years in management as key developmental experiences. These experiences were transformative since they forged awareness and permanent leadership approaches, styles, and values.

4.4.1.3 Mastering in challenging assignments

The participants stated that challenging assignments are one of the most powerful triggers for learning. Challenging assignments were described as being assigned to and/or jumping into a work situation that were viewed as totally new, combining risks and problems that did not have a prescribed approach, and forming a part of strategic execution plan for the company. In these assignments, the participants were the only accountable person with full power to decide and to act while standing as the only target for superior evaluation. Their objectives, several in parallel with varying scopes, are set in strategic consensus of executive boards and appointed to them for trustful and successful execution. Then, they are the main responsible and the only decision maker who set the strategy and plans about how to achieve, who face the barriers and challenges before the realization of these objectives, solve the problems to keep things going on, producing results, and finally evaluating the outputs. Mastering in these assignments resulted with a series of learning related to self-knowledge, personal and professional frameworks, altered and new ways to act and perform as a leader.

These assignments acted as turning points that require quick consultation, analysis and adaptation, creative and effective solutions, finding alternative ways of doing work, questioning, planning, and locating resources in an effective way to deliver results. The participants learned to manage increasingly complex tasks, to solve complicated problems, to build and sustain relations with different stakeholders, to evaluate the context and options, to prioritize, to set a target and to direct people towards it. Through these assignments, the participants reflected on themselves and their results, understood their gaps, set new learning objectives for themselves, tried things out and discovered what is working and what is failing, and built their own reservoir of solutions

and actions to perform better. These participants all highlighted that they did not become accountable and capable for all these and gain their power in one day. This was a long process of transformation in which they have majorly learned by doing, experiencing, making mistakes, trying things out consistently and finding the right way to proceed. They learned to fulfill these responsibilities step by step.

As their scope of work expanded from role to role, and as they took different roles in challenging assignments, the participants learned to look for, to find and to evaluate ways to deliver results. They questioned the assumptions, beliefs, and ways of doing job obtained through the former assignments again and again for the new assignment. They checked the appropriateness of these former knowledge, actions and capabilities in the new conditions and learned numerous lessons related to accountability, power, and authority in different assignments. Thus, the participants have shared numerous stories and incidents about these challenging assignments which led them to explore new ways of knowing and doing the job, making provisional efforts, and reintegrating these again into the new conditions dictated.

Building and delivering something totally new, turning a business around and expansion in the scope of the role are the three major categories of challenging assignments highlighted by the participants. As part of building and delivering something totally new assignments; they have introduced assignments which they began from scratch like building new product lines or plants, founding of new businesses or functions, entering new geographies and markets. Restructuring existing operations and processes, transforming the strategy and culture of the company, and reorganizing all assets to avoid potential failures were shared as examples of turning a business around assignments. The most underlined challenging assignment was taking a new role that is

higher in the management level. As top/high management level leaders, they all have gone through the similar, progressing career path. They experienced the expansion in the scope of their roles that are either broader or different from the ones they had before.

Six participants stated that they learned a lot through the assignment in which they have built and delivered something totally new. Building a new product line / plant abroad, establish a new function in the company and entering new geographies as markets were shared as examples of building something from scratch. While implementing these; the participants worked in unfamiliar contexts, expanded their technical knowledge and skills, experienced numerous failures, and confronted social, political, and cultural barriers which they formerly knew nothing about, managed ambiguities, faced shortage of staff and financials, and invented new procedures and ways of doing things. Despite all, they delivered what is expected from them. All these assignments were shared as exemplar success stories that are framed by the pleasure of getting good results and leaving a permanent mark on the business and / or on the world. But moreover, these assignments were highlighted as “necessary advancements” for leadership roles and formed key cornerstones in their individual career paths.

Through these assignments, the participants learned how to identify what is important, discriminate and prioritize the right thing to focus on, how to organize themselves and stakeholders to reach goals. They changed their ways of interpreting the world, having different processes of making meaning of the same experiences. The participant –who is currently working for building a new metal manufacturing facility in another country– highlighted that her perspectives and beliefs which have been already changed in former assignments helped her a lot to get rapid results in this project:

> Project is reporting to the minister. There are very intense government relations. Let us say there are legal and illegal dynamics. As a control freak myself, I am trying to establish multiple functions and systems. On top of these, I am a woman. The minister has a relative in the project, who is supposedly reporting to me. On the other side, he is reporting my work to him. I had experienced such complicated situations in a smaller Kazakhstan project before, from that experience I knew that increasing the tension of relations does not get anywhere. Dead end. I must manage this somehow. We came across in the meeting again, in the middle of everybody, he flung everything on the table down. Nonsense actions. I have barely established my authority, it was shaken. Of course, I went crazy. But I stayed very calm. I will have to swallow later if I say something at that moment. It is an illusion that everything always goes in line with what the leader wants. What I can do is to control myself and my feelings, manage my own ego. If I react with anger, things will be prolonged, a thousand of other troubles, like me continuing in Baku. Despite the challenging problems, this project will end on time as planned, we agreed on politics, we knew what and how to do. Observing, reading the dynamics of culture and being able to act accordingly, understanding people's behavior, controlling my own feelings and reactions. These are all learnings of former incidents. I lived something, changed, and I am remembering the reason for that change like yesterday. I experienced the results of my former reactions, I learned by doing it, by trials and errors, by banging my head into failures. But I changed, these are what I said I would not do any more (Feriha, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 64).

Another participant, who is now responsible for establishing HR Function in an international consulting company, shared her experience of establishing the marketing and communication function from scratch in her former company. As a member of the executive management team, she was the only accountable person for the project and faced various oppositions from her peers in the management team. She stated that she changed her perspective and ways of behaving through that former experience. She understood that positive approach and optimism is key for great leadership, and the executive management role is a lonely one that sometimes achievement is only possible through passion and self-motivation of that leader. The former experiences and the learning made her perspective more comprehensive and positive, while contributing to her self-knowledge as a leader. After the success of the former project, she feels more confident as a leader in the new project:

> In my previous company, I set up a function from scratch and led it. There was no business development and markets division in consultancy industry functioning in this way, which we could use as a benchmark. A marketing notion, that is operating on networking, personal branding and thought leadership grounds, does not exist even in another industry since this is the need of consulting. First, I tried to clarify what kind of roles and responsibilities this division must have, in which frames it should work. This has been very challenging since I was new to this field, and there was no benchmark data or a single example of this. Then I looked at other countries, there was something in the Spanish office. I went to Spain. There, I worked with this division. What are they doing, what are their goals, what business results they are affecting, how do they present the evaluations of these effects? What are the difficulties of this operation? I tried to understand them all. Then what are the needs in Turkey. I started to ponder about how this division can be adapted in Turkey, what kind of business model and organizational structure can shape this division. Next, I contacted with a consulting firm specialized in organizational structuring and design. I met with them and shared my observations. It gave me an idea about what kind of organization and role definitions we could start with. I have worked several alternative models through this. I suggested it as a division involving business development, marketing, and corporate communication functions. I determined networking, personal branding and thought leadership as the priorities, and prepared how we can transit these into objectives. I said that it is a structure standing on these three strategic pillars and explained about its expertise and goals. Who can do these works, I also prepared these profiles. But I tried very hard for getting this model accepted by the management. I realized that leadership is an important strength; either makes a difference or puts things at a dead end. The positive approach, optimism is important. Sometimes you can be alone even when you are sure that you are doing something good. I knew this from my case. What are the reasons behind my argument? The management team did not express the goals and vision of the company, clarify the expectations; but even I understood and shaped those, I struggled a lot to get the approval of these. After acceptance, I started to struggle to bring this structure into life. I visited each of my peers one by one, explained, tried to convince them. My motivation, belief in the subject and my desire to work on it were very high. This was reflected in the structuring and functioning. It is continuing; it is still going very well. That division made the history there and is continuing in the structure I have established. It has become over my head, there has exceeded. But this has carried me to this level, too. Right now, I was again given the job of setting up a division from scratch and preparing all the processes, but I am more confident now (Ebru, Consulting, N-1, Appendix H, 65).

Four participants underlined the assignments which they were working hard to turn a business / project around from failure or to fix it as important sources of learning.

Restructuring existing operations and processes, turning a company from failure, and

fixing it, reorganizing the assets and resources of the function according to new needs were shared as examples of these assignments. The participant, the general manager of a consultancy company in advertising and communication sector, said that her major role is predicting and fixing the communication mistakes of the clients so that they do not end with negative reputation and loss. These mistakes may get bigger and make that company "end in one night, result with legal punishments and loss in the prestige of the company". Coming with strategies to save the client`s business, making the decisions for them under tough and uncertain conditions are routines of her role. She developed new behaviors, invented new solutions, and through accumulating numerous cases, she gained the capability to foresee and prevent risks before they turned into crisis. Moreover, her career and individual choices are shaped with where she preferred to stand through these cases. She understood what will make her happy and decided on steps to take next with courage:

> Should I grow up in the big sea or should I be the big fish in the small sea? These are very different in terms of responsibilities, what you learn and your decision-making powers. I tried both. I made my decision for trying both. First, I was a small fish in the big sea, but too small that it wore me out. It was a very large company, everyone was saying wow, but I could not bear it. Your initiative is limited, everything was defined. But clients were so huge, therefore there were constant crises. Crises, mistakes that will crash the companies overnight. I learned through hearing and seeing, observing. Then I said I should go to the small sea. Let the decisions be mine. I wanted to take initiatives, make decisions. I felt ready for this. After my first company, it was more like a lake. Then I saw that I am not that small. I am deciding, I am going to clients, if I made the wrong decisions, the results are big, the stress of this. But I did manage those crises on my own, solved them. I learned by doing. After eight years, I became such a fish that I have dived into the big sea with the same decision powers. I said OK. I am ready and it is time. Then, in that big sea, I became general manager in two years, and it came afterwards. Fortunately, I made those decisions, I did these things with courage, and I am glad I did not mind the things said to me and took those risks. Luckily, I knew myself and said that I would be happy in this way. If I had not seen so many different cases, I would not have been able to live through this change so confidently (Nur, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 66).

The participant, who is working as a COO in a Pharmaceuticals company shared an assignment in his former role. The assignment focused on turning a business around, fixing it and selling it in a totally new format. He came up with strategies that saved the business while he has faced with many challenges like inadequacies of the staff including the top management team and shortages of financial assets. In this assignment, he was fully accountable and highlighted that this resulted with new awareness about self, a different self-in-relation, confidence and empowerment, and new professional perspectives, knowledge, and skills. He explained this challenging assignment and his learnings out of it as the reason why he is now at his current leadership level:

> That was a Private Equity business and the first time I have been in that industry, doing that job. That business is a different one with its own dynamics and rules. As a manager, you must think differently, you must approach things with another perspective. We had to make the company ready for sales as soon as possible. The company will almost bankrupt but in Turkey, these sales issues are done by exaggerating a lot. It is not realistic for a company to be transformed and become profitable in two to three years. People asset, HR processes carry a company to overwhelming competition. These areas cannot change or be transformed in such a short time. My brain is working mostly on being sustainable. So be it long-termed, permanent, and effective. In this business, I had to shift my thinking between today and sustainable approach. You start by determining the truths for everything first. No anchors, no references, no ground to build things on. The primary owner of the company is the Private Equity, but then from here and there, management professionals have entered the company. This has created a freakish culture in the company, and communication between people was inconsistent. The company's general manager has changed meanwhile, the new CEO was a very toxic leader. People find me trustable. After knowing me, people trust me. In this process, he even damaged the trust of the family towards me. He was going to my staff and complaining about me. He told everyone that I could not do this job. In fact, he took the mindset, tools, skills, and self-confidence that made me away. But this has transformed me like even the tanks pass over me, if I can raise my head up then I will go ahead. I learned how to work with a toxic leader and how to manage the relation with him. I learned to negotiate for the sale of a large company. I practiced in people relationships, I learned to get successful results from toxic relationships. I have always worked in international companies, then I learned a world that I did not know. In those companies, we did not have cost related problems, but in this company, costs were the major determining factor for making decisions. I learned to find the quality in the cheapest means. I discovered global resources. I learned to manage

> the money of a financially troubled company. For example, I did not contact the bank as the CFO of a company at risk of falling down. The company was eventually sold for a considerably high amount. Would it worth the money paid, no it would not, but we have made such a business plan and fed it with such a story that it was sold. There, I had a great transformation, a lot of awareness gained. I learned this. I was looking to the companies through the financials but beyond that, the company should have a story. I need people who can realize that story, not doing only business. But opposite to this, we are just giving up those people in these processes of change. This is the main mistake. The story should be solid. When I took that responsibility over me, I had unintentionally accumulated tactics and methods. The product I have put forward should be of overwhelmingly good quality, so that we can restore prestige. I worked very hard to make it perfect. I worked ten times as much as needed for each subject. If I did a mistake, it would not be. I looked at every detail ten times, presented ten times, I was telling myself the story of sales day and night. But it happened. When it happened, I said what to do with these now. The things I have done, the things I have acquired, and the awareness brought me to my current responsibilities, my position (Zafer, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 67).

In this experience, the participant faced serious staffing problems and struggling with these problems, he has discovered that there need to be a balance between using authority and persuading people. This awareness transformed his self-knowledge as a leader, leading him to use different leadership attitudes and expectations at different conditions. Since the employees knew that the company was not in good condition, they were feeling insecure and acting demoralized. There were increasing dissension among them, and this was ending with increased ambiguity and lack of a clear direction to go. Things were getting more chaotic and disorganized. Then, the participant discovered that he is required to make tough decisions that will result with unhappiness of people. This awareness triggered a reflection process on the existing condition where he questioned his assumptions and beliefs and changed the ways of interpreting the conditions. But he knew that if he did not take any actions, then in this tight deadline and high pressure, things would become worse for everyone in the team. He tried to keep the balance between “using the authority and persuading people to take action”. He was more

authoritative towards the employees in whose skills he did not believe much and who were highly demotivated and creating toxic relations around themselves. He gave them two months to change their attitudes, to reorganize their operations and for the ones that did not do so, he had to fire them. He thought that this decision and consequent actions have made him gain the rest of the team. Since he knew that he did not have the time to build a new team, he needed to work with people one way or another. For the rest of the team, he organized information meetings and explained what was going to happen and why, listened to their worries and fears and supplied them with facts and relying on their comments, he has also changed some of his ideas. He realized that:

> Authority is necessary, but inherent to its nature, there is tearing things down. To build things, you must persuade and motivate. There must be a balance between these two. Everything is not always under your control, but at least you must explain them that you have the intention and desire to do your best for them, you must gain their beliefs (Zafer, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 68).

The more complex and demanding managerial tasks became, the more transformative informal learning occurred. In some of these assignments, the participants were loosely supervised due to geographical reasons or not supported much by the head quarter, the management team of the local affiliate and by the peers because of different reasons. Two participants pointed out their merge & acquisition experiences in which their responsibilities and authority did not align due to the ambiguity going on. Since they do not have the full authority for their assigned responsibilities, the participants improved their skills to persuade and to influence other people to take actions towards the desired target and to deliver outputs. Through these challenging periods, the participants established strategies to convince their superiors and peers for decisions that they do not believe in much or took the lead where they were not required to. They implemented numerous tactics to deal with different divisions and people who are recently brought

together after merge and persuaded them to do things when they were reluctant to. They installed new systems while they were unfamiliar with new situations, facing serious staffing problems like them being demoralized or unskilled and faced the challenges coming from their unsupportive peers. The participant said that going through a merge & acquisition challenge meant enormous learning for her, like a strong disorienting dilemma transforming her in a short time. She is now in the middle of this process but even in this limited period of time, she discovered a lot about herself as a leader, developed new strategies to persuade people, discovered new ways to survive as a leader through tough conditions and led her team to take the same actions. She perceived this as a learning opportunity, since she already became more open and competent:

> The profile of my peer, in the company that has bought us, is a challenging profile. We are trying to integrate us to them mainly, so I am disadvantaged. I am in an assessment process, and anxious. I do not know if I will continue or not at the end of the day. Leave it aside, this is a period in which I am even wondering about what will happen today. Every day, resignation is coming to my mind, but then I am saying you are learning these, you are gaining new experiences, lets continue, a little bit more… For a while, I started to realize that information coming to me is short, missing things. Eyes are on me, but there is no sharing and support, a lot of uncertainties and I do not have a source of information to progress with health. Biggest problem is that the environment is not reliable. First, I was as clear as possible. I openly stated that she did wrong. But we went through more conflicts, got negative reactions. This strategy failed. Then I realized that I was wrong by trying to build this relationship on trust. Overall, we do not have to trust each other to do business. This is a temporary situation, so can be lived in this way. In other words, my values such as having an enjoyable environment and trust are currently not responded, but I learned to live with this, I am required protect myself and my team. Now, I turned everything into a project team, we are proceeding with everything as a project follow-up, asking and recording. For example, I am documenting what we talked about in written format and emailing it. So, we are getting testimonies. We started to establish relationships with other countries, asking to different people repeatedly. We are in need to confirm information. I am calmer now, obsessing with it less. I learned well that if I am not sure about the goodwill of the other person, then I had to stay in a more data-driven and political relationship with that person. Not allowing the trivial points to create chaos…. One should regard this as a learning environment (Cansu, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 69).

Almost all participants highlighted the expansion in the scope of the management role as a critical learning experience for them. They took over more responsibilities through different levels of management and finally had the full accountability for their functions or the companies. In mid-level management roles, they were moving the operation forward and this role required being more hands on. When they did promote to top/high level management roles; their geographical, functional, stakeholder, asset and people management scopes became broader. The impacts of their decisions over financials, markets, quality, risk management and/or people engagement priorities of the company enlarged. Hoggan (2016) defines this as sense of empowerment and responsibility in which the learner gains greater mastery over themselves, their relations and engage more consciously with their environments and tasks. As the example of this, the participant underlined the weight of expanded people management responsibility and associated feelings in his first executive role and how learning to manage this transformed him:

> I felt quite bad when I became a director. Being unsuccessful in matters related to people who I am responsible for made me afraid the most. The first thing I think of is that there are more than 500 people reporting to me, and even if I do not know them, they are all looking at me. They are thinking about what will happen to their careers. You make someone promote, one`s life is changing. You assign someone to another city, one goes to a different region, life changes. A very big responsibility ... The responsibility of other people becomes a huge part of your life. You have no choice but to make the decisions related to people right. Losing money, taking risks, goals… These are all hard, but they have a return, you can make them right again. But people related decisions are not like that. You are responsible for the suitability of the person you take from another company, you are responsible for the orientation and adaptation to the company, you are responsible for trainings, you are responsible for everything. Because your decision made him come there. First, I learned to be a more patient man. If you are going to decide, you must spend a certain time and then decide. You know that you must stop without stepping forward. This is a very important transformation for me because deadline is always yesterday in sales business. So, you are always, already late. From this point, I came to a point where I know stopping and waiting (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 70).

Expansion in the scope meant change of responsibilities from being more operational to tactical. The participants are required to decide where the business should go while thinking over the impact of that decision over other priorities, resources, and processes. Their daily routines changed and became more complicated regarding the scope of the decisions taken, problems solved, risks calculated, stakeholders managed, and operations monitored. Afterwards, the participants need to make sure that the updated processes and operations are in line with the decisions taken. These required developing of new behaviors, skills, attitudes, expectations, purposes, views, and knowledge of self as a leader. As highlighted by the participant, after his promotion "I have changed and learned to think and act like an executive" (Mete, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 71). Likely, another participant underlined that although he has wide range of experiences gained through his former roles, each new role involves broader scope and is a learning experience itself. To adapt to new expectations, he must develop new strategies, and to learn different things for fulfilling the expectations and for staying a good leader:

> The knowledge and perspectives do belong to past experiences. In every promotion, you need to upgrade yourself, forget things and learn some of them again. Otherwise, people are always trying to move with their memories, old experiences, and same solutions. These are important but not enough. You are responsible for so many jobs and tasks at the same time, that first it is impossible to catch up in terms of time. A decision you made due to financial priority is affecting quality, customer relations, and happiness of employees. These have a cost, but invisible. Like a spiral, it touches other points that you did not guess but you should. I became a better listener; this is my achievement which I think made me a better leader. I am listening to everyone who believes s/he has a good idea. Listening is not actually a simple thing; I am talking about hearing but listening by trying to understand, listening without prejudices. You can find a point that you have not noticed before just by listening to the right people. You are not hands-on, not inside the execution anymore. Those involved in the execution are bringing more effective solutions. Since you are listening, they are feeling more responsible and own these. Good leadership is not about knowing everything or being right but ensuring that as many people are happy as possible (Ercan, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 72).

As a summary of the findings in this section, the participants shared developmental experiences that can be placed under three categories: Building something totally new or delivering something unfamiliar, turning a business around and restoring it and expansion in the scope of the role. While the participants were going through these experiences, they gained the knowledge, self-awareness, expertise, skills, approaches, and solutions required to become and to perform as better leaders.

4.4.1.4 Task force assignments and rotations

Some of the participants highlighted task force projects as important experiences in their careers. Task force projects take a certain time, from six months to a year, and are added on top of an ongoing job which is already demanding. These projects start with discussions about strategic priorities of the company, focus on solving a set of problems or transforming the existing dynamics in the company, and bring talents from different functional backgrounds together. As Ratanjee (2018) also underlined, the task force assignments are important sources of learning since the leaders face the challenges that are new and unfamiliar, work on out of expertise tasks, lead cross-functional teams which he has no former knowledge about and try to realize the targets. These tasks are mostly mission-critical for the organizations, therefore mostly task force assignments are monitored by the top management in the organizations, the final outputs are directly shared with them and evaluated by them. In line with Ratanjee`s highlights, implementing pilot projects to try new ideas for the first time, working on a specific problem that requires contribution of numerous functions and forming a strategic team and leading strategic, prioritized projects to get better results were shared as examples of task force assignments by the research participants.

A few participants constantly mentioned rotations as important learning sources in their careers. Rotations are assignments to other functions or critical strategic roles within the company for a period of one to two years. Locating to headquarters, working in hot seats with a leader several levels up and working in a general administration function like quality and risk management are shared as examples of rotations by the participants. Rotations are designed to make the leaders more ready for broader future roles, to help them grasp the bigger picture of the company, to understand the corporate culture and strategies better and to observe the original incumbent of the position, to gain new knowledge and skills, and to build a mentoring relation with him / her (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001). Eraut (2008) also underlines the rotations as important sources of learning through which the worker gets the chance to visit other parts of the organization, being coached and mentored by different colleagues, particularly more experienced ones. Rotation is also a learning opportunity for the rotated function and the role since s/he provides additional, outside perspective to that function.

The common thing about task force assignments and rotations are their results being highly visible to executive board committees since those are thought to be an investment for the future leadership pipeline of the company. This visibility made the experience more challenging for the participants since they were required to manage the ambiguity of learning a new thing and to initiate a team that should work together and produce results in a tight framework (Roongrerngsuke & Liefooghe, 2013). Corresponding with this visibility and criticality, the participants featured these experiences as developmental since they handled the pressure of success or failure that will be visible to superiors, discovered the difficulties of tasks that they are not familiar, learned to lead people through influence. These led to new leadership capabilities and

alternative ways of leading other individuals. The participants also met with other leaders in the company, analyzed the problems from different functional perspectives, saw the business from their sides, gained a broader perspective and understood the culture of the company better. This led to empowerment of the participants as leaders, constructing confidence and obtaining new skills, knowledge, and perspectives.

One of the research participants was assigned as a lead of the task force which came together to transform business processes and operations end to end. He defined this experience as an "enormous personal and professional development" for him which has impacted his promotion to an international role. The project was on the strategic agenda of the local affiliate and monitored directly by CEO of the company. In addition to his technical skills and business know-how, he set his strategy as "being open and adaptive" so that the task force group can quickly begin working together and learn to benefit from each other`s strengths and expertise:

> In the project, we would evaluate, and if needed revise and redesign all the processes which means whatever you can think of, involving IT, finance, sales, logistics, HR, procurement… Final goal is to automate all these processes and transfer them into digital platforms. This was already my responsibility so since the end is my role, they gave me the former analysis phase, too. I have technical knowledge, but I do not know any of these processes. What matters or not. I openly said that I have the technical knowledge, but I am ignorant in your processes. I told them that we will learn from each other. For this, I will not hesitate to say I do not know and ask questions. I said that you can say anything that comes to your mind openly, without thinking that it might be stupid. I guessed that we all had already very busy agendas and were thinking as now this came out additionally. Even I was thinking like that. You need to figure out how to work with 35 people quickly, understand who is strong at what and where. We need to feel like a part of the team so we can start acting like that. Motivation problems happen. They do not care; you must explain the importance of the project continuously. It is necessary to communicate without personalization. Additionally, you need to trust people. If I said that I would decide after I learn everything, this would not work (Tolga, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 73).

The learning in this case is related with the requirement to deliver results in areas that are also new for the participant, with no former mastery or related knowledge and to convince task force members to take actions towards the same direction and targets in a very short time. It is the challenge of ambiguity that the participant gathered and synthesized information piece by piece, relied on others and asked the right questions to find out what is critical and important. The participant thought that he was chosen as the leader for this project because he had the required technical skills, questioning skills to grasp unknown basics from a common framework and ability to persuade others that they are "all together in this deep trouble". As he learned; in times with little authority and control like this, persuading others with patience, being open in terms of strengths and weaknesses, concerning the views of others and melding all into a common goal are critical for getting results as a leader. The participant accepted that he could not be the expert on everything, know every detail and control every action and discovered that in fact, there is no need for this. Instead as the leader, he is required to look at things from a broader perspective, find ways to make people produce results together. This awareness about togetherness, sense of transition and trust to others ended with a set of developed strategies and a shift in the mindset that made him ready for a role with broader scope.

Another participant shared her experiences about her additional role to corporate strategy office of the conglomerate`s head quarter. Her role as general manager in one of the conglomerate's affiliate continues, so that this role is like a task force assignment in nature but a rotation in terms of length. It was planned to be around six months but will be possibly extended to over one year period. She highlighted that although she is working as a general manager for years, she learned a lot through this additional role in terms of self-knowledge and leadership concept. She had the time to focus more on how

various businesses within the conglomerate should respond strategically to external conditions like clients, competitors, government regulators, media and internal conditions like employee engagement and efficiency. Through working with different affiliates of the conglomerate, she gained knowledge about new industries and how to dream up options, work on alternative scenarios, analyze problems from different angles and execute strong judgment to decide on the less risky and effective options. Although she does not have the expertise that other executive leaders in those affiliates have about their industries, she is accountable for providing different perspectives and accomplishing their strategic goals together with them. She needed to find "some common ground" and work mostly with her peers over whom she does not have authority or control. In her time spent until now, she began to think that "being curious, adaptive and inclusive" together with competency in questioning and listening skills are the most important features of the executive leaders today and acting through these principles and skills helped her to find and to provide the common ground:

> I experienced that possibilities and risks should be evaluated according to company culture. Adaptation is very critical. One solution does not fit all, it stays in the air when it does not respond to company`s dynamics. For this, spending time in that company is required. Listening to people, questioning with curiosity, and giving the effort to really understand are required. Inclusion is important. This requires considerable time and effort. You must listen to different opinions with patience. Deep Democracy Method, for example. We are particularly using it in strategy setting, business planning workshops. Beyond listening to everyone consciously, hearing even those who are in the minority, trying to involve them in the decisions… Sometimes a very unhappy employee throws an incredible idea so I say that ok I must make it happen. There are ideas that can be implementable and not, if it seems not possible to implement, then why, if possible, how… We must ask through different perspectives, independently and patiently. In this way, you get insights and the solutions you find are owned because they change something (Sevim, Local, N, Appendix H, 74).

Two participants highlighted that rotations to other functions within the company were significant developmental experiences for them. Although they had concerns about that

the rotation time may be a setback in their careers, in the long term these rotations changed the participants personal and professional frameworks. Before promoting to director role, the participant was defined in the talent pool of the company and the company asked her to prepare an individual development program for herself. In this plan, she asked to make a rotation to finance function since she defined "reading and interpreting numbers and financial reports" as her weak spot that would always create problems for her in leadership roles. By demanding this, she was not feeling very secure since this was not directly related with her own expertise, and she would not be producing concrete results in HR function for the definite period. Then, she made a rotation to the finance function and worked together with the managers in there. In addition to gaining financial know-how, she said that this experience made her gain new capabilities and perspectives:

> At the budget meetings, I really wanted to read P&Ls and interpret the financials. I am somewhere, but I am struggling to understand the issues, I am listening, but I cannot improve, or I cannot contribute anything. In such environments, I was feeling very bad. When I was asked to make an IDP (Individual Development Plan), I said that I want a rotation to finance. This is not a very routine request, you will spend some time outside your own area of expertise, what will the team be, what will happen to tasks and so on. Anyway, this opportunity was given to me. In the rotations, I had the opportunity to get finance training for non-finance people, did not hesitate to ask questions to people I trust, I worked on reports, I attended meetings at that time like CFO's assistant. I established good relations with the finance team and created relationships that I could also go and ask things in the future. It was a six-month period, but it helped me a lot. Currently, I am tracking a significant part of the company budget alone due to employee costs. I am predicting what will affect where and at least asking the right questions on time. This rotation was an investment. My leadership skills have also developed. For example, team building. I understood that I always had to keep people who are good at numbers in the team. I realized that it is necessary to create time to learn by experiences. In every leadership training we are designing within the company now, concrete steps that enable participants to experience such as voluntary work, rotations, strategic project task force groups, NGO roles, some simulations… we are adding these to the programs (Suna, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 75).

Another participant said that her value as an executive leader and a consulting partner to other executive leaders are highly related with her wide range of know-how and expertise gained through experiences in different functions. She stated that through these job changes and rotations, she has gone through a mental transition from being tactical to thinking strategic, and started to grasp things from broader perspectives:

> I worked in different lanes, not in only one lane. I was in audit; I gained financial perspective. I learned to interpret the financials. I rotated to the advisory division for a certain period in the same company. I gained the ability to take a holistic approach and establish cause-effect relationships. In this rotation, advisory started to get my attention, so I continued in there. I was curious about business development and communication specific to consultancy industry, and I worked, particularly in this field. Then I realized that I really like the consulting sector, I also know it well, but I want to continue with marketing. I wanted to be transferred to the marketing department within the company. At that time, another company came across, I combined these two interests and I provided, for myself, the environment where I can utilize both very well in this new company. My motivation and passion to work on these subjects were so high that I established a new function, built a structure from zero. It exceeded me. I took roles in the academy, I started to give trainings, and this is when it started to find people related issues and leadership concept interesting. Soon after, this new job was like a tailor made, exact cut out for me. I gained a lot from rotations, additional roles, and from my interest for trying different things. I have reflected all these experiences on this job. This has become a place where I transited every field, every lane of my 16 years of experience into an advantage and created value for everyone and the company (Ebru, Consulting, N-1, Appendix H, 76).

Overall, although the task force assignments and rotations were limited in time and scope, these experiences were featured with their high learning potentials. Convincing the diverse members of the task force groups to act in a shorter period of time, leading these groups through influence, delivering the expected results in a strategic field monitored by upper management were the learnings associated with task force assignments. Rotations provided the participants more understanding about strategies and company culture, seeing the broader picture of the company, establishing supportive relations with peers in other functions and gaining the knowledge in another field other

than their own expertise. In the next section, I will present the findings related to international assignments. Although international assignments are similar to task force assignments and rotations due to limited period of time spent in that assignment, they set different demands and expectations out of the participants and offer different learnings.

4.4.1.5 International assignments: Navigating a new culture and leading in it

Eleven participants highlighted international assignments and underlined working in international teams as the most powerful, transformative experience in becoming a better leader and a different person. Ng et al. (2009) underlined that functioning and managing in the global environment as a valuable, rare, and inimitable learning experience through which the leader gains global perspective, self-efficacy, ethno-relative attitudes toward other cultures and accurate mental models of leadership cross cultures and flexibility of leadership styles. The experiences and reflections shared by the research participants are totally supporting these highlights. Working in other cultures, delivering results in different countries, leading teams with varying cultural backgrounds, living abroad and immersion in other cultures led the participants question and reflect on their own frames of references, mindsets, beliefs, and assumptions. Exposure to broader sets of cultural, professional, and personal frameworks all at the same time in the participant`s professional and personal life impacted their flexibility, openness, and tolerance for ambiguity. Executing tasks and fulfilling responsibilities in totally different contexts required transfer of former expertise and capabilities into a new set of circumstances and these stimulated transformations as leaders and also as individuals. The participants learned to discriminate and prioritize among numerous things that are both new and ambiguous for them, went through learning processes to understand and to adapt new

circumstances, built a more comprehensive world view and became more open to differences. They defined themselves as more visionary and inclusive leaders and individuals after the international experiences.

International assignments shared by the participants were the ones in which they worked and lived-in foreign countries and led businesses and teams in those countries. By working in international teams, the participants meant being responsible for different geographies in their companies, executing business in those countries and having team members from different cultural origins who are located either in their home country or in other countries. All of these participants said that these experiences were all transformative since they have discovered significant information about themselves, developed their skills of communication and strategies of adaptation. They have struggled the challenges of living and working in a different geography and culture, found out strategies to immerse in local cultures, managed the ambiguity they are going through, questioned, and discovered new ways of living and managing people with numerous differences, learning the unwritten rules, and inventing new ways of management to eliminate barriers before getting results. They defined these learnings as part of their transformation from being a local leader into a global leader who thinks with a “global mindset” and acts via “cultural awareness”. One of the participants shared his assignment to China as a challenge for himself and his family. From this experience, he developed a different self-knowledge about himself, improved resilience and personally became more confident and flexible. He also learned new strategies of management to get results, developed the perspective to pay attention and to understand the unwritten rules of culture and obtained different leadership skills:

> China is a completely different culture. There is a similarity when you enter the company`s door. Everyone is a world citizen, corporate values are clear, human values are universal. But it is different. It is very formal and quite slow. Although the corporate culture breaks this a bit, you feel the hierarchical reflection of the country culture. There are rules of respect, at the beginning of the meetings there is a long greeting step and an introductory speech. I really understand that these are signs of respect, but it was challenging my patience. Rules are black or white, if you say let me think this through a little bit, this may not be appropriate, this is perceived as a no. There were people who addressed me with my title. At first it seemed very strange then I got used to it. Things that look like as little details like these are actually very important. You must learn otherwise you will be regarded as odd. After all, it is me who went there and therefore I am the one who is required to adapt. As a family, we were enthusiastic to go there, but when we started, finding a home, finding a school for children, driving license, etc. learning everything from scratch. There is the saying about being ignorant overnight, that is exactly what it is. Not being able to read the alphabet was the hardest thing ever, you are trying to get over the day by the translator in the phone. Grocery shopping is a problem. You must continuously learn things, ask, and solve problems. The work you will do in one unit takes 10 units. But it is very developmental and transformative both personally and professionally. I discovered a lot about myself, discovered that I could do a lot of things. I think I came back more resilient, flexible, and confident (Tolga, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 77).

Major skills discussed to be developed in relation to international assignments and experiences were communication and adaptation. Necessity to fit and live in in different cultures and geographies has shifted the participants` focuses and perspectives about the environment and relations they are living in. They began to read the body language, observe gestures, analyze the behaviors and responses of others and to continuously self-reflect whether they are doing something wrong or not in the moment. Due to this discomfort and disorientation, they tried to learn clues of immersion from each interaction, and this has become an automated reaction after a time. In one of the participants words, they became “culturally intelligent” and “respectful” (Onur, Multinational, N-1). As an example of becoming culturally intelligent, one participant shared his challenges lived in Lebanon. He discovered that learning the non-verbal,

unwritten rules of interaction is important to demonstrate respect and to understand people from different cultures. Learning these made him a more competent leader:

> While doing something perfectly normal, I was catching glances on me. Something is sounding different to these people, but what? For example, I do not ask the employees much about their families. I think this is an indicator of respect for private life. In there, it is the opposite. If you do not, you are just a business-oriented, cold, distant manager. When I said just how are you, their faces were falling off. Asking their ideas are also surprising for them. Because the manager is like an absolute authority. I am required to know everything. Civil war still has a serious impact, topics of religion and politics are very sensitive. In fact, they do like talking about these issues, but without expressing their own thoughts. This indirectness has become stable, but they have learned it because they had to do so. I could not break this. When I was making decisions, the most difficult thing for me was to understand the connections they are establishing. So indirect; I was always nervous about missing the relevance, that there is absolutely one. When I started to pay attention to body language, astonishments, smiles, evasive responses, and so on; I found what I should do by trials, gropingly. Looking at these details is a habit. Obviously, it is always working for me (Mete, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 78).

Another participant shared her story about living and working in Azerbaijan as a woman and how this experience has contributed to her strengths as a leader. She learned to analyze cultural dynamics leading interactions, discovered the power of being attentive in every moment of interaction and to adapt her actions to get results. She said that her work environment was dominated by men disregarding her and her opinions as a leader, and this is disrespectful. The ability to analyze and to lead these interactions played the key role in getting results in the project. Although she said that personally she is still frustrated about those gender relations in the country, she thought that within the limited period of her assignment, she could do nothing to change these. Thus, she changed her perspective and preferred to “play the game accordingly”. Rather than judging these and struggling, she adapted herself to overcome the reactions and get the work done. This is also corresponding with what Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) highlighted about the leaders going through intercultural experiences. They stated that the leaders became more

tolerant for ambiguity, learned to act flexibly, to discriminate unchangeable things and to focus on the strategies that will bring them to the desired results:

> I came to Azerbaijan as a surprise. I found myself here. There were stories told by my friends, there are lessons I retrieved from these stories, but it is different when you experience it. First, I have learned from my astonishments. Women cannot bargain, cannot object to something. Everything comes at the last minute, well, when the deadline approaches, you just realize that you have irrelevant things in hand. You are discussing the content of a million-dollar contract, asking serious questions, but you must speak very carefully because you are a woman. In a role with authority, they are not used to women at all. I learned to discover the dynamics of culture and developed the ability to act accordingly. I was not in panic. I searched for resources, read, asked my friends, asked the other expats here. I determined strategies through trials, the tone I talked to was always strong, never wore dresses and high heels. Unbelievable but I have learned Azerbaijani language. I worked with the teacher at nights. Because I must directly say the things what I want to say, without needing the translator. Learning the language was the only possible way to make an agreement with a male state officer over an age, as a woman. Through this process, I developed the ability to observe and to act according to changing dynamics (Feriha, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 79).

Observation of cultural dynamics, engagement in daily conversations, learning from mistakes and adapting oneself were considered as necessary actions and behaviors to proceed and to succeed. But moreover, the participants underlined that international experiences are directly related with who they are and what values they have. They stated that these experiences made them better leaders since they began to be more respectful, open, and tolerated towards the people they work with. They began to act more collaborative, opened spaces to hear alternative perspective, became more respectful and mature towards different opinions and criticisms and prioritized to make all team members feel valued and confident. One participant, who is responsible for EMEA region and leading a multicultural team, said that she discovered the value of having multiple opinions and voices, started to initiate platforms to hear those and take collective decisions. She started to bring her team together over virtual calls and make

them discuss about a particular problem of a country. The aim of these calls was to grasp the similar experiences of other people and to share their perspectives, to discuss solutions collectively and to reach an inclusive consensus with these people. The participant defined these calls as a great source of learning since she grasped multiple sides of the problem through the lens of different people, acquired knowledge and skills from people for designing and implementing plans and accessed provisional and integrating solutions that she could not see from within (Berrak, Multinational, N-1). Another participant highlighted that he understood the significance and value of learning from the different than oneself. This awareness and worldview are now shaping his decisions and actions as a leader in terms of flexibility, persuasion, and toleration:

> If you work in hospital sector, you will go to the furniture fair. Otherwise, you will stay there, nothing new will come out. For a company in US, it is not ok to review US companies, but you need to review Far East companies. Benchmark is important when deciding, as you cannot try everything. This is the way to stay in the market. I prefer to get this data from different channels. Because what is effective is focusing on what I can learn from the one different than me. My job is restructuring, I always went to companies for breaking the structure into pieces and rebuilding. There have been times when I made difficult decisions easily. In the past, I was a heavily demanding person, I would put a lot of effort, but I must see that person also does the same. At this level, I reached a different perception. Everyone has a life situation, active agenda, a capacity. In my old version, I acted pedantic, showed arrogance, and forced people. Now I feel sorry for those situations, why I have pushed those people so hard. I became more flexible and tolerant as I saw many differences. Now I know that if you move with anger and say nothing will happen from once; then it is over. You can justify every decision like that. In these days, even the man who took bribery can say that this is a good thing. But in fact, you kill the chance to learn something yourself and that person`s possibility to approach you again. It is killing the respect and togetherness. Respect, openness, fairness, flexibility, accountability. Being accountable in the realm of materiality and in afterlife. I know now that they are values and when you give up any of them, you deal with who you are. That is why I enjoy working with start-ups. Start-up is another culture. Everything changes instantly and rapidly, but it includes all the differences. Different solutions are coming from everyone and something collective comes out of this. A very valuable learning environment. Everything is new, you have the chance to set everything right the first time (Adil, Local, N, Appendix H, 80)

Finding a common ground, establishing links, and sustaining these relations effectively are underlined as the key knowledge and skills obtained through international assignment. One participant discussed these as the learnings that made her valuable for her company. She shared a strategic, global project she is leading and stated that being a world and a corporate citizen are the common ground for the project team, and she is chosen as the lead of this project due to these learnings:

> I am here for my success in establishing abroad links and relationship management because I can read people and create deep relationships. In this project, I am trying to manage a matrix structure. There are people from different cultures and countries. I have peers in the project, and I am also responsible for their results. Our common denominator is the corporate citizenship and our desire to achieve the project. We are happy to live in the same company culture, after all, which is an important indicator. Our intellectual levels are the same, we have similar lifestyles, common values. Let`s say we are all world citizens... So, the differences do not cause any problems. When setting the project team, you are not looking at where they are from but what they know, what are they caring about, and how they are behaving. (Suna, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 81)

Some of these participants stated that their international experiences changed their frames of references, make them aware of their own cultural assumptions, beliefs, and biases. These findings are also very parallel to what Hoggan (2016) discussed as transformations associated with the worldview and self. According to Hoggan, international experiences led shifts in the way a person thinks the world works, as well as how it should work, and these are mostly explained as expectations and values. This also involves an active process of making meaning of one`s experiences, starting to interpret past experiences differently and to locate themselves differently in these experiences. He also discusses that the international experiences and the learning outcomes out of these experiences involve reimagining some aspects of identity, like racial and cultural identity, self-positioning and resulting with awareness about biases and illusion of self. In line with these highlights, the research participants questioned

themselves and discovered some of the reasons behind their actions, which they were not very happy with. These moments of discovery were transformative since they understood their own unconscious cultural biases and prejudices. One of the participants shared her thoughts after an article she has read in Harvard Business Review:

> I curiously took the tests referenced in the article. These are created to help you understand your own unconscious biases and attitudes. For example, I was curious about the gender one, so I did that test. The results I got surprised me. The link I established between family and woman was higher than the link between career and woman. For some reason, I matched social sciences more with women. And I am an engineer woman (laughing)…. Afterwards, I explored these unconscious biases issue a lot. The ones that even you are not aware of lead your decisions (Sevim, Local, N, Appendix H, 82).

Another story was shared by the participant who has lived in Dubai for three years. She discovered about her own prejudices and underlined that as she got more competent as a leader, her personal and management values combined and began to drive her approaches, preferences, and leadership style more obviously:

> A client in Dubai said I do not want an Arab model for the event I was planning for them. I had then said okay, but I would never say this if it were for now, I would question and oppose. What do you mean I don`t want an Arab model, you are living in United Arab Emirates, your target audience is there but you don`t want an Arab model? This is discrimination. This is disrespectful. Later, this racism continued to be weighed on me, but at that time, I was inexperienced so that it was hard for me to say anything then. Also, I was also going through a questioning myself. Our families, schools had a judgment, a standing against Arabia. It was always like their other, they are not modern, backwards, etc. You are coming with such a cultural background and my son was learning to write his name in Arabic, I was feeling strange. But my English husband did not understand this, saying it is good that he is learning another language. This is a prejudice about yourself, your past, culture, family, all of them. Your prejudices are conflicting with your values, sometimes you even don`t notice this. After living abroad, I realized that I must go over these moments of discomfort. Now, I am digging deeply about where this prejudice is originated, whether it is me or what. Now, I have a maturity and attitude as a leader, I am more competent and has the power to adjust the client. A part of client management is teaching, making them aware about these standing out biases. A part of leadership is not taking a step back about your own values (Nur, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 83).

As a summary of the findings presented in this section, it can be clearly said that international assignments developed the communication and adaptation skills of the participants, contributed to leadership perspectives like flexibility, tolerance, inclusion, and diversity, expanded their understandings about other people`s points of view. While living through the international experiences, the participants questioned their own assumptions, gained awareness about their own biases, and became more open and tolerant both in their professional and personal lives. These experiences also contributed to the self-confidence of participants as leaders and individuals.

In general, adults learn when they need to or have to just like the participants of this research. The assignments and responsibilities shared in this part of the chapter demonstrated that learning was something these participants did because they were required to act, to respond to demands and to deliver the expected results. Perception about the necessity to succeed, and having that learning reinforced by this motivation, made these assignments powerful learning sources. The participants perceived these responsibilities and assignments as learning opportunities and therefore, could make use of these experiences for their professional and personal development.

4.4.2 Learning from others

Marsick (2009) argues that workplace learning majorly grows from social contacts among people who work together, ranging from groups to complex organizations. Matching with this highlight, the research participants shared that they learned from other people in the workplace. Bosses and clients, other leaders particularly the peers and the leaders who are reporting directly to them are featured as key and important people who left a vivid and long-term mark on the participants, both positively and

negatively, while they were evolving through the leadership path. The participants learned through working together with these people during their long years of experiences, accessing to the support, guidance from them or dealing with the challenges created by them, observing, and getting feedback and insights from these people about their own behaviors, approaches and leadership and reflecting on these to adjust themselves. They highlighted that taking these other leaders as role models and imitating them helped to develop the understanding about what kind of leader they want to be and how they can change into that leader. They got feedback from their peers, reflected on this feedback openly, responded to the challenges coming from them or accessed to the support provided, tried things out together with them. They learned to collaborate on different management levels, and as part of the management team / local executive committee. Thus, other leaders in the workplace helped the participants to become competent in intrapersonal skills required for different management levels, to develop their own task and role performances as leaders, to gain new understandings and awareness about teamwork, collaboration, and leading the leaders.

In these terms, the participants primarily defined their bosses as reflection partners, as the role models who contributed to their formation of leader identity. Their relations with them were helpful to answer the questions of who they are and how they should be as leaders, and these become a part of their leadership frameworks. The bosses that are mentioned by the participants involved both the organizational superiors and the clients. They were either highlighted on their own and/or in relation to the critical part they have played in a larger context of assignment, project, or role. Second, the participants highlighted that analyzing the reactions of their peers, figuring out ways to work with them particularly in executive board meetings, observing what happens to

their peers, building productive relations with the leaders outside have changed them a lot. Last, relations with the directly reporting subordinates / leaders were defined as important learning sources for them. Leading the leaders, trying out new methods to motivate and influence these specific direct reports, making them to stay focused and go into same direction for results and meanwhile dealing with numerous confrontations were highlighted as actions and behaviors which they have developed in the path. I will share these findings under the titles of bosses, other leaders, and direct reports.

4.4.2.1 Bosses

The participants mentioned that their relations with their bosses and clients were important in their paths of becoming leaders. Six of these participants shared positive and good examples, while three highlighted negative and bad examples of their relations with their bosses. The participants developed behaviors and invented unique ways of acting with their bosses. The negative experiences were shared as direct answers, as “my boss”, to a critical incident question while they referred to the certain period in which they had spent together with that boss. They shared stories about both the good and bad bosses and clients who impacted them a lot.

As good examples: the bosses encouraged the participants to try new things on their own and make decisions, showed them how to execute a complicated task through effective prioritization, demonstrated the importance of good questioning, heartened them to take risks and empowered them through making them visible in the organization. Some bosses were remembered as geniuses in a specific leadership capability such as team building, communication and some as wise people in management who were trustful, honest, and caring. Working with these good bosses

were defined as pivotal for the transformation of the participants into executive leaders since they acted as role models and demonstrated what good leadership is. Ashforth (2001) underlines that role modeling is related with copying the habits from role models. Usually, experienced people are motivated to frame their roles toward their preferences and to adapt role expectations to fit their sense of identity and who they want to become. By comparing themselves to the role performances and leadership expectations, through reflecting on their experiences with these people and on these comparisons, the participants shaped their leadership orientation, ideals and commitments and management styles and values.

Some of these participants highlighted that they generally became better in execution, operation and managing people through the years they worked with these good bosses. All these participants defined this as a great chance and learning opportunity since they knew that they would spend more time to learn what they have learned effectively from these bosses. Thus, reflecting on the experiences and observations, dialogue, and directions with these people, they avoid the risks of making higher number of mistakes. Under the guidance and mentoring of these bosses, the participants learned what they need in relatively safer environments. One participant said that her boss was very good at setting the strategy and convincing other leaders about that strategy. The important skills of the boss were presenting the broader framework to explain even the daily routines, building connections with why the things are or should be done and asking good questions. Through observing her and having dialogues with her, the participant discovered how these skills are important in leadership. While working with her, she developed the questioning and reflecting skills which she stated as very critical in her becoming the leader she is today:

> I am lucky to have the opportunity to work with X (name of manager). She is my role model. Setting the strategy, making that strategy marketable within the company, and implementing it step by step... Her questions, passion for work, and standing behind me. These are very important features for a leader. I learned these by observing her and doing it together. When she left the company, I was very disappointed. It was like I have been left out of nowhere. But I was ready to take over her role. I was ready because I had not a very long, but a very intense experience. She recommended me to take over her own position (Banu, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 84).

With the existence of a good boss, the participant had the chance to develop those skills under good guidance and in safer environments. Another participant highlighted that client management is his major strength, what makes him successful now, and he developed these skills through his relationship with his boss. Observing and reflecting on how the boss prioritized things, responded to clients, and valued open communication and the results he took by this; the participant discovered that getting better in client management is equal to getting a better leader. Moreover, the experiences with his boss transformed his management values, as being transparent, and self-concept as a leader:

> The man was guru in client management. In some moments, I am still saying that this work, our job should be done just like that. I learned from him that you need to build trust for a much longer time to get the possibility of speaking about a partnership with the client today. We are on the road one day, a call came. There is a problem with the benches, all production has stopped. First thing that came to my mind has been directing someone to the site since it was not a big client, and our agenda was crazy next day. He said we should go there ourselves; he changed the route. From inside, I was complaining, is that necessary, we are tired now. When we reached the site, my boss said very openly that we might have thought wrong about the planning and done something incorrect. When he heard this, client calmed down automatically. When my boss said those so transparently, there was not much left to say to the client. We solved the problem while they were having this dialogue. Going there that day made our relationship with the client stronger, he later referred us to other clients. We gained new work out of that day. Now I also know that there was nothing more important than going there that day (Ercan, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 85)

Commitment to good and qualified results, investing in trust based and transparent client relations were among the values that were underlined in this example with the good

boss. The participant showed that the actions and behaviors of a good boss are copied and became the actions, behaviors, and attitudes of the participant in the long term.

Good bosses led by example, and spent time with the participants, provided guidance and feedback that were helpful for the participants to develop their performances as leaders and also to build their leadership concept, what kind of leader they want to be. These bosses were like the personification of values from whom the participants not only learned but saw that one can only reflect the values through actions, behaviors, and attitudes. One participant shared a story from her first work experience and said that the behaviors and attitudes of her manager then have taught her some strong lessons and transformed her leadership values to this day. Even in some tough situations she is facing today, she is thinking and reflecting about how her former manager would react in order to find the right way to act:

> I had been too much of a crazy truth teller, this was not wrong, but I was always expressing myself in anarchist ways, at the extremes. As I remember, I am still laughing. In our youth, in the early career years, when we were entering a company, we were dreaming to be there for a very long term. This was my motivation to start working in my first company. I have not received a salary increase for 2,5 years and my performance was also good. I thought I should be differentiated then. I was expressing this to both my director and the manager, they were saying that they are evaluating it, but everyone has the same conditions. One day, I couldn`t stand it anymore, got my payroll slip and hung it on the man`s window. I highlighted the money I receive with yellow and then resigned. I thought this as the exact, last end from my side. I had a friend then, who was bored of trying to explain things to me, she was saying call your father and ask for advice but no, I would not do it. They out the payroll down on Friday, I hung it up again on Monday. My manager was a graduate of X (the university), a member of the 68 generation, I knew that inside he liked what I did, but it is a workplace at the end… In normal conditions, they had to fire me directly. He talked to me, told me what he had in hand and what he could do, explained me the reasons. In that dialogue, I realized how well he knew me, cared about me and how much he believed in me. I was convinced to continue; I also learned my lesson. Of course, he kept me under surveillance for six months for having no other outburst, but as the result he embraced me, stood behind me and I was not fired. I learned from him how important it is to control emotions, and to express reactions appropriately. Balancing your career expectations with

> the conditions of the day. But the most important thing was that he tried to understand my values leading me to do this, empathized and guided. I am a director now; I am not sure about how my reactions would be if something like this happens to me. But sometimes I am thinking about what he would do or how he would react to some of the incidents I am going through today. Thinking about this is helpful to see different perspectives, evaluate alternatives. Even the exercise of thinking about how he would do is enlightening (Feriha, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 86).

This highlight is matching with what Carter (2002) demonstrates in his study. He focuses on the practice of dialogue to grasp how leader identities are constructed. Dialogue is a situation where the learning, transformation and identity construction are all interrelated, particularly in the leadership domain. He states that dialogue with peers and bosses in the workplace as well as internal dialogue with oneself establish the dialogical self-framework and this is an important source and strategy for learning. Through the dialogue in the workplace, multiple selves possible are seen and formed by the leader, and these are required to learn from the other in dialogue and to respond expectations. As the participant shared, thinking about how her former boss would respond to a current situation provides her different perspectives, and the chance to evaluate alternatives via standing in a different self. She is using this exercise as a source and a strategy for learning.

As bad boss examples: ongoing harsh and toxic relationships, critical incidents that lasted short but with long term emotional impacts were shared by the participants. These examples were transformative, the negative emotions and ideas involved in these moments acted as disorienting dilemma for the participants. Having conflicts in front of other people, battering others on purpose with their power, using their authority not in a respectful and trustworthy way were some of the bad examples shared. The participants stated that these negative experiences led them to build self-knowledge, to discover

about their own strengths, borders, and motivations, to figure out ways to act and behave right, and to identify and to situate themselves differently as leaders. These examples shed light on which type of leader they would like to become. The bad examples acted like the demonstrations of what should not be done and formed the lessons for future about what to do and what not to do. In this way, the participants became more differentiating and focused about their leadership style, and values. One participant shared an incident that the actions and behaviors of his bosses made him feel disgusted, angry, and humiliated. After the first a-ha moment, the participant started to think and reflect about ways and actions for not putting himself in that situation again and decided not to do anything to make others feel that way:

> I have been re-assigned to that position. The decision was cancelled due to some political interventions before. When you are assigned to such a position, flowers, chocolates, etc. are sent, people say congratulations and three-four days passes with this politeness. It has been 10 days, my boss and his close two to three colleagues from the board did not congratulate me, did not say anything. There was something wrong. Anyway, he called me at the end of the week, and I went to his office. My boss and two other board members were sitting. Roughly speaking, the meaning of what they said is we brought you here, afterwards things will be as we say. I am appointed, thinking that I deserve it, I was knowing it. I took this position again with my efforts and success. When they said you came here because of us, and things will happen as we say, I was disappointed but more than that I got angry. I said that I do not know how you told those to me, how you dare to say those to me. From the point you look at, am I seeming to be as a weak, characterless person who is appointed to a position that I did not deserve? I said I will do whatever is right, not what you say. I quietly closed the door and left. I decided to leave three-four months after this incident. With this event, I realized that my values and styles are very different from them. We would not be able to work together. If I had not shown this rigid and clear attitude, I would have been suffered and then I would have been very regretful. From time to time, I am thinking whether I could manage these relations or not, but no, it was not possible at that time, I would have to step back a lot from my values. I did not want to see myself in such a dialogue and situation again, so I left the company. But then I came back to the company, this time to a top management, executive role. People in that room have retired, with one of them I am coming across in the summer resort. To make me forget that day, they have made various buffooneries under the name of respect and love. In the company, for a period of 45-50 years, I am the only one who decided

> to leave a role in senior management, by own will, by resignation. The people at the senior management were either fired or suspended. I am the one who opened the door of the resignation tradition. Many of my employees wrote a farewell letter to me when I left, saying that there were three to five managers, whom they thought would be nothing to them when they were there, they thought the company would go the right way by their existence, and I was one of them. Respect for me has been refreshed. If we make an executive summary for this, you have values and you pay the price of these as you go through the top management levels. You are mistaken, deceived. You took radical decisions for the moments for which you say I cannot fall into this situation again, you are paying the price, but despite these being respected and trusted are important. In your age (referring to the interviewer), this is not understood much, but in my age, it is clearer. To be remembered well, to be peaceful with yourself, these are valuable feelings, not everyone can experience them. For example, the three people in that room, my boss, cannot live this feeling, this peaceful mind. For the top executive leader, standing for the values, not compromising, being fair, and regardless of the price, facing up to pay it are necessary. I learned this from these experiences, from these relationships. (Yavuz, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 87).

In their interactions with bad bosses, all the participants underlined that they learned to protect themselves from toxic relations through building new skills to deal with hard people in effective ways. Moreover, these bad bosses and negative experiences with them led these participants to experience ontological changes, by building and living their leadership concept with joy and respect, forming a more positive and engaging way of leadership based on attributes like empathy and optimism. In line with this leader concept and desired leadership style, the participants invented guidelines to regulate their own mental models, attitudes, behaviors, and actions. One participant said that she had a very toxic, struggling relation with her boss who was responding always by criticism and lack of recognition, to the extent of humiliation and irrational questioning. She stated that the relations the boss established with the subordinates, the atmosphere created changed her way of interpreting experience. She learned the value of being positive and recognizing the achievements of her subordinates, to build a respect-based relation with them. She decided never to do things that will make her that kind of boss,

to obtain that kind of leadership style and to make others feel that way, while building a different self-concept as a leader:

> It was hard, like a nightmare with the general manager. Because of him, I even resigned. But from him, I learned how I should not behave to my team, what I should not do. I think my skills for managing difficult clients have also improved (laughing) because of him. He used to say that the good is the enemy of the best. True, but he was questioning so much to be better that he had exceeded the rationality dimension and we became unable to do business. One day he would say how detailed we thought and the second day he would come with requests that cannot be applied today and criticize me for not obtaining a long-termed perspective at all. I have discovered that it is effective to talk only with numbers, data, and facts. When I questioned a decision, I always went prepared and with data. My breaking point was a report. No one had the relevant experience in the company to complete that kind of a project and the subject came to me in some way. I did not approach it negative. I did not say directly no, as others did. I gathered different service lines together and we united our knowledge, we asked the UK team and so on. We spent a few sleepless nights; we searched a lot, learned a lot. It was not a super quality thing, but something came out. It was what I can do; in such a short time, and in a field which I do not know much and even I was not required to take that responsibility. When we presented to him, he was so critical… so critical. It is good to ask questions, but even that is no good when done disproportionately. Because of him, we felt into a condition as if we were not knowing anything about business, this is how we have been perceived. I felt very bad, I was very angry, but I got out of the room trying to stay calm. Everything could be better, we all know it, but this is very tiring. You are constantly working and there is no tangible result. You have not heard even a good small thing, no recognition. I always avoided direct conflict afterwards. I lived patiently, silently and escaped for a while because I knew neither the team nor me would benefit if we went into a conflict. I loved the company, and I wanted to stay. I always reminded myself that I put so much effort in here and I work for the company not for him. I tried to see and perceive things from this perspective. When I lived through this constant tension and with humiliating conditions, my behaviors towards my team have changed. Totally changed. I think I have become more positive and constructive leader. I learned to celebrate success. I understood that my role should be to transform mistakes and failures into lessons, make sure that the team to catch that learning opportunity, not criticize (Meltem, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 88).

Based on these narratives, it can be clearly said that bosses are learning sources for the participants. Because of the leadership styles, values, behaviors and/or ideas, the bosses left a vivid and lasting mark on the participants through their paths of developing as leaders. In the events and stories shared, bosses in both positive and negative terms,

were featured as the force behind the learning associated with leadership. Similarly, in the next section, peers as sources of learning are presented and discussed.

4.4.2.2 Peers as supporters or challengers

Ten participants described their peers as an important opportunity, and a source of learning. Most of these participants shared positive learning experiences and underlined that they gain the knowledge and understanding about the culture of the organization and discover the unwritten rules through their relations with the peers. The lessons of the peers are also learning opportunities for the participants, since they learned from each other`s experiences and accelerated the ways to build new knowledge. Additionally, the participants stated that their peers enabled them to be more honest in reflecting on themselves, seeing, and accepting their weaknesses and building self-awareness. According to these participants, it was easy to be open and honest with the peers in terms of their functions, teams, failures, and weaknesses since they are sharing similar problems and having similar experiences in the company. The ideas, advices and guidance provided by the peers are very important and directly relevant for the participants. In a way, relations with peers accelerate the critical assessment of assumptions in the company and as a leader, and the examination of alternatives for new relationships and actions. One participant said that although he had held leadership positions for a long time, a role in the top management level triggered a new phase of learning for him. In this phase, his peers were more likely to be supportive rather than being challenger since they are not in a competition for a specific role. His peers in other countries supported him to have an accurate self-image, build an altered self-understanding and positioning in the new role:

> It is impossible for me to learn all the information I need by living it. The need to learn in top management is increasing, contrary to what is thought. But at the same time, you are all alone. In this phase, I approached the general managers in other countries, my international peers. They probably felt the same, so we could establish good, nurturing relationships. Openly, they told me things to do and not to do. They provided me clear picture of how I could be perceived when I say something or do something in my former ways. I have been in this company for a very long time, long time in managerial roles. I tend to solve problems with similar methods, let us say if you can use the hammer well, everything looks like nails to you. They supported me to break this loop. But I cannot share the same, positive experience for my former roles. This is only possible if your peer is not your competitor (Ahmet, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 89).

Another participant underlined that her peer in finance function enabled her quick adaptation to the company. Through having dialogues and sharing experiences with her peer, her understanding about the culture of the organization, who is who and what the unwritten rules of the company are accelerated:

> Technology Development Zones have their own special rules and regulations. There is a tax advantage reflected to the employees and the company, it is necessary to calculate project-based personnel costs to get this benefit. On the other hand, we are expected to work integrated with the financial and HR departments of the headquarter. The requests and priorities of both parties are different. This is an environment of chaos and continuous reports are coming and going and I do not have good relations with numbers. The person who was heading the finance division supported me incredibly in this process. He made me understand the corporate culture, explained who is who, taught the systems and reporting. Beyond that, he gave me tips and compact information about how to present what to the board of directors, how should I explain things to whom, who would be convinced and whom I must paid attention to. Otherwise, it would get me so long to learn these, and would cost various failures, trials and errors, and mistakes. Instead, he provided all this information like a pill. Thanks to him, my orientation was really quick (Suna, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 90).

Four participants shared negative learning experiences with their peers. They stated that these experiences taught them “how to survive in top management levels” and made them more competent in conflict management, negotiation, and persuasion skills. Management team / committee meetings formed the major challenges for these participants since they were required to convince their peers to approve what they are

presenting and to start acting in the same direction. Opposite to the participants who experienced positive peer relations, these participants highlighted that their peer relations were more constructive and positive back in mid-level management levels but for the top-management levels, things changed. Strategies are more connected now and there are more conflicts of interests inside the management team / committee. Since peers are the ones with same level of accountability and power in the company; different set of knowledge, skills and behaviors are required to influence them. One participant stated that there are a lot of toxic people in top management, and she required to change her skills, actions, and behaviors in a way to cope with them and achieve results:

> There are toxic people in the business world, and even more in top management. I met such people here and learned to work with these people. You do not just manage subordinates as a leader. You manage your below, your superior and above all, your peers. I entered this structure with naïf and different norms, but I lived negative incidents and learned through these. For example, my first project was related with the structure and processes in the Middle East Region. I presented the results in the management team meeting. Almost all questions, which I thought were not asked with good intentions, came from my peers. Besides, I had already asked their ideas before the presentation. Everything that is related to external communication must first be discussed with us, and approval must be obtained from us. Until we made this settled and executed by everyone, I confronted the company leaders, my peers many times. It is all an experience. I am thinking that these made me strong and confident. I still had to get better in conflict management and persuading people, therefore read a lot about those now (Berrak, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 91).

The other participant described interpreting the relations within the management team right and adapting his behaviors and actions accordingly as a strength that makes him a successful leader. He underlined that he developed this strength through relations with his peers, and through his whole career starting by his first job. But he thought that he got very advanced in these skills as he moved towards upper management levels:

> I am good at organizational political savvy, a feature with the greatest impact over my success. Who influences who, how and to what degree? I must understand the approaches of the top leader, and priorities of the other leaders so I can shape how I plan and explain things. Background of the CEO, for example, says a lot. If it is sales, it is something; if it is finance, it is completely something else. Who peers are and how your relations are with them are important. Everyone in the management team has different motives and I need to behave accordingly for the results I want. For example, I decide how much details to share and how to tell them. Starting the career in sales makes you quickly realize that you should care about characteristics of the opposite party in the communication. Advantage. I think this is the reason why there are a lot of CEOs coming from sales background. I noticed this in my first job but after becoming a management team member, trying to manage relations in the board, with peers that are mostly not supportive, I learned a lot more, advanced (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 92).

As seen in narratives shared in this section, the participants learned from their peers through their leadership paths. They learned and developed leadership skills by sharing ideas and experiences with each other and explored their development areas through the honest feedback provided and suggestions shared by the peers. Building relationships and forming a community with the colleagues in the management team or across different parts of their organizations provided understandings about the culture, unwritten rules, and politics of the organization. Negative experiences with peers were also highlighted as potent teachers that made them more competent in conflict management, negotiation, and persuasion skills, particularly at higher management levels. In the next section, learning from the leaders who are directly reporting to them will be discussed as another sub-category of learning from others.

4.4.2.3 Leaders as direct reports

Eight participants stated that they learned from the leaders, who are directly reporting to them. Some of these participants mentioned that this learning is related to the requirements of their new roles, in higher management levels. In the former managerial

positions, they already excelled in technical knowledge, practices, capabilities, and behaviors required to lead people. As they took new management level positions, not only the scope of their teams expanded but their directly reporting subordinates became leaders themselves. In their new roles, their direct reports have their own experiences in leading businesses and teams. Although the participants evaluated and adapted their existing approaches, skills, practices, behaviors, and knowledge, they also required new ones to lead these new types of relations.

Leadership is not only coordinating things to meet business objectives but also developing, empowering, and providing opportunities for the directly reporting subordinates to reach their own development goals and to fulfill their own career aspirations. Through trials and errors, the participants exercised and developed skills that are required to stay effective leaders. While the participants were trying to find strategies for building good relations with their new group of subordinates, they also worked on the greater challenges of their new roles. As stated by one participant, he learned to create opportunities for his subordinates that are founded in careful thought and consideration and are especially attuned to challenging others to perform and succeed. He stated that he was required to change his former attitude of developing his team members and standing on their sides to get results. Rather he started to encourage them to try things, take risks particularly on the parts required for their next career advancement, and therefore focusing more to empower them:

> When I became a manager, I was more detached and a singular man. I thought everyone was the same. By the criticisms coming, I realized that I am also responsible for the development of team members. This was an important awareness for me. Our job goes case by case, you learn by experiencing and observing these cases. In the past, I would go to the store with everyone who started, them as they contact with the client, and just after I would say this is ok and this is not. I did this to develop them. Now, I am expecting my reporting

> managers to do this. Managers with whom I work are already very experienced people and know what to do with the job. I can share insights from a slightly wider perspective where I look at them and say I observe this, and this may be the areas of development. Apart from this, I think my main responsibility now is empowering those managers. I am mainly responsible for providing the necessary learning opportunities for my direct reports. I am trying to create these opportunities for them. Let us say there is a top management level presentation that I, on behalf of the team, must make. I will work with the manager whoever has a development point in this field. Let us take that risk and work together. Preparing a top management level presentation is an important part of our job, an area where we must be good at. That is the next level for the managers in my team, and they must develop themselves now, get ready for this. And I am there to support them (Burak, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 93).

The participants stated that working with senior, experienced leaders as direct reports are different from working with subordinates with more limited experiences and / or no former managerial roles. Although some already developed capabilities like coaching and asking good questions are still relevant; the participants underlined the need to invent new strategies to build effective and productive relationships with their direct reports who are at management levels themselves. These relations are described as learning opportunities for all. One participant said his relations with his directors are built on trust, they are reciprocally learning from each other, and he is shifting between being a boss and a friend. This requires showing compassion and respect for the directly reporting leader as a whole and valuing them as a learning source, considering their value for and impact over the organization. The participant is still learning to do these:

> We both have very limited time; our times are both valuable. We are both experienced. It would be frustrating, arrogant to say that this needs to be like this. Mid-level is a little different, it is more a one-sided teaching... Now it is more reciprocal learning. But this is only if a trust relationship has been established in between and you got over the diplomatic language. After we had challenged each other hard because of doing things wrong, we should be able to go and eat lunch by laughing a lot, having fun. If we can leave the egos aside and do not perceive it personally, then it is like this. This is reciprocal. I am getting more prepared before the meetings now, knowing that challenging questions will come. In this time scarcity, we could organize a meeting, then it must be efficient. I am preparing my questions, I am detailing my expectations, I am only

> describing my must-haves. The performance of both of us depends on this, we are talking about what we will evaluate at the end of the day, we are aligning. After this meeting, we must both defend the same thing, stand next to each other. Second, open-ended questions only. I am going to learn more if he tells more... When my director says something, I treat myself more roughly. Deep questions are coming, sometimes there is such a comment while discussing the pros cons, you say that a-ha, I have never thought about it, how did I not think about it. I am still learning this relationship (Mete, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 94).

Another participant highlighted that the relationship with the subordinates, who are experienced leaders themselves, is a very important focus for him that requires attending to the emotional needs, career expectations and individual priorities of them, and showing compassion to understand them as a whole person, within the context of their lives and conditions. He explained that building these relations with other leaders, learning to lead leader were transformative for himself:

> If I think within the limits, future frame, of the company, then the things I can learn from that person are certain, obvious. This is limiting my focusing. Instead, I am asking open questions and make them explain in detail. There is no culture of getting feedback and learning from each other in our geography, however the best leaders are the ones who can do it. To learn, you need to be alive and vigilant. Feeling one`s oats. A cat waits in front of the mouse hole, this is a like a similar condition. It is a matter of moment; cat waits for it and catches it. It is necessary to wait for learning and building the working relations with these people like that (Adil, Local, N, Appendix H, 95).

The participants did not always learn leading the leaders in safe and peaceful environments. They went through several tough relations and handled difficult conversations with their direct reports. They have learned how to handle passive aggressive behaviors, gossiping and / or refusals about doing what should be done. They underlined that the negative behaviors and actions of directly reporting leaders are infectious and toxic that if they are not solved appropriately, they will expand and take over all the team. This learning was transformative over their decisions and actions as leaders. One participant stated that facing with these negative experiences has made her

discover strategies to handle and solve these. She is now feeling more confident about what to do in those cases:

> We have gained a lot of work and thus we had to expand the team too fast. In our field, it is very difficult to find good staff who are good in English, who has good project management skills therefore there is a constant search for recruitment. But beyond this, it has started to be like a pool problem. As I speed up in recruitment, the number of exiting staff is increasing, my managers are leaving…Turnover rate has become almost 40%. HR started to say that we have met every possible candidate in the market, there must be another problem with the team. Then, I returned back and focused on the team and discovered things that I did not like at all. For example, some teams are constantly gossiping, constantly criticizing, but only criticizing. For compensating the gaps, some of the managers are working so hard that they are both unhappy and aggressive towards the team. Staff do not want to work with these managers anymore, they do not listen to what they say, implying bad to them and a constant tension. I became manager very young. The priority was always client management until I became a partner. At this level, I suddenly realized the importance of people management. Let me say it honestly. I said to myself there is no way you can solve these problems all on your own, ask for help and take some advice. You need good leaders in the team. HR recommended someone as a coach to me, I started working with her individually and my managers started working with the same person, too. While implementing solutions for structure related problems like being under staff and working overtime, in parallel we learned to work together. I realized that, no matter what it is, how hard it may be, I should not ignore people related problems. Because those problems are spreading, expanding, and taking over the whole team. First lesson is not ignoring. The second is do not personalize. If a person behaves passive aggressively, it may be related to that person, yes, but it is more likely to be related to the working environment. Do not make assumptions, ask directly, and try to understand. Third, let us explore the needs together, and decide what we will do together. Managers are responsible for following the progress of decisions, and informing the team transparently about the progress, what is happening and what is going on. Documentation and communication are very critical. We did team activities to raise the mood of the team, away days, happy hours, learning weeks... I started publishing newsletters to support the communication. I got open door policy, come, and talk directly with me, I gave this message very clearly. I dedicated resources to empower the managers, in terms of project and people management skills, not only learning classes and so. I worked with them. Side by side. I also discovered a lot about leadership, people management from these relationships. And as team members came, I stood behind this openness. After all, we worked very hard. Turnover rate decreased, engagement increase, results are good. But we had to separate our ways with two managers…. (Meltem, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 96)

Another participant stated that he promoted internally, and this created a tension between himself and once peers. Living through a healthy transition from being once a peer and the next day a leader in the top management is the challenge of internal promotions. His promotion has been a transition for everyone in the team and from his direct reports, he learned to clarify mutual expectations, to build healthy relations with new format and dynamics, to provide accountability and to restructure old, friendly relations to some extent. He provided examples of poor behaviors which he faced from once peers and how he learned to handle these:

> Relationships are the most challenging part of internal promotions. The new versions of the old ones let`s say. This is very open to errors for everyone. For example, I was simply thinking this as an advantage for starting to work together. Learned that it is not like that. Two days ago, we were sharing our complaints with each other and now I must talk to my friend with another hat. I must get the tension down, gain authority and build trust with this new role. This is really hard but very helpful for learning. A colleague of mine, as experienced as I am, was thinking himself as a candidate for this position. I was actually seeing it that way, too. I dealt with his low motivation and passive aggressive behaviors a lot. Another friend of mine did silly things, threw away emails and so on relying on our good relationship. He expected me to overlook these. We had a lot of arguments. There were a lot of moments which I felt deceived and used. In the first three to four months, I only dealt with these relations. We decided to not to work together lastly. I realized that I had to give up trials at some point. Accepting this is also an important learning. It worked with the rest of the team, but not with him. I told him many times that I respect him, I understand him, but we cannot continue in this way and that he should change his behavior. It did not happen. Lastly, I provided him outplacement service, tried to stay as good as possible, but wanted him to leave the company (Oktay, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 97).

As presented in this narrative, while the participants learned proper and improper behaviors and attitudes for a leader, they also discovered that this learning is continuous. Overall, they understood that there was no one way of leadership but every relation with a subordinate, a peer or a boss may reinforce or modify their habits, attitudes, behaviors, and assumptions as leaders. Bosses, peers, and subordinates are crucial learning sources

for the participants, and every relation with these people has the potential to be a unique learning process in itself.

Mindsets, characteristics, and associated behaviors which enable the participants` further learning are presented and discussed in the next part.

4.4.3 Mindsets, characteristics and associated behaviors Enabling learning

The participants highlighted growth mindset, flexibility, adaptability, passion and curiosity as their important mindsets and characteristics. These increased their attention, motivation, and abilities to learning ongoingly and in an accelerated way. While recognizing the impact of these on their success, the participants stated these are embedded in their learning strategies as leaders, forming a part of their self-conceptualizations. In former parts of the chapter, I already shared examples and quotes related to the significance of these characteristics and behaviors for the participants. To avoid repetitions, in this part I focus only on how the participants perceive and make sense of these and how they think they benefit from these in the learning.

The participants did not discuss these characteristics as fixed constructs like given from birth, but also as growing ones as they went through various experiences. What made these valuable for the participants are not their being there from the start, but the process of applying them in work life, the benefits and results gained by their reintegration. Thus, they focused to nurture mindsets and characteristics, and to develop associated behaviors through finding different ways for learning. One participant said that the interview she had with me is like a reflection on herself, her past experiences, and the concept of leadership through the lens of informal learning. She stated that the things she began doing naturally at the beginning of her career like questioning, running

after information with curiosity and being result oriented, trying to implement what she learned directly and keeping the trials on despite failures helped her to grow in her management roles quickly. After gaining the awareness that these mindsets, characteristics, and associated behaviors are important for leadership, she tried to focus and dedicate time for getting even better in these (Berrak, Multinational, N-1).

Likewise, another participant discussed that growth mindset, mental openness and adaptability, curiosity, passion, result-orientation, and empathy as the constructs of her leadership conception. She underlined that each leader in the executive team, including herself, must evaluate oneself in terms of these and locate, and develop since every leader should hold these as capabilities / competences. As the HR Director, she was working with an international consulting company that conducts global researches on leadership and with them, she was designing the company`s leadership model. She was happy that in that research, these characteristics and behaviors are found as the significant 21st century leadership constructs. She and her team transformed these into components of a leadership model and prepared a 360 Degree Feedback Survey to collect information and feedback about where every leader in the company stand against the components in the model. The leadership model (see Figure 9) relies on growth mindset -defined as learning agility- and involves mental, result, change and people agilities and self-awareness as pillars to construct this target leadership for the company. The results will not be a part of performance evaluation, but as an input for individual development plans for each leader (Banu, Multinational, N-1):

Figure 9. The leadership model based on agility

In next sections, findings about some of these identified pillars, namely growth mindset, flexibility, adaptability, passion, and curiosity are presented and discussed in detail.

4.4.3.1 Growth mindset

The participants featured characteristics of the growth mindset as the most crucial must-haves for a leader. All the participants who featured growth mindset have been first promoted to the top management leadership roles before the age 35. Based on what are narrated by them, it is possible to say that they experienced a quick upward mobility on a very early age due to the means of learning. Although they experienced hardships such as challenging assignments, setbacks, bad bosses, unsupportive peers, crisis and so on; they perceived all of these as an opportunity to learn, change and grow. With the growth mindset, the participants became open for new experiences and challenges, took steps towards these stretching situations, and sometimes even to ran after these and immersed

themselves beyond their comfort zones. Acting with growth mindset are discussed as the major reason behind the wide and intense learning resulting with quick advancement in their careers. As one participant stated:

> In learning, let us separate the school. It is kind of a mandatory process. Learning in business life is only possible by will. Openly and at your own will, it happens. For example, it has nothing to do with age, learning keeps the person young. If you do not have this approach, you cannot learn, and you will regress. Learning, especially learning for success in business life, is in some way a personality, a trait. If you have a learning perspective, you can learn from anywhere and from anything. When the hunger for learning and inner motivation come together, you move forward (Berrak, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 98).

Avolio and Hannah (2008) state that the existence of growth mindset and the high learning readiness level of the leader influence the learning experience positively. Shapiro et al. (2006) invent the concept of *reperceiving*. It is the practice of attending to situations with and open and non-judging attitude which causes a significant learning at the end. When individuals can reperceive, it enables them to see and reflect on their experiences with greater clarity and objectivity. In other words, in addition to the experience being there, how the leader approaches and interprets it also have a positive or negative influence on the whole learning. Corresponding to these discussions, the participants described growth mindset also as a learning strategy itself. In addition to who they are; what happened to them through their careers and how they responded to these experiences are equally mattered. These experiences acted as solid reasons for their thinking and reflecting on themselves, their relations, assumptions, ideas and believes. One of the participants defined growth mindset as a transformative feature for becoming better and confident in learning to learn. Moreover, he referred to executive leaders as “us”, while highlighting that they are a distinct group, who are strong in

growth mindset, and went through similar learning experiences because of common approaches grounded on this mindset:

> Loving to learn, curiosity, the joyful time you spend while learning… These may be personal characteristics. But, learning to learn is an experience that I could promote because of this mindset. Something that we all developed through living it. As I am repeatedly doing it, I do it faster and more effectively. As I could do it, I am confident, or I do not act with the fear of what if it does not work. For example, you are learning to listen only constructive criticism. Then you are focusing to learn again and again, with an endless passion and curiosity (Mete, Multinational, N, Appendix H. 99).

Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2003) name corporate leaders as cosmocrats and say that they are constantly being "on the move and on the make" rather than being happy in their comfort zones. Exampling this, the participant who entered the company as a CFO Finance Officer and promoted to COO position in a short period, stated that his achievements are direct results of the growth mindset. In his roles, he was constantly questioning, examining, evaluating, defining gaps, and acting to solve these in innovative ways. These practices and processes were grounded on the growth mindset. The participant described his value as a leader in the company in relation to this unending learning processes, strategies, and practices. He defined learning as a dynamic construct, and his ability to execute this dynamism differentiated him as a leader. He described his leadership roles as side results of learning.

> What is learning… I think knowledge comes from need, requirements. If there is a need, there is learning. I always said that I should first learn myself. I earned money with this feature, like a side result of it. I would not be here if I did not learn so much, did not try and do different things, had not step out of my comfort zone, had not educate myself. I would not initiate the restructuring of the company, into which I entered at the CFO seat. For example, I went through assessments, and they said to me that we have never seen a CFO on your profile. Because CFO is the one implementing the rules and regulations, it is more fixed. My questioning, creating and innovating sides are strong. More dynamic. Thanks to learning for this (Zafer, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 100)

As it is in this case, growth mindset shapes creativity, innovation and attitudes towards learning, daily tasks, how one perceives his/her role. Growth mindset shapes adult learning process in personal and professional life, has important implications particularly when considering innovation because of the need for openness for trying things out and the courage to face with possible mistakes. In the next section, flexibility and adaptability is discussed with their relations to learning and how the participants perceive these capabilities through their career paths.

4.4.3.2 Flexibility and adaptability

As Castells (1998) discussed, leaders are self-programmable that they are equipped with the ability to requalify themselves and adapt to new tasks, processes, and sources of information. Leaders re-program themselves according to changes and cope with the unpredictable, chaotic, and often not very friendly environment of global economy. One participant highlighted that being flexible and adaptive are vital in leadership to keep the business ongoing in a successful way. The combination of growth mindset, flexibility and adaptability enabled her accelerated learning throughout her career:

> You must learn continuously, constantly. You are entering a new market; it has different dynamics. From the regulations to methods that work in communication, differs. You are obliged to learn. A new person is coming to your team, boss is changing, peer is going somewhere else. You are learning something new about communication by every change. Related to technology, ways of doing business are changing. For example, Google Ads has changed the life in our world. Marketing has become something else after that. When I started, there was no proper cell phone. Afterwards, the team is somewhere else, and you are learning to work together virtually. Things that make life easier are learned quickly. But even for this learning, it is necessary to embrace change in the first place. Being flexible, trying to understand and staying focused on the result, what I will earn if I adapt. WhatsApp has changed the way work is done. If we did not quickly adapt, and started to use it in the team, we would not have been this fast all-over different places (Bahar, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 101).

Until now, the participants accumulated knowledge through working as leaders in different companies, sectors, and functions. Not only in every new role they take but every day their priorities, action plans, locations, number of people in their teams, the team members and working hours change. In the long run corporate culture, geographies of responsibility, organizational structures, workflows, processes, strategic priorities and business plans, people they work with at all levels change. Change is now embedded in their roles and lifestyles, and managing those changes are perceived as part of their responsibilities, constructing their self-concepts as leaders. The participant, the sales director of a multi-national company, demonstrated that being flexible towards and adaptable to change resulted with accumulated knowledge of running a business and managing the people, which he gained in a shorter period. Through adapting these learnings into new situations, he became more competent for responding to the challenges coming into his agenda. Thus, having these individual characteristics and knowing how to use them made him a more competent leader:

> Why I stand at this point because I changed so many companies, regions, and jobs. I traveled a lot in my previous company, saw every area of sales, went to different regions, rotated to different functions, and worked in marketing, advertising. Since I was flexible, I accepted every role that came in front of me and could adapt each one of these very quickly. With these approaches, I became more equipped (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 102).

Similarly, the participant who was then going through a merger and acquisition process defined change as a natural component of her role:

> Handling and managing every situation as a new transformation. If you are going there as a leader, you are new, in fact you are the actual means of change. Getting rid of the habits, the patterns in your head. Forgetting what you learned and learning it again. The attitude of being flexible. I learned this because I worked in very different companies and in different channels. Performance Management, for example. It must be different in every company, in every country. When I left my first company, I would say that I know this well, now I am thinking differently. There is always the desire to do good work, to be

> successful, but every change must be approached with the same excitement and awareness that it will have different dynamics. This is clearing the way out for learning (Cansu, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 103).

As demonstrated in the narrative, flexibility and adaptability are vital in driving change with success but also to keep learning while going through that change. In the next section, passion and curiosity, also as important enablers are presented, and discussed.

4.4.3.3 Passion and curiosity

Some of the participants discussed learning as an active and ongoing process triggered with curiosity and passion. They stated that they went through very challenging experiences and despite numerous failures, they kept trying via passion and curiosity in each time. They never led these to become a barrier in their progress and learning, they always acted with openness. One of these participants underlined that learning does not end until the lesson is truly applied into real life situations. Thus, he did not only learn but also adapted and applied those learnings to navigate new complexities and challenges. Curiosity and passion were described as enablers:

> With modesty and knowing your place, you should ask the question of how else this could be. Continuous questioning. Thinking about what can go wrong. What are the risks of this business if we fail, what will be plan B viewpoint. I think that for every individual, these are embedded. However, there are conditions that make it possible, enable these features to appear. Such as the actions you take, your motivations, your environment. You are in a bad situation; it is like being able to get rid of it. It occurs in a place where opposites collide. If you are closed while these are happening; then it is over. It is nice if your sensors are open. You will not hang around and act lazy, you will not give up, not postpone. You will surely go and find what you can find, do what you can do. You will chase passionately until you find satisfactory information, then it will become wisdom. This is hunger for learning, an obsession, passion, a deep curiosity. Customer is talking about a problem, something happening in the company. You decide, make a choice, and everything changes according to that decision. This makes me important. Not that moment, it is what I could bring until the moment through these knowledge and experiences (Adil, Local, N, Appendix H, 104).

Similar to above statements, another participant underlined that being curious made him continue searching and understanding things in depth. Being passionate about his job helped him to respond new, challenging agenda items with openness and energy. Curiosity and passion led him to learn even further for his job:

> Project management is making me excited. It has been 20 years; I am still starting each project with the same energy and passion. Still excited about the learnings I will get. I am curious, searching, learning, trying to be better each time. At the day project ends, sadness and pride are being experienced at the same time. But curiosity about the next one also starts. I was at my own university lately. I explained the project management career and the works we do, the way we work. I explained for about three hours. I can explain the work I do continuously, with the same energy. This is a different passion (Onur, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 105).

Overall, the mindsets, characteristics and behaviors discussed in this section are important for adult learning and leader development, but also for team and organizational development. Dweck (2006) exemplified the importance of mindsets in the workplace. Her book provided numerous examples of leaders with these mindsets are more successful compared to leaders who had fixed mindsets and not believe that people can learn and change. Regarding the highlights shared by the participants, it can be said that these mindsets and characteristics were important for the participants since they knew that these helped them to keep learning a continuous process, to accelerate their learning, to find new sources of learning, to develop learning strategies and overall to stay updated as leaders and organizations in an ever-changing environment.

4.4.4 Self-directed learning and meta-learning skills

Self-directed occurs when the learners take the initiative and seek a learning opportunity or information on their own. Adults take control of their own learning, set their own learning goals, find, and locate appropriate resources, decide on learning methods to use,

and evaluate their progress (van Noy et al., 2016). Learning how to learn and becoming skilled at learning are key for self-directed learning. This involves adults to develop understanding about their own habitual ways of learning and an awareness about one`s own preferred pattern of learning. Through developing their meta-learning skills, adult learners can build a more constructive relation with learning and can increase their own SDL potential in the workplace (Taylor, 2001).

Matching with these statements, 16 participants featured learning on their own as their most preferred learning strategy. One third of these participants also underlined meta-learning skills as significant ones that has great impact over their learning processes. For all these participants, meta learning is described with its transformative potential over the learning process, and with resulting effectiveness and speed in learning. Since today's leaders must learn continuously, developing the meta-learning skill was helpful for them to become better leaders. Raising awareness about one`s own strengths and weaknesses in learning process, understanding about one`s own learning style, ability to make a comprehensive self-learning plan and self-managing it are underlined as practices of meta-learning skills.

The participants described meta-learning as a skill that can be developed when practiced more. Although the participants have a strong drive and record of former learning, they highlighted that even them have little awareness about meta-learning and how to develop this skill efficiently. One participant discussed meta learning as the most critical skill for leaders since they are the ones who require to renew themselves continuously. But in parallel he has shared his surprise about gaining awareness and understanding about meta-learning as a skill so late in his life, even accidentally:

> Those in the top management should always keep themselves up to date. However, I think that my knowledge about what learning is, is still very limited. This topic is like boundless seas. I started searching about the subject with a book that I found by chance. Meta learning is actually the most crucial point of learning... This information is so valuable... You see what you need to do when you are learning on your own. The ground of learning. I was honestly angry about how any of the trainings I received so far do not involve this topic (Ahmet, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 106).

Another participant described meta learning as a "superpower" and stated that she is now using this superpower to design realistic and effective learning plans for herself:

> Learning about how you learn is like gaining a superpower. This means gaining speed and time. I discovered that I am learning very effectively with mind mapping. I am keeping things in mind when I create something visual. I have my subject-based mind maps. This visual is coming before my eyes. While driving, in meetings etc.; if something comes, I am attaching it to a relevant corner of the mind map. This is like placing information on tidy shelves and finding what you are looking for when you want it. I discovered the mind map myself, my coach was taking notes in this way, then it took my attention. But there may be other tools like this, I want to learn particularly about visually powerful tools. This topic is very critical but for some reason, it is just new on the agenda (Ayfer, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 107).

The participants featured individual, self-directed ways of learning as their most preferred learning strategy. Deciding on learning goals, planning, and realizing this plan were the major steps of this process. More than half of the participants underlined that SDL is important both for personal and professional purposes. They searched and understood what is going around and what is needed, evaluated themselves and discovered their gaps, prioritized, and set learning goals, found the most appropriate strategies to learn individually and executed these with motivation and attention to close their gaps related to leadership. As individual learning strategies and sources; reading, watching, following the blogs of people who they found remarkable, surfing on the internet or company intranets, following related blogs and social media accounts (particularly in LinkedIn and Twitter), note-taking in one`s own developed way and

leaving these notes as reminding marks around, completing trainings of their own choice in mobile and online platforms (Harvard Business School [HBS], Culture Wizard, Udemy and Coursera) are featured by the participants. Majority of these participants stated reading as the preferred SDL method. They listed books, journals, blogs and social media accounts, recent researches and reports, and newspapers as sources they preferred to learn from. 7 participants mentioned watching as their preferred method for self-learning, which involved YouTube videos and TEDx talks related to leadership or the respective topic of interest, TV serials related to professional life, company videos, and interviews with other leaders. The combination of reading and watching is surfing on the internet and/or company intranets through which they found wide range of different sources and by prioritizing these, transited these into valuable and relevant learning. These are not only the learning strategies they use, but routines and practices which they dedicated some slots through the day or week.

The participants did not only gain knowledge and develop skills by using these practices, sources and methods but later thought and reflected on the new knowledge and information gained. Through these reflections, they focused on themselves and their own contexts while trying to discriminate the information that would be the most beneficial for their lives. One participant described her strategies to remember the information exactly at the moment where she needs it:

> If you have been working in the same company for a long time, learning means looking at what is happening outside. Then this leads to personal awareness. Understanding what you need for adapting to the new environment, to new requirements and of course getting aware about what you don`t know. Based on these, being able to learn on your own. I set individual learning goals, I am searching on my own, I am following the industry by communicating with people, LinkedIn is the tool I am using the most for leadership. I am reading what is in there like new reports, researches... I am preferring mostly abroad resources; those are feeding me more. Then I am evaluating about what I can

> take and adapt in my own life. There are quotes which I like a lot, and which are motivating me, these are making me remember what I learned. Visually, I hang them all over my room, even when traveling, I have a notebook that I am carrying with me, I keep those in there. Seeing, being them in front of my eyes, is making me remember. They are making a positive impact exactly at the moment when they are needed (Berrak, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 108).

In addition to using similar learning sources, another participant highlighted that useful elimination of information, the ability of discriminating and mind mapping are very critical in benefiting from these sources:

> I am trying to devote at least 15-20 % of my time other than sleep to develop myself and to learn on my own. I am trying to follow all the current journals related to my field. I am using the social media as a mean of getting and sharing information. I am dedicating a considerable amount of time to online trainings and videos. Watching TEDx Talks a lot. I am following the certificate programs related to my field, although I cannot participate, I am overviewing their contents, reading the latest books and cases to stay updated. Learning is a top priority for me. I sold my house and went to have the MBA degree in US. Despite all these, it is still not enough, because there is too much information, full of things to learn more. What you need is to eliminate these quickly, focus on what really works for you, and organize them as you can remember. Like mapping your own mind... (Oktay, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 109).

As underlined by Wuestewald (2016), while a leader initiates an SDL process, s/he also bridges changes on individual and organizational levels. The leaders take actions for both themselves and the organization after becoming more self-aware and reflecting on the gaps and needs. Matching with this highlight, the participants described their responsibilities as defining the learning and development strategies of their companies and ensuring that the required sources and processes are presented as learning opportunities in their organizations. Their individual learning goals and self-plans had an impact over the changes in company`s direction. Establishment of online learning platforms, instant messaging tools with different features, project planning and follow-up tools, and virtual meeting tools, corporate platforms enabling networking (like intranet, corporate Facebook) are discussed in relation to self-learning goals and

priorities. Although the participants set these strategies and made the final decisions on sources, processes, and tools; they were also active users of these within their companies. In line with this, one participant stated that getting better in virtual, international team management should be one of her direct reporting leaders` learning priorities as well as herself. She also defined this as a broader need which will become relevant for most of the employees in the company due to the internalization of the business. Therefore, she began looking for tools to support herself, her own direct reporting leaders, and the organization in terms of building cultural awareness and being a leader that values diversity more. She stated that these kinds of tools guide her to think and reflect on herself, to gain new awareness and understanding, and offer practical tips to adapt in her own environments:

> Understanding the cultural background is very important. Being unprejudiced, approaching constructively, not perceiving personally. These are all about global leadership. I wanted to develop myself on these. Then I realized that in the very near future, these will be problems for all, not just for leaders in our company. We searched, bought a tool, made a company membership. Culture Wizard. It is interesting. We put it on the intranet, whoever wants is using it now. In Culture Wizard, there are cultural dynamics and profiles on country basis where you can see how these reflect to the business environment. For example, let me say that I am going to France. I am filling a questionnaire, marking the important values and priorities for me, and the tool is providing a comparison report. What will be matching between my approach and the culture there, what will be the difficulties for me in terms of values and leadership style. And the easy points. Great guideline to understand yourself and be aware accordingly. There are videos, you can also listen to experiences and stories of different people (Ayfer, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 110).

Another participant described that the evaluation and identification of individual gaps are the initial, and the most important ground for SDL. To build this individual awareness and self-knowledge, he was willing to use different assessment tools and requested these from HR Function:

> I am learning the most by myself. I am learning by internet, from videos, taking regular notes, reading books. There is personal awareness required essentially, if this is not there, you even cannot see your own developmental areas. For this, there are projects I requested from HR. 360 Degree Feedback, assessment center applications, leadership inventories, benchmark reports and linking these results to individual development plans. Good to have your individual learning goals, a solid plan (Mete, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 111).

Demonstrated in the narratives shared in this part, self-directed learning is the most used and preferred strategy by the participants. They discussed the reasons for this as usefulness and effectiveness in achieving learning goals / results. They had the control of their own learning, could design it according to their needs and priorities, and got practical and highly relevant learning results in a quicker time frame. In the next section, I present and discuss the strategies in building self-knowledge and increasing self-awareness, which provide understanding and direction to the participants for forming their learning goals and designing their learning process to become better leaders.

4.4.5 Building self-knowledge and increasing self-awareness

Building self-knowledge and increasing self-awareness were one of the most profound strategies highlighted by the participants. In the former parts, I presented some findings about gaining the awareness and knowledge about self as learning outcomes. In this part, I share the sources and strategies which the participants initiated to build self-knowledge and to increase self-awareness. The participants shared their understandings about self-awareness being the essential point where the learning process starts. Thus, the participants underlined that they started to dedicate time and effort to build self-knowledge and increase self-awareness as practices embedded in their daily routines. They discovered their strengths and weaknesses as leader, and invented new ways to plan on their strengths and to compensate their weaknesses. As an example, one

participant stated that increased self-awareness has two results. First, it is initiating a new learning process. Second, the knowledge she gained about her weaknesses helped her to find ways to compensate these and to make informed decisions for reducing their possible effects proactively:

> Awareness… This is the point where learning is ignited. This is the key, something self-related, a self-initiated process. You will not learn if you are not curious about yourself and act with that. If you are not curious about your life, not curious about leadership, you will never grow better. If you know the points you are weak at, then you are taking the measures to reduce their effects. Finding ways to avoid their possible effects on important items. It is affecting your plans and your decisions (Cansu, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 112).

Clarifying this by an example, another participant said that her transformation started at a moment of self-awareness and followed by a full acceptance about emotional intelligence being her weakness. Through some failures and difficult experiences, she observed the significance of emotional intelligence for leadership and then accepted that change is required for her. To become a better leader, she was required to learn managing her temperament, staying calm and building more empathy with others. First, she focused on understanding emotional intelligence as a concept. She became more interested in emotions of her own and others, searched through books, videos and online trainings and learned about possible ways to practice. Next, she began to try these in her life. She explained that now, she is giving pauses before deciding in tough conditions, trying to regulate her immediate reactions by thinking about the possible results and how she will make others feel by taking an action or saying something. This awareness, and the learning process triggered by it, has empowered her towards doing it better and also, she became more open to learn further about emotional intelligence:

> This situation had started to challenge me constantly. For a period, I had banged to boss, subordinates, peers, everyone. Even my family. Failed again and again…When I accepted that I must change, I started learning. I started to question why I am doing the things I do. I searched a lot about emotional intelligence, participated in online trainings, webinars, read the topic, watched. I focused very intensely about it. Now, I have a few strategies set. Pause before giving a reaction to someone. I learned to wait for the intense feelings to pass before deciding and to postpone the decisions if necessary. Focusing on the longer periods, I am trying to control my instant reactions and feelings. I am trying to live with the feelings that make me uncomfortable when I postpone things. This is easier than to repair the bangs and failures due to my reactions (laughing) (Feriha, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 113).

According to the participants, building more self-awareness made them understand what they should change and adapt to become better leaders. The directly reporting leaders and team members` opinions are valuable, since they are holding a mirror for the participants to understand further about their leadership and themselves. Thus, the participants underlined that the question of what I can do to be a better leader is frequently asked to these people. Through some formal and informal feedback tools, the participants tried to understand how others see them as leaders. The knowledge and awareness gained out of the answers are transited into learning goals and individual development plans towards becoming the leader they think they should be. Receiving feedback and reflecting on these, reflecting on self and past experiences, and conceptually on leadership, asking themselves the hard and honest questions, and welcoming what they hear no matter what are shared as ways to gather more data and knowledge about themselves and to become more self-aware leaders.

4.4.5.1 Receiving feedback and reflecting on it

Majority of the participants featured feedback as the most important strategy they use for getting insights about themselves and their leadership. They highlighted that asking for

feedback, thinking, and reflecting on it, welcoming it, and transiting it into learning plans and taking the required actions afterwards are all essential parts of a learning process. They discovered the strong and positive impact of feedback over their career paths and leadership. Some of these participants shared that they learned so much from feedback themselves so that ability to receive feedback is now a major criterion for selecting the leaders they will work with and evaluating their performances. Feedback is like an indicator for one`s intuition for learning, which is assumed to be the reason to get better in one`s role and be successful. Getting feedback is discussed as a quick and practical way to learn about oneself and one`s leadership if what is received is transited into learning goals and plans. One participant described his discovery of feedback as a valuable source of learning, and learning to get feedback as a significant skill in becoming the leader he is now:

> Learning itself is time consuming, so this makes it like it can be postponed. But there is no such luxury. Feedback is very important at this point because it is just integrated in the day. Instant, effortless. You can ask at that moment; you can also share what you have on your mind at that moment. Thus, it is very effective. You do not become a manager on your own, it is important how others see you. Feedback is allowing you to access this very easily. I am lucky that I can get feedback, let`s say I learned it, not everyone can do it (Zafer, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 114).

Another participant underlined the transformative potential of feedback. He defined feedback as a path to understand the perspectives of others about him and his leadership. He stated that asking for feedback, being open to hear anything, welcoming what you hear and reflecting on it as the most important criteria to build an effective learning process for himself and for the leaders in his team:

> It is very important that one can get feedback and act on it. My own boss, for example, he is strong in this feature, he is thinking about what he heard and very open to develop himself on it. Even at that level of management. I think this is more important than the experience gained in 20 years. I try to do the same, I am

> asking what do you think? I am trying to figure out the perspective one has about me and thinking about how to fix this. Why does one think so, why I created such a perception in this man, why did he feel the need to tell it, what should I do to make it happen... I expect the same approach from the team, they should not be defensive but constructive. Feedback carries you from one place to another (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 115).

Feedback is discussed as a valuable contributor for learning new things or unlearning what you already learned before. These are only possible if the environment is supportive, and if one is open to feedback and asks for it. Thus, the participants did not want to leave the power and value of feedback to chance but took actions to stick it to their company cultures. Some of these participants described this as a strategic approach, to build a feedback culture in the company. 360 Degree Surveys, Upward Feedback Surveys for early managers, project feedback forms, trainings for giving and receiving feedback, building online libraries and guidelines to make daily dialogues efficient, and forming spaces of feedback were shared as initiatives to support this culture. One participant stated that she learned a lot about herself and her leadership skills through asking for feedback and welcoming what she received. Thus, she was trying to make sure that feedback culture is built in the company:

> If you do not ask, nobody would say you need to change this for no reason. This is exiting from your comfort zone and taking that risk before knowing what you will hear. I learned the most about myself, about what is expected of me, and how I am as a leader from feedbacks. I learned that I had to forget some things and start looking from another perspective. Self-assessment inventories are also very important. I learned a lot from them about myself, too. That benchmark info embedded in these reports are great chances for comparing yourself. Because of these, I want to have these kinds of tools in the company to make sure that feedback is asked and received, there should be a feedback culture. Trainings were organized, the whole team participated in these. We established 360 System for manager and above levels. We are working on project basis therefore we have a system to make project evaluations written and right after the project. We also have a non-logging, informal tool called spontaneous feedback to request and give prompt feedback. These are important but a constructive culture must accompany (Meltem, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 116).

Overall, receiving feedback through their leadership paths was important for the participants for getting a holistic view of where they are doing well, what they need to improve and how they are perceived as leaders. They made use of these feedbacks by transforming them into individual learning goals, sometimes into organization`s strategy and business goals, and future actions. Seeing this importance, the participants framed feedback as a significant learning process and a strategy they used. Thus, they kept asking for more feedback through conversations and tools shared in this section. In the next section, the focus will be on reflection. I present and discuss the findings about how the participants use reflection as a learning strategy and a process.

4.4.5.2 Reflecting on self, leadership, and the company

Almost all participants discussed reflection as a learning process and a learning strategy. For these participants, reflection meant thinking on self, one`s own experiences, relations, skills, and leadership styles, and on leadership as a concept. They underlined that thinking on their companies, functions, strategies and structures, the processes, and workflows as also reflective practices. The participants thought on these critically, took lessons from what they experienced, and later took steps to change these. The outputs of these reflective practices are usually new and/or altered strategies, changing priorities, structures, cultural elements and / or processes embedded in the organization`s environment. All these reflection processes started usually with a challenging or a non-matching experience, when the old way of thinking, behaving or the way of doing things no longer worked. Reflecting on these provided possibilities for transformation both for the participants as leaders and on the organizational level as companies.

Majority of these participants highlighted that reflecting on their leadership, thinking about the moments of discomfort shaped by negative thoughts and emotions, examining of past experiences or actions, particularly the failure cases, helped them to develop new perspectives on themselves and their leadership concepts. Exampling this, one participant stated that critical reflection in leader development has a transformative potential. She was trying to dedicate a daily time to reflect on what happened in that day and how this may impact tomorrow. Since she learned a lot through reflective practices, she tried to increase the knowledge of her peers about reflection and to implement some methods into the leader development program she is designing for the company:

> System approach and reflection are the things which I said I am glad to learn. I learned these while getting professional coaching training. Caring about the feelings and body, asking not only what comes to the mind first but going deeper. I recognized myself through this process, pondered about what I really want. I am not putting things about myself under masks, instead trying to express them further and more clearly. This effort also is enabling me to learn more. The processes and learning styles there have helped me to learn in all areas of my life. Writing, for example, journal keeping. I learned these techniques there, writing whatever comes to mind. Taking an incident and analyzing it in detail and asking what I learned to myself. For example, for the presentations I made or the coaching sessions, recording them and evaluating myself in those videos is a reflection. Reflection is honestly and openly mirroring myself. Devoting time to this every day. I internalized this technique, and this formed a basis for transformation. I am trying to involve this technique also in the leadership programs I am designing, and to my coaching sessions. Reflection is very important so that what is learned does not stay in the air and that it can be transformed into a meaningful lesson. For example, putting things that are not familiar to the participants into these programs like Dialogue in Darkness, simulation of crisis on plane, camping, escape games. Afterwards, asking questions such as what you lived, what you did afterwards, what you felt. I really want reflection to be a habit for everyone (Suna, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 117).

Thinking conceptually on how a leader should ideally be and reflecting on how they are doing against this ideal accelerated the learning process of the participants. They invented new strategies, found new ways of behaving and practicing, gained new skills and perspectives to transform themselves into the leaders they want to be. As Mezirow

(1991) highlighted, self-examination is the initial step in reflection and at this step, the learner thinks over what they are hearing, seeing, feeling, and doing while blending all these into a broader examination of long-held assumptions. This is also relevant for leadership. Through reflection, the participants identified the sources of their assumptions as parts of their self-examinations. Exampling this, one participant described today`s leadership as influencing people and keeping them engaged. At the core of it, he said that this is only possible by responding the needs and feelings of the employees, considering their interests. Therefore, being a caring, people-centered leader is important for today. He stated that through reflective practices, he understood his own doing and found out his own gaps against his ideal leadership. He also added that reflection should not be only on the negative experiences but also on the positive ones, since these are equally important for learning:

> What went well is an equally important question as what did not go well. By nature, I am inclined to question the negative but revealing the positive helps you to learn a lot, too. What did not go well is a result-oriented question. When you take the road for improving the results, you miss to respond the feelings of people and their motivations. For this, I invented my reflection method. When I am listing the negatives at the end of an incident, I am putting a positive item for each. Things I am happy about, I am glad for, the appreciated ones. I am even adding my role model, my boss to this. I am adding the things like what would he do, what would he say to me, what would he like. The reflection exercise and looking at yourself from the other`s eyes, is making you see the positives (pluses), the energy in yourself (Ercan, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 118).

Another participant highlighted that leadership is learned through trials and failures, but what transited these experiences into permanent lessons of leadership are reflecting on them. Through reflection about what went wrong and what failed, the participant began to hold himself more accountable for his responsibilities, admit his mistakes openly and accept the consequences of his decisions so that all these experiences turned into permanent transformations instead of forgotten memories. Reflective practices expanded

his perspectives on problems in the company, made him understand his own impact in these and helped him to equip himself with new strategies to utilize in the future. He stated that taking the experiences of other leaders and reflecting on these as if they are yours accelerated his learning path:

> Leadership is learned by falling and standing up again. Mistakes are essential. We all need mistakes to learn, so it is not good news if you do not do mistakes or open the space for people to make mistakes. But I cannot learn if I do not reflect on these. There have been times when I have never felt responsible for the bad results I have encountered and always attributed the defeat to the external factors. Self-serving bias… Let us call it the error of owning success. Since I noticed this concept, I have been performing an autopsy for both good and bad results. What I learned, how I felt, what I thought, how I behaved, what I could do differently... Being able to turn mistakes into lessons is the really important, reflection is therefore necessary. I also apply this autopsy for the mistakes of other leaders, through cases. Decision making bias, for example. Big company collapses like BP`s mistakes, Enron scandal. What happened in these, what did the leaders do so these happened, and I am asking what I would think in those cases (Ahmet, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 119).

Reflection is discussed as a strategy to increase effectiveness as leaders in different dimensions. The participants took the time to review themselves as leaders, and tried to examine their current level of skills, strengths, behaviors, knowledge, and styles, mostly comparing these with their leadership ideals, commitments, and frameworks. They interrogated their goals, ambitions and values related to leadership and in the context of their own organizations. All these served to increase the self-knowledge and awareness, to develop and align themselves with the leaders they want to be.

In the next sections, I present and discuss the findings related to different forms of dialogue and communities of practices which the participants discussed as their significant learning sources, processes, and strategies.

4.4.6 Fostering dialogue as a learning strategy

Executive coaching as a specific form of dialogue, conducting conversations in the company events (townhall meetings, open door sessions with leaders, happy hours, team brainstorming meetings), storytelling groups and gamified virtual platforms triggering dialogue like intranets, corporate facebooks and wikis, and instant messaging tools are discussed as powerful learning sources and processes. These dialogues are not discussed as processes of transmitting knowledge from one to another but creating the collective knowledge together, as cooperative learning platforms. These helped the participants to gain awareness about an important dynamic or expectation in the company, to learn a new information that may be important for further decisions, or to question and to change their perspectives about a specific issue and/or to discover the roots of a problem. The participants also stated that since they knew the power of dialogue and these conversations, they are trying to implement new company initiatives and platforms aiming to bring people together, to have group based reflective practices and exchange.

4.4.6.1 Coaching to generate learning

Nearly half of the participants underlined executive coaching as a significant learning process which they preferred to use effectively for changing themselves and indirectly their organizations. Gray (2006) defines executive coaching as a powerful tool that generate learning for the leader, since through the executive coaching dialogue, the problems of the leader are explored and discussed as incidents for promoting self-knowledge and catalysts for personal change. The process itself involves a reflection process, triggered by the coach, and executed by the coachee. Parallel to this highlight, the participants said that executive coaching helped them to reach their individual goals,

to realize company objectives, to review their assumptions about leadership and to develop new perspectives and behaviors associated with leadership. They met with executive coaching through company sponsored coaching sessions that are built on an agreement between the coach, the leader, the supervisor of the leader and / or the HR director. Although coaching started as a formally structured process, the participants discovered the value and the transformative power of coaching as a dialogue form and started to use it for realizing the change they desire for. They discovered that getting the most out of a coaching process is both a mindset and a skill. The coaching dialogue led the participants to examine their assumptions, values and initiated further reflection on themselves, experiences, ideas, and feelings from multiple perspectives. These dialogues always ended with finding solutions and actions to try until the next session, therefore linked to the real-life practices, into the leadership domain.

Some of these participants highlighted that coaching generated learning for them, triggered their transformation by eliminating the feelings and thoughts pulling them back and encouraged them to take steps forward to change. One of the participants, who will be assigned to a more senior role in one of the Europe Zone Countries next year, highlighted that the moment that this assignment got certain, he contacted with his executive coach from his network. His goal was getting prepared for this experience as an executive leader but also for the vast change he will go through. He wanted to ensure that he will get positive and meaningful learning out of this experience:

> Most likely it will be France next year. It will be a role with more responsibility, not just sales. I want to adapt quickly, have a pleasant experience and be successful. For this, I called my coach, with whom I had worked before. When I was appointed to the management committee first, I have worked with him, and he had made positive contributions to me. Making someone realize that what one is saying will not work by only asking questions is the most effective method of persuasion. Coaching makes me think about things and alternative scenarios. My

> own planning and execution potential come to light. I can spare time for this. On the professional side, I must create next move for myself in the next three years. Thus, I have already thought and planned about how my orientation to France will be and what will be my first steps and so on. Well, sometimes I stop and say how I can transform this experience for myself and my family into a French movie, but I also know that I will forget this. Coaching makes you face this, like a companion holding a mirror. Life is flowing fast, while dreaming long term, it is necessary not to miss what is happening in life. At this point, lucky to have coaching. I am trying to succeed and to transform this experience into a French movie simultaneously (Necdet, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 120).

Similar to the above statement, another participant defined coaching as a perspective shifting tool, which is followed up by a journey. He highlighted that through the coaching conversation, he had the chance to review important events, reflect on them and get aware of own biases, feelings, beliefs, and thoughts that hold him back. He said that he saw most of the sessions as a chance to concentrate on himself and to reflect and sometimes even forgot that the coach is there. For him, the coaching session itself is the moment of learning:

> I left my previous company with disappointment. A promotion that I was sure I deserve did not happen, and at the end of the second year I decided to leave. I took a break and started to take coaching in that time. I was angry, I was constantly fighting inside. By coaching, I focused on my own inner journey and gained some awareness. There is a pattern of negative emotions, and since I could not get out of that vicious cycle, I could not turn the crises into an opportunity in that period. I questioned the self-worth, so I perceived it personally. I returned to these incidents repeatedly again in the coaching sessions, and when I got rid of the intensity of negative emotions, I saw my own mistakes. Recently I faced with the fact that I have triggered the incidents myself by acting with prejudices, but that is my problem to link my feelings to an incident that I cannot control, allowing it to affect me that much. What is always said that emotions do not have a place in professional life, but contrary to this, I think they are a very important part. They affect decisions. In some sessions, there were moments when I kept speaking to myself, on my own for an hour which started with a one, single question. I even forgot that the coach was there. Here it is as if I am changing through the conversation started with one question (Kerem, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 121)

Two of these participants highlighted that they learned from executive coaching a lot so that they started to get professional coaching training themselves. They started to use

these learnings to initiate helpful conversations for the team`s and subordinate`s learning. They started to use some of the coaching tools to prepare strategic and operational plans, and to increase the effectiveness of team working. Exampling this, one participant described a coaching tool she is frequently using with her team to make annual plans, to solve problems and to ensure that everybody is included in the decision making. She highlighted that coaching is a leadership mindset for her. The daily conversations with her team are now shaped through coaching questions she learned:

> In coaching training, I can say that my hand got stronger about learning. I learned to ask questions with different methods, which had a positive effect on the team as well. There is a method called Disney. As a team, we are using this method when planning. We have three hats, which you question an incident through different perspectives and make the plan. These three hats are talking to each other and questioning each other. First one is the analyzing one, it is questioning what can be in reality. Second one is the dreaming one, if only this could be this way, this would be the ideal version. Third one is the criticizing one, criticizing others, challenging, constantly asking questions about why it would not be. Sometimes the previous thoughts change through these dialogues. We are facing with what we know wrong, shifting occur. Eventually, realistic, and feasible solutions emerge out of this. Consensus is being established, the attitudes of the participants towards each other, and perspectives for the environment around are changing. Lately, one of my team members said that the question you asked changed everything, coaching mindset is changing you and your environment without even realizing it (Suna, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 122).

Demonstrated in this narrative, coaching as a specific form of dialogue is perceived and discussed as a mindset and a strategic outline shaping the participants` daily interactions, behaviors, attitudes, approaches, and actions. Moreover, they also underlined the executive coaching dialogue as a major informal learning source for them. In the next section, stories are discussed in a similar framework.

4.4.6.2 Learning through stories

Brooks (2004) discusses that dialogue and storytelling practices foster relationships and dynamics that broaden the perspectives of the leaders. Confirming this broadening of perspectives, the participants stated that stories are powerful learning sources since they present the chance to learn also from other`s experiences. They shared that accessing and listening to the stories of other companies, other leaders, stories about leadership or on different topics are strategies to accelerate the learning path. Kroth and Cranton (2014) review that stories transmit the meaning of the experiences and messages about how to live and behave as a good leader. They offer a journey to the listener, communicate a vision that the listener goes through the feelings and thoughts of the teller as in real life. Listener intellectually understands teller`s experiences and connects emotionally, reflects, and sometimes changes. Corresponding to this, the participants discussed listening to stories as an important strategy for learning, since they received valuable information and accessed the other`s perspective through a practical and easy way. In case of listening with openness to understand, they processed the information and generate different interpretations, and made these all parts of their learning journey. One participant defined stories as an important component of leadership and highlighted that stories shared by a leader are related with the identity, values, and the world view of that leader. He stated that he does not have to reinvent the wheel every time instead the leadership stories and lessons of others helped him to level up himself:

> Story telling is a very popular topic for the last two to three years in leadership. The miracle of the story is discovered. Stories have been important to me since I realized that I could not learn everything by living those myself. In the last days, I read the story of a miner named Luis Urzua, very impressive one as a leadership story. Mine collapsed, 33 miners lived under the leadership of this man and survived for 70 days. Through these days, Urzua explained every condition transparently, executed voting to make decisions and included

> everyone in each decision. Instead of complaining, he focused everyone on the solution and made everyone calm down. This is a long survival war, a crisis about life, and it is hung with the identity and values of the leader there. If we can talk about transparency and democratic approach in that environment, this means that we may apply these principles everywhere. Without any excuses. A very important leadership lesson (Ahmet, Multinational, N, Appendix H, 123).

Another participant stated that she is participating to conferences, watching TEDx Talks, and reading biographies of other leaders to learn also from their stories:

> I am following the people who are puzzling their brains on this issue. Blanchard for example. I am going to conferences where these people are talking, watching Ted Talks. In there, individual and company stories are told. I am reading the biographies a lot. It is enjoyable to learn what a leader has gone through from these stories, in your comfortable seat, without being in that crisis or taking on the responsibility as a leader (Nur, Consulting, N, Appendix H, 124).

Stories that are told within the company are underlined as a source to learn the values and principles of the company, to understand organizational culture and to discover the strengths and weaknesses. These stories are particularly important when the leader is new to the organization, when leading a strategic project and / or trying to recover from a business mistake when continuous pulse check of people is required. The insights gained through these stories were very critical for the participants to make strategic plans and informed decisions. The participants said that they ask questions to get detailed stories from people in daily informal chats, routine team meetings and random exchange meetings. These stories provided the information they look for, the insights about possible obstacles on the way and some understandings about what they were lacking to get the desired outcomes. One of the participants highlighted that stories create the company`s memory and present a purpose to people for doing that job, in that company. Giving the cultural transformation project she was leading then; she discussed stories shared about the company, leaders, peers, teams, projects and so on as the building blocks of the project which will create learning for all:

> Listening to stories is the strongest method I can use to learn company culture and understand the meaning, contribution of the work. The company`s memory and identity are there. In Purpose project, we asked employees to share stories, even if they are very simple, failures or funny moments, or incidents that the employee is proud of. We tried to embed collecting stories into daily routines. We made it possible to talk about these in the kitchens, organized campaigns to ensure that the stories are shared. Everyone started to listen and to observe each other to learn others` stories to share in the campaign. People saw that the work done is not only producing a basic report or a financial excel but beyond that, has a meaning and contribution. I saw where the engagement to the company stands exactly and understood, discovered the expectations of employees. These stories helped us to make decisions about what is necessary for engagement and what does and what does not fit into this company, including the types of leaders (meaning leadership styles) (Banu, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 125).

Stories helped the participants to gain awareness, build knowledge and learn. They used stories as learning strategies to understand the dynamics of the companies they are leading and became better in in strategy setting, influencing people, decision making and executing. Underlining the links between stories and learning, some of the participants said that developing the questioning skills to access powerful stories in the company, listening skills to understand them effectively and storytelling skills to influence employees became their learning goals in recent years. These participants stated that they already requested story-telling training for themselves and the subordinates.

4.4.7 Building networks as communities of practices

Twelve participants described networks as important learning sources, and networking skills as important learning strategies to keep connected to these networks, to become and to stay as part of them. Networks can be considered as communities of practices, where people come together based in a concern or an interest, interact regularly through different means, share knowledge and insights with each other, and learn cooperatively to get better in something. The participants discussed local and international colleagues

in their companies, other executive leaders in the same or in different industries, people with expertise in their functional areas like consultants, or in leader development like coaches, people in universities, important people in media, and decision makers in government and regulatory entities and professional associations as important networks from which they learned a lot. In Sklair`s (2016) highlights, these are parts of the elite group setting the rules, making decisions, and generating knowledge in global economy.

Networks are used to cultivate the right people with the right insights, to gain knowledge, to verify decisions and approaches, to build self-awareness about the things one is good at and not, and to access the people who can help things to proceed fast. Just like every member of the network, the participants are sharing knowledge, experiences and information with other members while learning from them and developing themselves personally and professionally. The participants discussed networking skills as a strategy to expand these networks, and to nurture the relations and knowledge for becoming and staying as a member in these. One of the participants highlighted that if optimized and expanded in a productive way, networks provide a leader great advantage:

> My network is strong, and this is providing advantages. When I say network, I am talking about an optimized, a right network. Other managers, influencers discussing leadership topic, someone doing the same job with me in South America… Or else it is not like there are 5000 connections in LinkedIn but no benefit for me. I am talking about a productive network where you can access the information you are looking for quickly and discover what you know and what you do not know (Kerem, Multinational, N-2, Appendix H, 126).

Half of these participants discussed that networks provide the opportunity to access other leaders` thoughts, perspectives, experiences and plans from different functions, industries, and countries. They discussed networks as communities of practices:

> Leadership communities are very important. This may be particular to a business, a function, or to a global industry as we do. It may be a social network group, an individual blog, a webinar which you find by chance. Here you are having the opportunity to test your ideas, perspective, and plans. You are asking. A completely different viewpoint is coming, a book is shared, a journal article is suggested, you are getting into contact with an expert. I am always learning from here. And this information is very valuable, because it is answering exactly the thing what you are looking for (Yavuz, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 127).

These participants stated that they would call "people like them", the other leaders within or outside the company to take additional view specific to decisions, mostly economic ones, and problems. One participant complained about the increasing imbalances within economy and hardness in decision making in this environment. She highlighted her major source of learning for making informed decisions as other professional leaders, the network of people like herself:

> There are moments when I have a hard time to decide. It is sometimes very difficult to make economic forecasts. It is good to look with an additional eye. I am then calling my managing friends, those who are going through the same difficulties (Sevim, Local, N, Appendix H, 128).

Coursera, HBS, Udemy, LinkedIn Learning and Culture Wizard were some of the mentioned online learning platforms by the participants. These platforms were valuable due to the quality of the programs and learning opportunities presented but more than that, they were valuable due to the interactive, virtual platforms they offered to their learners. It is the opportunity of building networks presented by these learning platforms. For example, HBS promoted high level of engagement among participants and the opportunity to access peer group contributions as their unique feature:

> Engaging with your peers is a big part of what makes HBS Online unique. You exchange ideas, offer input, and seek out viewpoints from a community of learners gathered from around the globe. In the process, you learn from each other's experiences and perspectives, and leave the program with a broader outlook on the world. (Harvard Business School Online, n.d.)

Through these platforms, the participants contacted and bound with each other, followed the trending topics related to leadership and discussed the economic, social, and cultural issues affecting the businesses. Reflecting on things like career, leadership, profession, self and relations with the company, organizations and learning together with the other members of the network provided additional perspectives, information, and new knowledge for the participants. Since investment in these online platforms required a considerable amount of money, only large companies prefer to make annual investments on these tools which makes them safe in terms of accessing similar people, with similar problems and experiences. Through these platforms, the participants, as learners are establishing their own learning communities, and staying connected to similar leaders from different parts of the world.

Matching with these, some of these participants grasped the international experiences as an important source of learning, and the fluidity of transcending the physical and cultural borders as part of their leader identities. 4 of these participants defined themselves as "world citizens" and described this feature as a unique, universal attitude related to "human values". These were discussed as common among the peers of their distinct group, independent of the country one is living in. One participant highlighted that being a world citizen provided a common ground for him to connect easily with his international colleagues, to access a network of people with similar concerns due to the level they are working at and in the same industry:

> What is a leader doing in a UK or US company, what is on the agenda…Even though we are competitors, we are sharing information due to the dangers and vital risks embedded in the business. Everyone at the congresses explains their experiences openly because you know each other in a way even if you have just met recently. Everyone is a world citizen … The value you give to people is same (Yavuz, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 129).

Another participant highlighted that project management is the core responsibility of his team and keeping numerous projects in different countries delivered on time requires strong connections and networks from the local and regional people with decisive and influencing power. He defined networks as the most critical and useful learning source for him and shared his systematic approach to building networks. He built his own model of networks by reading blogs and books, participating to webinars, and following the social media accounts of influencing people about networking:

> When I started working, what was important was know-what and how, technical knowledge and information were important. These are not enough anymore. There are also know-who, when why and what if questions on the current table. I saw this multi-perspective in a webinar organized by someone called Khan, this was in fact a network model. Who are the key people for executing a project in country, what information do these people provide me? How do they decide on things, what are the scenarios? If I know the business culture of that country, it will help me to understand what is done why. A strong network is required to collect all these together at the same time. Now, this is important. In the simplest way, everyone in the team is in another country, in another corner. There are project managers in other regions of the company. Everyone is a part of the network. As a team, we are coming together every week on MS Teams (virtual tool), we are doing tech talks sometimes at lunch. We are inviting people from other teams. We are conducting learning weeks specific to project management. Everyone is taking a subject and explaining it. For example, I attended the session of an executive working in Amsterdam, he was explaining his own experience of agile working in his team. People from all over the world attended, met each other. That meeting was as a significant learning itself since we all came there due to having similar (Onur, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 130).

Networks with consultants / experts in their professional areas or in leadership were mentioned as a critical source of learning. The participants worked with consultants / experts particularly in restructuring, workflow reviews and process designs, strategic projects that requires multi-disciplinary approaches, and/or focusing on a specific problem by using the analysis and facilitation skills. These consultants / experts are helpful since they had much more experience on the topic of interest since they worked in many different countries, industries and projects while accumulating the knowledge

and skills in a short time. They constantly moved from one project to another, from one company to another while making the lives of the leaders easier in running the business. They had the knowledge about tools, required changes, how to stick these in the company, and unique experience to foresee, solve and avoid some of the common pitfalls. Therefore, learning from these consultants and experts, understanding their reasoning, and analyzing what they are doing in the definite period of intersection were key for the participants. They shared that knowing these consultants / experts expanded their knowledge, made them get more effective results. Thus, the participants took actions like participating to their seminars, having routine one to one meetings, e-mailing, following their social medias and so on to stay connected with these people. One participant highlighted that she developed networking skills first and then began using her expanded network as a learning source on purpose. Keeping in touch with friends and former colleagues is a great way to keep learning since they are also learning their own lessons, getting information from their own networks, and providing the trustworthy direction on the right time. The personal network she built provided her the adequate information at the right time so she could get informed decisions that contributed to capital growth of her company. She also underlined that her network with experts, coaches and consultants were very important for her personal and professional development while making her faster and productive in her areas of responsibility:

> I participated to a training about networking, where the instructor explained it mathematically. It is important whom I know and whom that person knows. These connections form a network like a spider web. I am an engineer, and after that training, I started to revive it better in my eyes. Having the right network means constant learning. It is a fast and effective learning network very suitable for today. For example, a colleague from my former company, who is now working as an SGK (Social Security Institution) consultant, called. He explained that the state will provide tax advantages and close to 1/3 of salary incentives for new graduate employees who continue their vocational education in the

> company. He said that the legal regulation will be passed on Tuesday. We were hiring 300 new graduates every year at that time and when you calculate the incentives and tax advantages together, subtotal is an important amount. By preparing a project, we are one of the two or three first applicant companies in Turkey for this incentive. I am not leading a department that produces profitability, revenue, and for the first time I had a plus effect in the budget. The company recognized this success. If I did not have this kind of network, I would not be able to get this advantage. Thus, I tried to establish networks and maintain good relationships. I am trying to keep my communication with experts, consultants, and other leaders alive. I am following their articles, asking questions on my mind, calling on special days and inviting them to the company for chatting (Banu, Multinational, N-1, Appendix H, 131).

Making the effort and dedicating the time to stay connected to a network through different practices and developing networking skills to expand the networks are part of the participants` learning strategies. 6 of these participants highlighted that global and local memberships in business associations and occupational groups assisted them to stay connected with people who are valuable for them and for their businesses. Thus, they are dedicating considerable energy to participate the meetings, conferences, usage of social media platforms and by following the agenda related to these memberships.

Since 15 of the participants have international roles; staying connected with their bosses, international peers and teams is now a requirement for them. Daily written communication in emails, conversations, phone calls, conferences, and meet-ups, in meetings like leadership trainings, townhall meetings, celebration events and story sharing groups were highlighted as their methods to build new networks and to expand the existing ones in the company. The participants highlighted using of initiatives like interactive intranets, company wikis, instant messaging services, video conferencing tools to access and to learn from their networks. Lastly travelling itself, as almost a weekly routine, is discussed as an effort to stay connected with their peers in different regions and countries, with their teams and with the leaders in the global headquarter.

Accepting networks as major sources of learning and networking as a strategy, the participants aimed to create an awareness about the significance of networks and the networking skills in their companies. Networks are seen as communities of practices within the company and supported through different initiatives through the decisions taken by the participants. They initiated some structural redesign projects with a network perspective, directed the investments to some tools that enable forming networks and connecting within the company and requested strategic projects from HR, Internal Communication and Marketing departments aiming to trigger collective networking capability of their companies. They tried to activate the power of networks as a learning source for themselves, for all the other leaders directly reporting to them and for all the employees of the company. The participants underlined that in these steps, technology is clearly an enabler, particularly for the global networks across the company and countries. Exemplifying this, one participant highlighted that successful companies have strong systems to connect people and document the knowledge they have in a fun way. She shared the strategies they obtained to strengthen the company in these areas and, explained the initiatives implemented:

> I am learning the most from my connections. For me, I think that the way to learning in our present day is passing through networks. The companies that can do this well, are successful and will be. It is very important for the employees to know each other and to know what each other is doing. I am also saying this on global level. For fulfilling these pillars, I thought it was necessary to create a dynamism, a communication net in the company. First, we updated our intranet, we transformed the format into a form where each employee can ask questions, send their suggestions. They can search other employees globally and locally in this portal. Everyone created profiles such as what projects they did, what they knew, what they want to learn. For example, we set up an internal Facebook for the company, this learning should be fun so that people can start using it quickly. Each leader who has contacts with clients had to create and build his own personal brand. We predicted that this would contribute to increase in sales. We explained that they need to build their own networks and use social media like LinkedIn very powerfully. For example, we gave thought leadership goals to all

> leaders. This means; they will learn in their own area of expertise, transit this knowledge into articles, by writing books, produce new knowledge and share these with their own networks. This is the way for differentiation from others for our present day. We started to share these by publishing magazines, journals within the company, so that the employees would see and share these with their own networks. We did organizational network analysis and planning, some kind…. We are seeing the impacts of these activities both in communication within the company and collaboration, and in our market share. Network approach is working (Ebru, Consulting, N-1, Appendix H, 132).

Another participant shared that he triggered various programs in the company to transform the power of networks into learning for all employees, including himself:

> Digital libraries, online learning platforms, these are available in every big company. What needs to be done specific for the company is the question of how to prepare the approach, culture, and environment in which everyone will learn something. To create awareness, we prepare interactive boards for different corners of the company. We are writing articles according to weekly concepts and bringing issues such as teamwork, learning from each other to the agenda in these means. For example, there is a company magazine published. This is a magazine where you may see yourself as an employee and learn about each other more. You are learning what they are experiencing and sharing. It is necessary to support the processing of subjects that people are curious about. Those employees who do these should be supported. These people are contributing to the learning of everyone in the company. At this point, leaders are required to make the life easier. For example, five people worked for one month and created a platform with their own initiatives. It is like a Company Wikipedia, there are videos and applications in it. People who are doing the actual work have videos there, they are explaining their own jobs to others. They said to me that nobody knows that we prepared this, the union may be against it, but for us, this should be in the company. I was very impressed, convinced and gave my endless support to them. This core team had planned five phases at the beginning, and at the end of the day, it turned out to be a platform in which 1800 people are using, asking questions, and getting to know each other. First, they owned and created it themselves, learned while also taught others. Then we all learned, we learned who is doing what job. This is very important for our business; I am thinking that it even has prevented the risks that may occur in production. Then this team also released a company dictionary. It is not possible for someone who has graduated from school to know the production site we are working in. To see the risks, one must learn and understand the systems behind it. One is required to learn the technical issues again here; one is required to learn the tailored process specific to here. This dictionary has carried all these relationships to the digital environment, thanks to the technology. You even may ask questions anonymously, make suggestions for someone to explain further, what does it mean here in this business, what are the abbreviations. The responsibility of the question belongs to the employee who asked it, one is required to follow it until

> it is answered. A newcomer says how can I ask this question now, the answers for all these hard to ask questions, unwritten rules sometimes are built there, there is a life going on that digital platform. They are recommending books, sharing videos, sharing articles. This is something built through collective intelligence, the common wisdom. People are now supporting the dictionary in their free times, trying to keep it alive. Because one is learning much from there than any class or book. Additionally, we created social spaces in the company, we opened cafes, we created classrooms that can be used with joy (Yavuz, Local, N-1, Appendix H, 133).

As seen in this case, the progress in technology, internet, and digital platforms are impacting how informal learning occurs in the workplace. It can be said that networks, both physical or virtual, helped the participants to promptly access the information and knowledge that they are looking for. Networks provided them the chance to increase their reservoirs of experiences by reflecting on other members` trials and errors.

Overall, this chapter depicted the findings and discussions of the study. The chapter started with the information about the participants and commonalities among them and their companies. Parallel to research questions; the learning outcomes, the factors and forces impacting learning and, sources, strategies, and processes of learning informally are presented and discussed. First, informal learning outcomes acquired through the participants` leadership paths, how they learned to act and perform as better leaders are presented and discussed. Second, insights about how the participants perceive themselves as leaders and which knowledge, capabilities, and actions are featured by them in relation to leadership mindsets and identities are shared. Last, learning from experiences, from other people, mindsets, characteristics, and behaviors enabling learning, self-directed learning and meta cognitive learning skills, practices for building and increasing self-knowledge and self-awareness, dialogue and networks are presented and discussed as essential sources, strategies, and processes of learning for the participants. These findings will also be summarized in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND FINAL REMARKS

This research was designed as a qualitative study and focused to explore the informal workplace learning experiences of gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders. The purpose was to understand what, how and why they learned informally through their work life, while they were becoming senior leaders. In the scope of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with leaders of multinational companies or companies that are in management consultancy partnership with these companies. Interviews were analyzed through within and cross case analysis approaches, and by using text mining and documentary analysis as complementary methods. The study provided answers for the following research questions:

1. How do gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders learn informally through the work life?
2. What are the factors, forces and dynamics leading gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders to learn informally?
3. What are the informal learning sources, processes, and strategies of gold-collar workers working as corporate executive leaders?

On the basis of the aim and research questions, in this final chapter, the conclusion is presented under five main headings: summary, final remarks and recommendations, de-limitations and limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary

One major challenge for the research was to determine who the gold collar workers are in the workplace. Exploring different theoretical discussions, definitions and reading related literature in this field, I understood that there is no clear definition of who gold-collar workers are that is widely accepted. First, considering the common characteristics of the gold-collar workers discussed in the literature, corporate leaders who are holding top- and high-level management positions in multinational companies that are over a certain size (in terms of operating countries, number of employees, financial power) were expected to be tangible members of gold-collar workers group and therefore determined as the target group of this study. In the next step, I clarified the criteria related with the size and scale of the companies in which the potential participants are expected to be found. To choose and access the data-rich participants within a reasonable timeframe for field study, primarily target companies were listed. Companies in 2017 Forbes Global 2000, 2016 Capital 500 Turkey and 2017 Forbes Best Management Consulting Firms ranking lists were chosen to form a basis for the company listing. Among numerous lists, these were chosen as the major ones since they review similar criteria like financial metrics, size, and scale to prepare the ranking lists.

For the purpose of exploring the informal workplace learning experiences of gold-collar leaders, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 leaders. 7 participants were positioned at the top level of their companies, working at N Level, either leading the executive management team in the company and/or acting as a board member. Twelve participants were positioned at N-1 level and were responsible for one or many main functions in the organization and being a member of executive management team. 4 participants were working at N-2 level. In terms of total work

experience, they varied between 12 and 40 years while making 21,5 years on average. In terms of total executive leadership experience, they varied between 5 and 24 years while making 9 years on average. On the case of expertise, the participants were managing 16 different functions with 32 different functional sub-areas. In terms of scope of the role, 15 participants had international scopes (i.e., responsibility in EMEA region or a global role) and 8 participants held the roles responsible only for Turkey. In terms of gender distribution, there were 11 females and 12 males. Twelve participants had graduate degrees, and 11 participants had undergraduate degrees.

With this study, it was expected to further understand adult informal learning in the workplace and leader development together. For this purpose, the significant informal workplace learning experiences of gold-collar leaders, their lessons learned, sources, processes, and strategies of learning informally and factors, forces and dynamics that triggered their further learning were discussed and presented. It was expected that the results of this study would contribute to the enrichment of the literature about informal workplace learning and to recognize the significance of informal learning in the context of leader development. Hopefully, it was projected that the adult educators would be able to take some alternative models, frameworks, and options for building the knowledge, experiences, skills, and confidence of leaders at all levels of the organization and designing leader development initiatives.

In this section, the summary and discussion of the findings will be presented in three different parts in line with the research questions: what have been learned by the leaders informally, factors, forces and dynamics triggering the learning, and sources, processes, and strategies of learning informally.

5.1.1 Lessons learned as a leader

The analysis of the interview data revealed that the participants mainly learned the knowledge and skills required for better task and role performance. Complementarily, they developed the mindsets and perspectives together with the associated leadership styles and behaviors in order to become more effective leaders. As reported by the participants, they got better in fulfilling their major responsibilities in different situations. Enactment of these responsibilities helped their companies to accomplish what are expected of them and to execute in an organized way. These responsibilities were increasingly getting complex, as the leaders moved towards higher management levels. Thus, the participants got better in management responsibilities like transiting the strategy into action plans, realizing these plans by coordinating resources, people, and time, making decisions, solving problems, and enabling process, adjusting the strategies and actions when needed like risks and crisis, monitoring these, and finally evaluating. Majority of these managing responsibilities were delegated and led through others, but the participants were responsible for making sure that the desired outputs were there. Therefore, they learned to build the appropriate and effective team for the operation and enabled the team to work together so that they could delegate with comfort and focus on other responsibilities. The participants learned to communicate with effectiveness, to adapt the process of communication according to the message, the audience, the context and to organize it in a way to achieve the expected outcomes out of it. These learning outcomes were concerned with operations of the organization, taking the right steps, and executing the whole process with success.

Second category of learning outcomes included the mindsets and perspectives together with the associated leadership styles and behaviors. These findings were

matching with what John Kotter (2013) discussed as the difference between management and leadership. The fundamental intersection between leadership and management is that good leadership covers the responsibility for managing, but it has more than that. Leadership involves leading and engaging people, questioning the existing systems and structure, challenging these and if needed, designing the organization, systems, and structure in a better way. It is also related with balancing the short- and long-term perspectives, finding and implementing the best way that fits to the organization. The participants underlined strategic thinking, leading by values, empowerment of others, growth mindset, developing and sustaining relationships, credibility and authenticity, decision making and judgement, and designing the learning culture and organizational context as important leadership capabilities and mindsets. These were highlighted as elements of thinking as a leader and described as the grounds of their leadership frameworks.

The participants discussed an intense conceptual relation with and a solid need for learning due to the desired leadership frameworks and their leader identities. Their purpose and motivation to become the leader they vision for was leading them to learn, to experience, to think on these experiences and to keep developing themselves in various ways. These findings are also similar to what George and Sims (2010) find out in their study that was conducted with 125 leaders. They state that leaders discuss the leadership concept in relation to their life stories, experiences, and challenges. Reflecting on these direct the leaders to build their own concept, and to understand who they are as leaders and to discover the purpose of their leadership (p. 14-15). The evolvement in these leadership concepts is described as parallel to their progress towards higher, more senior level of management in the organizations. The participants in this

study described that they want to inspire a vision and a purpose for their organization, to convince each member in the organization about this vision and purpose, to include different members of the organization into the decision making, to build the most effective team and to achieve those goals together, to engage the teams and subordinates to adopt the goals, to empower them to be better, and to act as a credible and authentic role models for subordinates. These leadership frameworks were outcomes of experiences and observations and evolved through reflection on and integration of these into more complex, differentiated and encompassing perspectives about who they are as leaders and what is the purpose of their leadership. The participants` leadership frameworks were not only related with their individual leader identities but equally with their relational leader identities, as part of the context of the organization. Their leadership styles, how they behave and interact with others in the organization, how they prioritize things and decide, what kind of organizational environment and culture they try to build, and which leadership capabilities and mindsets are important for these were all shared in relation to their individual and relational leadership concepts and identities.

5.1.2 Factors, forces and dynamics triggering learning

Baker et al. (2020) highlight that the periods of turmoil are no longer exceptional in today's rapidly changing world, but they are the rule now. Antonacopoulou (2018) says that VUCA conditions are now permanent. This means that today`s context is vulnerable, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. While the participants of this study were enacting their responsibilities and advancing through their career paths, they were continuously facing different impacts of the global economic complexity, changing business contexts, unexpected conditions, and the shifts within their own organizations.

The speed of change the participants must deal with was accelerating and their capabilities to learn and adapt under these conditions were critical. These ongoing changes and challenges formed the contextual factors affecting their informal learning experiences. They developed new knowledge, skills, perspectives, and behaviors to stay as effective leaders, to adapt themselves and their companies to the new requirements, to ensure results are delivered and goals are achieved and, to continue advancing in their own careers. Improving ways of doing things, in accordance coordinating teams and resources, solving complex problems, achieving results also for unfamiliar tasks and assignments, communicating with diverse range of people effectively, making decisions that are impactful on many parts of the organization, and finding the right employees / leaders for their teams were the learnings gained in order to respond and to adapt to these factors, forces and changing dynamics.

The second dimension was related with individual factors leading to learning. The participants underlined some of their characteristics and mindsets, and associated behaviors as impactful on their fast pace development in leadership path and lives. They all faced the ongoing demand for learning smarter and faster for their roles that allow little time to acquire new learnings. Growth mindset, curiosity, optimism, openness, and flexibility were shared as characteristics and associated behaviors that impact their informal learning, and also as constructs of both their learner and leader identities. As discussed by Knowles (1980), accumulated experiences become an increasingly rich resource for learning. In the process of accumulation of knowledge, the learner`s daily tasks and challenges on the job give rise to informal learning. The challenges are mostly faced with situations that require new knowledge, skills, and alternative ways of doing things. When these challenges emerge in the workplace, the learner passes through

different experiences and learns more if s/he acts as highly intentional and self-directed learners. This was also relevant for the participants as learners and related to the findings of this study. Each experience was discussed as a clear learning opportunity by the participants. The participants accumulated more of these as they went after these experiences through their career paths, and acted with growth mindsets, flexibility, adaptability, curiosity, passion, and optimism as these experiences were happening. They kept trying things out, continued with their paths despite various failures, were motivated to learn and even strive for further challenging assignments and tasks.

Discovering the relation between these individual factors and their success were underlined as awareness moments. Seeing the benefits of these individual factors on their careers, the participants learned to benefit from these towards the direction of triggering learning. The leaders in this study developed leadership capabilities needed to fulfill their role by intuitively utilizing ad hoc learning tactics during their experiences. They perceived learning as an integral part of fulfilling their roles as leaders, and actively engaged in learning experiences first in an unplanned and unstructured manner, but later they learned to develop these factors to trigger just in time learning, observing people around them and paying attention to the dynamics around, seeking and accepting feedback, and learning from mistakes and failures, gaining new skills and perspectives within the moment of experience. This mentality, ad hoc and proactive approach to learning seemed to fit with the complex, fast paced work environments, with the contextual factors in which these leaders are operating in. These factors were discussed as enablers of learning that is central to developing as an executive leader, who requires to respond to immediate challenges and to take actions with rapid analysis and solutions. These were related with the participants` development of learning strategies and

processes. They moved according to the dynamics of the organization and environment, learned in the moment from decisions, actions, and feedback, utilizing ad hoc learning strategies during their experiences, flexibly adapting based on the demands of the situation, and changing their approaches to continue delivering results and achieving desired outcomes. They handled these experiences, adapted their actions and behaviors to achieve their goals, to deliver results and to be sure that the learning potential in these experiences are gained to become better leaders. These findings are in line with findings of various studies (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2010; McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002).

5.1.3 Sources, processes, and strategies

In the interviews, the participants shared insights about their learning strategies, processes, and sources. Experiences were highlighted as the primary source of their learning informally. Experiences contributed to their professional and personal development as leaders through two dimensions. The first dimension was related with the actual experience itself being the source of learning. Lessons were learned, knowledge was acquired gained, behaviors, skills and perspectives were developed while the participants were going through experiences, doing the job themselves, taking expanded responsibilities, trying things out and making mistakes. Early work experiences, first roles in management, challenging tasks, unfamiliar responsibilities taken in task force groups and in rotations, risks and crisis, and international assignments were featured as developmental experiences. These made differences in the participants` lives, careers, and they learned to become leaders and advanced in leadership through these experiences. The second dimension related to experiences were the contextual factors and discussing experiences as learning processes. The contextual factors shaping

these experiences like the structure of work, challenging dynamics and risks, corporate values, organizational culture, attitudes of other people like (non) existence of support from the bosses and peers were also described as crucial in these learning processes. Although the experiences resulted with some solid lessons for the participants, these learnings drove their richer and deep meanings out of these contexts and time dedicated to them. While trying to find the best way to deal with these contextual factors, the participants learned in relation to their contexts. So, it was one thing to list these experiences and quite another to see them as learning processes. For example, learning to direct and motivate teams and subordinates were learning outcomes which the participants gained through building something totally new and/or turning a business around. In starting a new business, providing a strong direction through ambiguity, and motivating others to work side by side were learned. In turning a business around, overcoming resistance and incompetence of people and directing despite these were learned. Although the learning processes were embedded through the experiences, the learning outcomes differed. These learnings were not on their own, but were continuously evolving and affecting each other, too. They were not there as clarity but grasped when questioned, thought about and dug out of the complex and ambiguous experiences. Therefore, it was important to perceive these experiences as learning processes in varying contexts through which the participants excelled in their own roles and careers differently. They developed significant leadership knowledge, behaviors, perspectives, and skills while they were trying to find the best way to effectively respond and to manage these. The participants shared the awareness and understanding that now as the highest decision-making power and responsible in their companies, it was their

responsibility to design these contextual factors in a way that is supportive for learning, for increasing individual and organizational performances.

In general, types of experiences that the participants shared in this study, and which are presented in the former chapter and in the summary section of this chapter are like those described before by other researchers (Dalton, Ernst, Deal, & Leslie, 2000; McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002; McCall, 2004). The categories of experiences that seem to matter most are turning a business around, starting something from stretch and establishing something new, early career experiences and associated awareness, and significant increase in the scope of the role. In these studies, international experiences, hardships like crisis, failures and risks, unfamiliar and unmanageable problems are underlined as valuable sources of learning for leaders. Daily regular activities like solving problems, taking decisions, struggling with the changing conditions, delivering, and monitoring results are underlined as lessons required to become a more effective leader. Working with other people, going through both positive and negative experiences with bosses, peers, direct reports, and clients are also discussed as developmental by these authors. A common highlight in these studies was that opposite to much known about the types of developmental experiences, less is known about how leaders transform these experiences into learnings and what kind of change / transformation occur out of these. As highlighted by McCall Jr. (2004), people don`t automatically learn from experiences meaning that although people went through the same experiences, how developmental these experiences are specific to the individuals. To really make effective use of experience to develop leaders, a better understanding about learning processes and how people make the most of these experiences are crucial. The findings of this study contributed to the establishment of these relations, since the

research participants analyzed and interpreted their own experiences through the lens of informal learning holistically. Through the interview questions, they shared the insights about what they learned informally, why these were important for them, and described how they learned these in detail.

Among the experiences shared by the research participants, there were failures and hardships which are discussed as transformative critical incidents. These were moments that are framed by negative and discomforting emotions, not matching with the participants` leadership values, and avoiding them to stay true to themselves, damaging trust and relations built around it, and keeping the participants distant from realizing the premises central to their leadership frameworks. Among these incidents, there were also positive experiences that are framed by positive emotions like being proud of oneself and happiness, building trust and value driving relations and successes matching with the participants` commitments as leaders. These led the participants to different understandings and awareness, challenged their beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives, and ended with obtaining new or altered ones in the context of their lives and careers. The participants discussed the outcomes of these experiences as broader perspectives, altered or new leadership values, becoming more open-minded and tolerated, finding new ways of behaving, and doing things, examining themselves, and integrating change, increased confidence and sense of autonomy, emotional development, and overall development of a more robust leadership framework and/or clear articulation of it.

Eraut (2008) underlines that learning from others and self-directed learning are important sources and processes of informal learning in the workplace. Corresponding to this discussion, in this study there emerged two main sources, processes, and strategies of informal learning in addition to learning from experiences: learning from others,

through relations and learning on their own, through SDL. Likely, relationships were another central theme, a major source of informal learning discussed by the participants. Building and developing networks, interacting with other people in the organization, communicating with different stakeholders effectively to get results and influencing people from diverse backgrounds, engaging them were underlined as important learning outcomes related to. But more than that, the participants discussed the relationships as opportunities to learn from others. Bosses and clients, peers and direct reporting leaders in the organizations were underlined as important sources of learning. They mentioned positive examples with good bosses, and supportive other leaders in the organization who left a vivid and long-term mark on their careers. The participants also shared negative experiences with the same group of people, which were more transformative for them. Negative relations helped the participants to become more aware of their own assumptions and reframe these in terms of what they view as both desirable leadership behaviors and styles. They learned which leadership styles to avoid from and what not to do. Through reflecting on these experiences, they learned how to be a good leader and how to get competent in associated knowledge, skills, and behaviors. These relations were transformative since they helped the participants to answer the questions of who they are and how they should be as leaders.

The self-directed learning process emerged as a key theme in the study. First the participants underlined that they were executing the process of self-examination, understanding what is going around and what their gaps are as leaders, and trying to build greater self-awareness about themselves, to know their own strengths and weaknesses better. Receiving feedback, reflecting on this feedback, understanding it, and getting some actions related to it were underlined as important learning processes.

Second, critical reflection on self, leadership style, experiences, relationships, results, the organization, and on leadership concept was an important tool for the participants to learn on their own. The results of these reflective practices directed the participants` future actions, decisions, priorities, and self-concepts while triggering various learning processes to close the identified individual gaps and to make things in alternative ways. Based on these reflections, the participants transited the experiences into lessons taken and plan their further actions and behaviors accordingly. Third, the participants discussed that understanding their learning styles, developing meta cognitive learning skills, making comprehensive self-learning plans, and sticking to them as distinct processes related to self-directed learning. These insights shared by the participants are in line with the SDL literature. SDL is discussed as an informal learning activity that happens autonomously (van Noy et al., 2016), and the key starting point for describing learning through work in modern times (Bell, 2017). Regarding Knowles`s (1980) emphasis about learner`s responsibility in his or her own learning (Knowles, 1980), the role of learner`s motivation, preferences, and skills to assume responsibility for learning, to take control and to execute an effective learning process are also frequently discussed (Blaschke, 2012; Merriam et al., 2009). In addition to these factors, access to support and guidance, social and cultural backgrounds, economic capitals, interpersonal skills, and critical thinking abilities determine the potential of SDL (Boyer et al., 2014; Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Din et al., 2016). As shared in the former chapter, the research participants stated that they set individual learning goals and initiate the SDL processes as part of their individual learning plans. Taking the control of their own learning process and effectively implementing every detailed step of the SDL process, the participant made sure that they are up-to-date and gaining the lessons, knowledge,

and skills that are required for staying as an effective leader and/or becoming a better leader. Since learning was discussed as a constant requirement and a priority for leadership, dedicating time and effort to self-directed learning were discussed as a routine by the participants. They found various strategies and methods to get better in their own self-directed learning processes. Moreover, Lemmetty (2020) says that situations, frames, and opportunities enabling SDL in the organizations are paid less attention compared to factors, motivations and skills required for SDL. Thus, it is also important to highlight that various learning and development opportunities are offered to the participants by their organizations. The participants have an intense learning history in their workplaces through leader development programs, coaching opportunities and online learning platforms presented to them. Thus, they had the chance to develop their own measures and strategies to overcome problems and challenges, increase their effectiveness and performance in implementation of various tasks, responsibilities, and functions in their roles, in the workplace. Lemmetty and Collin (2019) discuss that SDL in workplace is not only dependent on the desire and motivation of individuals, but employees are also seen as obliged by the organization to learn in a self-directed way. This highlight is also in line with what participants shared about the learning culture and environment which they wanted to establish and promote in their organizations. As corporate leaders and decision-makers, the participants shared that they are trying to be sure that online learning platforms and/or tools to trigger SDL are offered to their employees. The research participants were also focused on to establish and/or maintain the mindset that ongoing learning is a priority, a strategic pillar for the organization and, implementing effective SDL processes are expected from employees.

As individual learning methods and platforms; reading, surfing on the internet, watching videos, following related social media accounts (particularly in LinkedIn and Twitter), note-taking and leaving them as reminding marks around, completing trainings of their own choice in mobile and online platforms (e.g., HBS, Culture Wizard, Udemy and Coursera), participating to knowledge sharing and brainstorming sessions of these trainings were shared. Reading involved books, journals, blogs and social media accounts, recent researches and reports, and newspapers. Watching involved YouTube videos and TEDx talks related to leadership or the respective topic of interest, TV serials related to professional life, company videos, and interviews with other leaders. The combination of reading and watching was discussed as the activity of searching the internet and/or company intranets through which they found wide range of different sources and by prioritizing these, transited these into valuable and relevant learning.

Dialogues in the workplace were underlined as important informal learning sources and strategies. Listening the stories of others, participating to story-telling events, conducting conversations in the company events, and executive coaching were highlighted as important means of informal learning in the workplace. Virtual platforms triggering verbal and written dialogue like intranets, internal social platforms (e.g., corporate facebooks, corporate wiki), instant messaging tools were discussed as instruments with learning potential. These dialogues, face to face or virtually conducted, were not discussed as processes of transmitting knowledge from one to another but creating the collective knowledge together, as co-learning platforms.

The participants described networks as important learning sources, and networking skills as important learning strategies to become a member and to keep connected to these networks. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe community of practices

as groups of people who share a common interest or a concern and, a desire to learn from and contribute to the community with their experiences. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2010) later apply the term into various domains including the workplace and says that these communities of practices are important to knowledge management. They are recognized as social fabric of knowledge, the social structures that enable knowledge to be managed by the members, particularly the practitioners in the group. The members share the passion for the same aim and focus with other members, have the knowledge about how to do, and regularly interact for the purpose of improving the field and individual knowledge. Networks that are discussed by the research participants can be considered as communities of practices, where they come together based in a concern or an interest, interact regularly through different means, share knowledge and insights with each other, and learn cooperatively to get better in leadership, associated knowledge, and skills, and/or their fields of expertise. Local and international colleagues in their companies, other leaders in the same or in different industries, people with expertise in their functional areas like consultants, or in leader development like executive coaches, respective people in media and in universities, and decision makers in government and regulatory entities and professional associations were shared as important networks. Becoming a part of these networks, similar to communities of practices, enabled the participants to access knowledge and information, to stay connected with people who have similar concerns and interests, to learn also from other members` experiences, to exchange ideas and to get advices and feedback, to interact regularly through different means, and to share insights to get better in leadership, management responsibilities or in the specific industry / functions they operated in. The participants sought these networks for personal insights, test practical advices and

capacity to access tacit knowledge of the other members in these networks. These experiences were considered as the most relevant ones to the daily responsibilities, pressures of their jobs and expectations of their roles. The participants used networks to cultivate the right people with the right insights and knowledge, to verify decisions and approaches, to build self-awareness about the things one is good at and not, and to access the people who can help things to proceed fast. Networks provided learning environments that are comfortable and safe for informal and incidental learning activities, and support trust-building and bonding among the members.

Bersin (2013) further discusses the communities of practices together with the flourishing of technology, internet, and mobile devices. He states that virtual communities expand the potential of learning from others from specific domains like workplace to ongoing life itself. Therefore, the virtual communities of practices impacted the strategies and ways of learning, including how workplace learning occurs. This is also matching with the highlights of the participants in this study. The participants shared that communities of practices outside their organizations (i.e., social media groups in LinkedIn and Twitter, WhatsApp groups, learning groups in online platforms like HBS) and the communities of practices inside their organizations (i.e., intranet sites, corporate facebooks, WhatsApp groups, corporate wiki) are key sources and strategies for learning. In these groups, they have the opportunity to access to the required information, and knowledge promptly while increasing their reservoir of experiences by thinking about and reflecting also on the experiences of others.

5.2 Final remarks and recommendations

Based on the insights of the participants, it can be said that informal learning accounts for most of the leader`s learning in the workplace, throughout their leadership career paths. Although the participants have a strong educational background and continuously participated to various non-formal learning programs through their careers, they underlined experiences, relations and various contexts and dynamics as the primary source of their learning related to leadership. Even in the general interview questions like what learning is, the role of formal training and non-formal programs related to leadership are referred with relatively modest effect in comparison to actual experiences, other people, self-directed learning and practices like feedback, coaching, networking, and dialogue. These findings are consistent with the findings of the previous studies in the literature suggesting that most of the learning occur informally in the workplace (Cerasoli et al., 2018; Colley et al., 2002; Eraut, 2008; Tannenbaum et al., 2010).

Powell and Snellman (2004) underline that the key enabling component of knowledge economy is the intellectual capital of the workers, combined with efforts to integrate information and improvements in every stage of production process and the workforce. Knowledge is started to be seen as the biggest asset of the companies and relatedly learning is featured as the only way to gain knowledge. Based on the studies shared in the literature review chapter, the companies are investing on continuous learning solutions and opportunities significantly to create and maintain sustainable competitive advantages. Leader development comprises a significant portion of the learning investments. Various studies and reports demonstrated that although companies emphasize on means of informal learning while forming their learning and development strategies, the actual learning delivery methods and dedication of learning investments

do not reflect this emphasis (Association for Talent Development, 2019; Freifeld, 2019; LinkedIn Learning, 2020). Face-to-face or virtual classroom trainings are still the most used learning practices. In terms of leader development, since most of these programs are generic and based mostly on formal ways of learning, they fail to provide the expected outcomes (Akrofi, 2019; Ghemawat, 2012). As Akrofi (2019) discusses, the companies are having difficulties related to leadership, lacking enough leaders with the right capabilities, and to meet future business needs despite these investments.

In this study, experiences, observations, professional judgment, and decision making, operational tasks, reflective thinking and trials and errors are discussed as the significant learning processes in leader development. Based on these, it is possible to highlight some final remarks and to make some recommendations on leader development and informal workplace learning: First, workplace learning should be considered and redesigned more from the perspective of informal learning. Different ways of informal learning should be embedded into the routines and daily flow of workplace. Technology and digitalization have the huge potential to shape and to enable this. Specific to leader development, rather than allocating a considerable budget and time to formal means and non-formal leader development programs, informal learning and/or transformative informal learning means have to be integrated in an organized way into the workplace. It can also be said that the value creation on individual and organizational level, and the outcomes of leader development should be defined as concretely as possible. Creating the chances for various experiences, dialogue, coaching, and reflective practices and task groups might be embedded more in the contexts and routines of the workplace. Second, non-formal programs on leader development should focus on forming the ground for skills like reflecting, dialogue, meta-learning skills and

networking. Forming networks is a powerful tool for helping the leaders learn since they have the chance to access and explore the specialized role that contain responsibilities, challenges, and experiences only known and sharable at the higher level of management. Therefore, becoming a part of the networks help the members to engage in the process of renewing and strengthening the role and their own capabilities, to share concrete practical steps and knowledge to make informed decisions. Learning how to learn should be considered as a key contributor for leader development. The leaders can`t forego learning to mere chance, therefore if they develop the understanding about how they learn, they can set up favorable circumstances and productive learning plans where learning is likeliest to occur. They can optimize the chances of learning what they need to know when they need to know it.

Leadership is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by global trends including pace of change, increased technology, diversity, organizational environments, and culture shaped by internalization of goods, people, and processes. These are forming the common, and to some extent homogenous contextual factors for leader`s learning informally. In this research, the individual cases are different from each other and have great deal of heterogeneity while seeing the homogeneity among them difficult to some extent. The affective environment might be particular to that organization in which the participant worked or is working for. The experiences emphasized as informal learning might be specific to that participant, unique and single from his / her opportunities, choices, personality, ideas, feelings and so on. Despite these differentiations, it is still possible to see shared patterns and principal outcomes that cut across the great deal of participants` informal learning experiences. In the wider grasp, these homogenous central experiences are stemming from the common ground, the global capitalist restructuring

and the widespread developments in leadership and professional life. Thus, the essence of these experiences is relevant from one leader to another, or from one organization to another since they can be effectively passed on during processes of sense making and learning. Regarding these homogeneities, it can be said that these are narrowing the large and complex realities, experiences, and specialized problems in different organizations into a smaller and concrete universe of leadership. These similarities simplify and contribute to learning strategies of leaders in fundamental ways that they can prioritize and take part in valuable and high return processes in terms of money, time, and effort.

Earlier in the literature review chapter, some leadership models and styles are shared as essential to achieve goals and to leverage continuous change now more than ever. Northouse (2019) says that adaptation is the learning itself for the leader and all the stakeholders involved in the process. The role of the adaptive leader is assessing the current situation by viewing patterns from a distance, separating the adaptive challenges from the technical ones, and developing a vision, providing direction, protection, and development to the subordinates. When the leader becomes aware of the need for change, then primarily s/he works to change oneself, to learn and to mobilize people around to tackle and to make necessary adaptations in the direction of the new vision and goals. During the process, they help the subordinates to raise problems themselves, to question, to unlearn outmoded and habituated ways, and to find alternative solutions themselves. According to Barrett (2014), the new leadership context requires a shift from the 'I to We'. The root of this participative model is that the leader tries to create a sense of engagement and belonging so that all subordinates will be part of the effectiveness, solutions, decision making and operations. The role of the leader is

discussed as to coordinate all the relations and stakeholders, to identify the need for change, to gain the agreement and commitment of subordinates, to create a vision that guides transformation and to realize it. This leadership style is discussed as the transformational leadership. In both adaptive and transformational leadership styles that are highly discussed today, the necessity to change and learning of the leader are central. Considering the contextual factors of the global economic structuring, these leadership styles are discussed with their benefits today over other leadership styles.

Based on the findings of the research, it can be said that the transformational and adaptive leadership styles and, associated behaviors and mindsets are also featured by the participants. The leadership frameworks, ideals, commitments, approaches, and perspectives shared by the participants are matching with the highlights about these leadership styles. Skills and knowledge required in higher level management, ways of thinking and behaving such as asking efficient questions to others, challenging the status quo and going beyond one`s comfort zone, coaching, having the emotional stability and control, staying optimistic even in tough times, deliberately seeking to know one`s strengths and weaknesses to build self-knowledge and awareness, reflecting on past events to see the lessons they offer, analyzing to understand the whole picture, adapting oneself and the organization to act appropriately in different challenges and conditions, imagining about alternatives of selves and organizations, trying out different scenarios and planning to realize one of these scenarios are corresponding with these leadership styles. This is not to say that some leadership styles are better than others, since each leadership style has its place in a leader`s toolkit, but to highlight that some leadership styles are more relevant for the current contexts, expectations, and requirements. The leadership styles and how leaders make sense of these are important to understand how

learning is connected to today`s leadership. The insights shared by the participants shed light on how contextual and individual factors influence the adoption of certain leadership styles, and how knowledge, skills, mindsets, and behaviors framing the respective styles are developed. These experiences and shifts are essential to set an up-to-date direction for leader development, and to find the best way to organize informal learning in the workplace. Based on the findings, I think that leader development requires a tailored and individual-focused approach to meet needs of the individual leaders and the organizational context as opposed to a generic "one size fits all" process. Attention of the leader development should be on how to support individual leaders and to address the contextual and personal challenges surrounding them. Developing the ability to move between different leadership styles, knowing the expectations out of a leader in the current contexts and organizations, and understanding which one works best for oneself are significant learning outcomes to enhance leadership effectiveness. Understanding the individual learning needs and surrounding factors, analyzing the sources and processes required from the lens of leadership styles have practical and theoretical value for leader development and designing the adult workplace learning.

5.3 De-limitations of the study

There were some de-limitations of the study, which were identified to avoid complexity and confusion in definitions and, to conduct an effective field work in a reasonable time.

Primarily, it is important to note that this study focused only on informal workplace learning experiences of gold-collar workers who work at top management levels / at executive leadership positions in companies that fit with pre-defined criteria. It was not all the learning experiences, but the dissertation focused only on the informal

learning experiences of the target group. Additionally, it did not involve all the members of the gold-collar workers group that was defined by various scholars and at the same time excluding the leaders at mid or entry level management levels. To be clear, throughout the dissertation I used gold-collar worker, gold-collar leader, and executive leader wordings interchangeably to refer and to represent my research participants.

Second, the research focused on the informal learning experiences of leaders with at least 5 years of experience in executive, top management levels in the defined scope of companies. Since learning itself, reflection on the learning and transformation take time, this year of experience limit was put to ensure accessing the participants with rich information and experience on the topic of focus.

Third, since gold-collar workers group may be defined as a newly emerging class with various heterogenous characteristics, their experiences may be highly relevant for different disciplines in social sciences. This study did not focus on the refinement of class theory but took only the informal learning experiences of this class into the core.

5.4 Limitations of the study

There are some limitations associated with this study. First limitation is associated with the generalizability. For the study, qualitative research design is conducted with gold-collar workers who are working as executive leaders. The participants are selected based on purposeful sampling. The participants answered the questions in the semi-structured interview form and shared their individual experiences. Because this was a qualitative research study designed according to these decisions made by the researcher, any findings cannot be generalized for other people outside the target group, even to other

members of the gold-collar workers group. Findings apply only to senior-level, executive leaders working in the companies chosen according to pre-set criteria.

According to Patton (2015), using multiple methods or more data sources in qualitative research helps to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena and facilitate the validation of collected data. Triangulation refers to the application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon and it supports in evaluating the consistency of the findings and the possible causes that may impact the results (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). In this research, data is collected majorly through using a semi-structured interview form. If triangulation method was applied, or a different methodology such as narratives or case studies, or observation were utilized, then different or even more in-depth results from exploring the same questions might be obtained. Furthermore, asking similar questions regarding leader development to adult education practitioners working in leader development field, HR professionals and executive coaches will contribute to the findings of this research constructively. These may open new possibilities for a deeper understanding of how global economic structures are changing the workplace and workforce structure, and workplace learning.

Third, the purpose of the study was informal learning from the start. The questions in the interview form focused on understanding informal learning experiences, outcomes, strategies, and processes. The participants did not explain about their formal learning experiences, so the content of the formal learning or the individual factor related to formal learning, which may impact the informal learning experiences, are excluded. Moreover, informal learning is not a confined concept. Spotting and deriving data about it are hard. This means that the study relies on participants` level of self-awareness and ability to spot, describe and share perspectives on important informal

learning experiences and factors, forces, and dynamics impacting these, and how these are learned. The in-depth interview technique was meant to help recreating these experiences in the minds of participants but ultimately there is no way to verify whether the individuals recalled these experiences accurately, described events and learnings that are most important for them. Further research that would address informal learning as it is happening would address this limitation and may reveal different views of the relationship between informal learning and leadership.

Fourth, the participants reported on their own experiences, and shared the critical incidents based on their memory and recollection of past events, conversations, or practices. Based on the critical incidents remembered, the participants looked through events that might have occurred long ago, remembered those, and explained in detail in relation to informal learning outcomes and processes. Some participants even said that the interviews are like thinking about the lessons learned, and the ways these lessons are learned and reflecting on their own experiences from the lens of informal learning. Thus, the experiences and incidents shared are being reconstructed and reported by the participants, even at the moment of the interview. Therefore, the collected information might have problems related to memory, interpretation, reasoning, and/or manipulation by the participants. Overall, the study relied on willingness of the participants to share their stories, their good faith and openness in answering the questions, and not intentionally changing their responses. Since the answers for critical incident questions involve sensitive and reflective information, the participants might have given the answers which they thought the researcher wanted to hear and/or presented themselves in the best possible, acceptable way.

Last, demographics like gender, age, nationality, disability and so on are significant dimensions in the literature of adult learning in the workplace and in studies focusing on leadership. The content of the interviews conducted in the study was not about the informal workplace learning experiences of gold-collar leaders based on these dimensions and associated roles. Therefore, if not highlighted by the participants significantly, these dimensions are not covered in the findings of the study.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

Primarily, a quantitative research design would be complimentary to the findings of this study for increasing the generalizability. Same research conducted with a larger sample size may reveal further connections between informal learning and leader development.

Gold-collar workers are discussed as a significant worker type in the global economy. They are hard to determine and clearly identify. Since learning and development, and knowledge acquisition are discussed among the most differentiating features of this group of workers, further studies focusing on understanding this group would contribute to workplace learning. As a distinct class, they have their differentiating characteristics, cultural practices and norms, social and cultural capitals. and clarify more about who they are and what their characteristics are. Conducting research about these would be beneficial to investigate who they are and clarify what their characteristics are and understand the ways in which identities are constructed and shaped. Further studies to understand informal learning experiences of these employees including other members of gold-collar worker group can be valuable. The further studies in this field and related to this group would relate to the reliability of the findings of this study and provide greater levels of certainty. Moreover, any research considering

the potential differences among demographic dimensions such as age, gender, disability, racial and cultural diversity and so on and, how these create a difference for learning in the workplace, related to leadership, would also be valuable. Comparative studies with leaders located in other countries, particularly in different cultures, are also needed to grasp the global economic structuring and effects over workplace learning and leader development. These would contribute to the field of informal workplace learning.

Informal learning is not easy to recognize and to study. Generally, I think that more ethnographical and participatory studies are needed to further understand the dynamics of workplace, how these are impacting informal workplace learning and how informal learning occurs in the workplace, particularly in leader development area. In this context, self-directed learning, incidental learning, transformative learning, socialization, situated learning and so on are all extensive sub-fields of informal learning and may be focused distinctly and in depth through ethnographical and participatory studies at informal learning contexts, including the workplace.

There is very little research that focus on how to support informal learning in workplace. This is also relevant for transformative learning in the field of leader development. Further research which demonstrates the relationship between particular experiences and learning of leaders, such as how certain capabilities are developed through experiences, would contribute to an increased understanding of the role of experience in leader development. This has also practical implications for designing structured leader development programs that involve reflective practices, working on real simulations of business cases and challenges, bringing colleagues from different parts of the world into the same learning practice and supporting systems to build dialogue and networks. Additionally, the research on informal workplace learning is

focused on identifying certain experiences described as being the most developmental. The certain lessons learned, and how employees relate and transform these experiences into these lessons, capabilities, and knowledge need to be explored in further studies. Although informal learning has random nature, and is based on the experiences, there might be methods to design programs and facilitate these learnings to occur. Understanding the cognitive and transformative learning processes in this context would contribute practically to the field of leader development, in the design of programs and ensuring that potential leaders gain the lessons and capabilities they need to effectively execute and fulfill their roles. How transformative learning is related to leader development, and career advancement could also provide insights for informal workplace learning. These would be added value for executive coaches and adult learning practitioners, particularly who are working with leaders and in the workplace.

Leadership competencies and skills are continuously changing, just like the leadership styles are changing to respond emerging dynamics. For now, leader development literature identified various items that are considered as important competencies and skills (i.e., global leadership, diversity, change management, and so on) and featured as appropriate styles (i.e., transformational leadership, participatory leadership and so on) for the current conditions. There are some styles, competencies, and skills that are discussed to be already outdated (i.e., authoritarian leadership style, inflexibility, know it all approach and so on) or have been evolved into another, more fitting version to respond changing dynamics of global economy. Regarding this fluidity, studies that do not tend to list the competencies, skills, and styles as if they are at the same level of importance but that focus to place these in the context of leadership, considering together with the organizational and broader picture may be helpful.

APPENDIX A

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

HUMAN RESEARCH INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE APPROVAL

T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Alt Kurulu

Sayı: 2016/28

21 Kasım 2016

Oya Sarkan

Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü

Eğitim Fakültesi

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Altın-Yakalı İşçilerin İş Hayatı Boyunca Enformel Öğrenme Deneyimleri" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2016/33 sayılı başvuru İNAREK/SBB Etik Alt Kurulu tarafından 21 Kasım 2016 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Saygılarımızla,

İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Alt Kurulu

Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya

Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Gül Sosay

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Mehmet Nafi Artemel

Dr. Nur Yeniçeri

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM IN TURKISH

Araştırmayı destekleyen kurum: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi / Eğitim Bilimleri Doktora Programı
Araştırmanın adı: Altın-Yakalı İşçilerin Enformel İşyeri Öğrenme Deneyimleri

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Proje konusu: Küresel ekonomide meydana gelen dönüşümlere paralel olarak yeni organizasyon yapıları, şirket bağlantıları, iş alanları ve çalışma biçimleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu değişim; altın-yakalı işçiler olarak tanımlanan yeni bir grubun ortaya çıkmasına sebep olmuştur. Bu grubun özellikleri; uluslararası şirketlerin karar verici pozisyonlarında görev almak, bu şirketlerin stratejilerini belirlemek ve hayata geçirmek, proje bazlı çalışmak ve standart olmayan ürünler ortaya koymak, sürekli olarak yenilemek ve öğrenme üzerinden kendilerini tanımlamak, uluslararası bağlantılar ile ve bilgiye dayalı karar vermek, zaman ve mekân olarak esnek olmak ve adaptasyon, iletişim, yaratıcılık gibi beceriler ile ön plana çıkmak olarak özetlenebilir. Bu araştırma projesinin amacı, uluslararası şirketlerde ya da uluslararası bağlantısı olan yüksek karlı Türkiye şirketlerinde üst düzey yönetici olarak çalışan altın-yakalı işçilerin, iş hayatı boyunca enformel olarak (herhangi bir öğretim etkinliğine katılmadan, kendiliğinden) ne öğrendiklerini, nasıl öğrendiklerini, öğrenmek için hangi stratejileri ve kaynakları kullandıklarını, öğrenme motivasyonlarını ve öğrenme deneyimlerine neden olan unsurları belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Enformel Öğrenme: Enformel öğrenme; herhangi bir öğretim etkinliğine katılmadan, günlük yaşam aktiviteleri doğrultusunda ve kendiliğinden gerçekleşen öğrenmedir. Bireylerin amaçlı ya da amaçsız olarak, kendi başlarına ya da başka herhangi bir kaynaktan yararlanarak, herhangi bir aktivenin yan ürünü olarak ortaya çıkabilen ve her ortamda gerçekleşebilen öğrenme olarak tanımlanabilir. Enformel öğrenmede, öğrenmenin kontrolü öğrenenin elinde görülmektedir. Öğrenme süreci; amaçları, öğrenme zamanı ya da yöntemi açısından yapılandırılmamıştır. Enformel öğrenme; deneyimsel öğrenme, kasıtsız öğrenme, kendiliğinden öğrenme, algın öğrenme, gelişigüzel öğrenme gibi farklı adlar ile de kullanılmaktadır.

Onam: Sizi Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Doktora Programı öğrencisi Oya Sarkan tarafından yürütülen "Altın-Yakalı İşçilerin Enformel İşyeri Öğrenme Deneyimleri" başlıklı araştırmaya katılmaya davet ediyoruz. Araştırma; şirketlerde üst düzey yönetici olarak çalışan altın-yakalı işçilerin iş hayatları boyunca herhangi bir öğretim etkinliğine katılmadan / kendiliğinden, enformel olarak ne öğrendikleri, nasıl öğrendikleri, öğrenmek için hangi stratejileri ve kaynakları kullandıkları, öğrenme motivasyonları ve öğrenme deneyimlerine neden olan unsurları belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu bilgileri okuduktan sonra araştırmaya katılmak isterseniz lütfen bu formu imzalayıp kapalı bir zarf içinde araştırmacıya iletiniz. Araştırmaya katılmak tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Araştırmaya tahminen yirmi kişi

katılacaktır. Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde sizinle, yaklaşık 1,5 saat sürecek bir mülakat gerçekleştirilecektir. Çalışmanın amacına ulaşması için sizden beklenen bütün soruları; eksiksiz, içtenlikle ve açıklıkla cevaplamanızdır. Görüşmeler sırasında ses kaydı alınacaktır ve görüşme sonrasında bütün içerikler transkriptler olarak hazırlanıp sizinle değerlendirmeniz için paylaşılacaktır. Katıldığınız takdirde çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında herhangi bir sebep göstermeden onayınızı çekmek hakkına sahipsiniz. Bu durumda sizden alınan bilgiler (ses kaydı ve transkript) silinecektir.

Bu araştırma tamamen bilimsel bir amaçla yapılmaktadır ve katılımcı bilgilerinin gizliliği esas tutulacaktır. Şirketinizin ve sizin isminiz yerine anonim bir harf ya da numara kullanılacaktır. Ses kayıtları ve mülakat sonrası transkriptler, araştırma projesi süresince araştırmacının bilgisayarında şifreli bir şekilde tutulacaktır. Araştırma sona erdiğinde silinecektir.

Bu formu imzalamadan önce, çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız varsa lütfen araştırmacıya sorun. Daha sonra sorunuz olursa, proje yürütücüsüne ve araştırmacıya yukarıda yer alan iletişim bilgileri üzerinden sorabilirsiniz. Araştırmayla ilgili haklarınız konusunda Boğaziçi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Kurulu'na (İNAREK) danışabilirsiniz. Araştırma tamamlandığında sonuçların sizinle paylaşılmasını istiyorsanız lütfen talebinizi araştırmacıya iletiniz.

Ben, (katılımcının adı) ....., yukarıdaki metni okudum ve katılmam istenen çalışmanın kapsamını ve amacını, gönüllü olarak üzerime düşen sorumlulukları tamamen anladım.

Çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Formun bir örneğini aldım / almak istemiyorum (bu durumda araştırmacı bu kopyayı saklar).

Katılımcının Adı-Soyadı:.....
İmzası:.....
Adresi (varsa Telefon No, Faks No):.....
.....
Tarih (gün/ay/yıl):...../...../.....

Araştırmacının Adı-Soyadı: Oya SARKAN
İmzası:.....
Tarih (gün/ay/yıl):...../...../.....

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM IN ENGLISH

Institution Supporting the Research: Boğaziçi University / Educational Sciences Department
Name of the Research: Informal Workplace Learning Experiences of Gold-Collar Workers

Thesis Advisor: Associate Prof. Özlem Ünlühisarcıklı
E-mail: unluhisa@boun.edu.tr
Phone: 0 212 359 45 58

Name of the Researcher: Oya Sarkan
E-mail: oyakarasalihoglu@gmail.com
Phone: 0 530 232 56 91 / 0 533 210 30 47

Project: Parallel to the transformations occurring in the global economy; new organizational structures, company connections, business areas and working styles have emerged. This change led to the emergence of a new group defined as gold-collar workers. The features of this group can be summarized as taking roles related to the decision-making positions of multinational companies, determining and realizing the strategies of these companies, working on project basis and producing non-standard products, constantly renewing and defining themselves through learning, making decisions based on international connections and knowledge, being flexible in time and place and coming to the fore with skills such as adaptation, communication and creativity. The aim of this research project is international companies or international connections with highly profitable Turkey company's top executives running gold-collar workers, job throughout his life as informal (without joining any teaching activity, spontaneously) What they learn, how they learn, what strategies to learn and they use resources, their motivation to learn, and the factors that lead to learning experiences. The aim of this research project is to understand what the informal learnings (spontaneously, without participating any kind of teaching activity) of gold-collar workers, who are working as executive level leaders in multinational or highly profitable Turkish companies, are, how they learn these through work life, what kind of strategies and resources they use, their learning motivations and factors leading to learning experiences.

Informal Learning: Informal learning is the learning that takes place spontaneously and in line with daily life activities without participating in any teaching activity. It can be defined as learning that can occur as a by-product of any activity and can take place in any environment, by individuals with or without purpose, on their own or by using any other sources. In informal learning, the control of learning is seen in the hands of the learner. Learning process is not structured in terms of goals, learning time or method. Informal learning is referred under different names such as experiential learning, unintentional learning, spontaneous learning, perceptual learning, and random learning.

Consent: We invite you to participate in the research titled “Informal Workplace Learning Experiences of Gold-Collar Workers” conducted by Oya Sarkan, a student of Boğaziçi University Educational Sciences Doctorate Program. The research aims to determine what gold-collar workers, who are working as executive leaders in companies, learn informally, without participating to any kind of teaching activity, and spontaneously throughout work life, how they learn these, what the strategies and resources used for learning are, the motivations for learning and the factors that cause learning experiences.

After reading this information, if you want to participate in the research, please sign this form and send it to the researcher in a sealed envelope. Participation in the research is completely voluntary. Around twenty participants are estimated to be a part of this research. If you agree to participate in the research, an interview will be conducted that will take approximately 1.5 hours. In order to achieve the aim of this study, the expectation from you is to answer the questions fully and with sincerity and openness. During the interviews, audio recording will be taken, and all content will be prepared as a transcript after the interview and shared with you for evaluation. Even if you decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any stage of the study without giving any reason. In this case, the information (audio recording and transcript) received from you will be deleted.

This research is carried out for purely scientific reasons and confidentiality of the participant information is essential. An anonymous letter or number will be used instead of your company and your name. Audio recordings and transcripts will be kept encrypted on the researcher's computer during the research project. These will be deleted when the research is completed.

Please ask the researcher if you have any questions about the study before signing this form. If you have any questions later, you may ask the research advisor and the researcher via the contact information above. You may consult Boğaziçi University Human Research Institutional Evaluation Board (İNAREK) about your rights related to the research. When the research is completed, if you want the results to be shared with you, please inform the researcher about your request.

I, (name of participant) ..... , I read the text above and fully understood the scope and purpose of the study I am asked to participate in, and my voluntary responsibilities.

I agree to participate in the study.

I have / do not want to take a copy of the form (in this case, the researcher stores this copy).

Name of the Participant:.....
Signature:.....
Address (if possible, Phone No, Fax No):.....
.....
Date (day/month/year):/...../.....
Name of the Researcher: Oya SARKAN
Signature:.....
Date (day/month/year):/...../.....

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW FORM IN TURKISH

Kişisel Bilgiler

1. Yaşınız:
2. Eğitim Durumuz, Mezun Olduğunuz Okul ve Bölümler:
3. Toplam kaç yıldır çalışıyorsunuz? Kaç yıldır yönetici olarak çalışıyorsunuz? Kaç yıldır üst düzey yönetici olarak çalışıyorsunuz?
4. Su anda kime raporluyorsunuz / yöneticinizin pozisyonu ne?
5. Bugüne Kadar Çalıştığınız Şirket, Bölüm, Pozisyon ve Süreleri:

Şirket ve Pozisyon ile İlgili Sorular

6. Sorumluluklarınızı, ekibinizi, projelerinizi biraz anlatır mısınız?
7. Şirketinizin yönetim yapısı ve karar alma mekanizmaları ile ilgili bilgi verebilir misiniz?
8. Yurtdışı ofisleri ve o ofislerde benzer işi yapanlar ile bağlantılarınızdan bahseder misiniz?
9. Şirketinizin çalışma rutinleri nasıl? Mevcut ilişkiler ağı (yönetim-çalışan, diğer ekipler, üst ve alt, vb.) nasıl? Sizin için önemli olanlar önemli olanlar hangileri, biraz bahsedebilir misiniz?
10. Rolünüz ile ilgili rutinleriniz nasıl? Günlük, aylık, yıllık rutinlerinizden biraz bahsedebilir misiniz?

Öğrenme ile İlgili Sorular

11. Sizce öğrenme nedir? Bir şeyi öğrendiğinizi nasıl anlarsınız?
12. Bu pozisyona nasıl geldiniz? Kısaca sürecinizi anlatır mısınız?
13. Hangi özelliklerinizin sizi bu konuma getirdiğini düşünüyorsunuz? Bu pozisyona gelme sürecinizde bilgi, beceri, yaklaşım ve davranışlarınız nasıl gelişti? (Sizi şirketiniz için değerli kılan bilgi, beceri ve yaklaşımlarınız ne? Bunları nasıl edindiniz?)
14. İş hayatınızda öğrenmek için sizi en çok tetikleyen neydi? Neden öğrendiniz? (Sizi öğrenmeye iten faktörler neydi?)
15. Çalıştığınız yerlerde olan hangi uygulama, platform veya aracın öğrenmenize en çok katkı sağladığını düşünüyorsunuz? (Yapılandırılmış eğitim programları dışında başka ne gibi hizmetler, destekler sunuyor?)
16. Pozisyonunuz ve işinizde güncel kalmak için neler yapıyorsunuz? Kendinizi nasıl geliştiriyorsunuz?
17. Çalışanların öğrenmelerini destekleyici neler yapılmalı, hangi uygulamalar, platformlar, araçlar faydalı olur?

18. Bilgi ve becerilerinizin yetersiz kaldığını düşündüğünüz bir durumu hatırlamaya çalışın.

- Bu durumu anlatır mısınız?
- Bu durum ile nasıl başa çıktınız? Nasıl bir strateji izlediniz?
- Kimlerden, hangi kaynaklardan yararlandınız?
- Bu durum sizde ne gibi değişikliklere yol açtı? Neler öğrendiniz?

19. Değerlerinize ters gelen, istediğinizden ya da hissettiğinizden daha farklı davranmak zorunda kaldığınız bir durumu hatırlamaya çalışın.

- Bu durumu detaylı bir şekilde anlatır mısınız?
- Bu durum ile nasıl başa çıktınız? Nasıl bir strateji izlediniz?
- Kimlerden, hangi kaynaklardan yararlandınız?
- Bu durum sizde ne gibi değişikliklere yol açtı? Neler öğrendiniz?

20. Farkına vardım, değiştim, keşfettim, şimdi olsa yapmazdım gibi ifadeler ile tanımladığınız bir durumu hatırlamaya çalışın

- Bu durumu detaylı bir şekilde anlatır mısınız?
- Bu durum ile nasıl başa çıktınız? Nasıl bir strateji izlediniz?
- Kimlerden, hangi kaynaklardan yararlandınız?
- Bu durum sizde ne gibi değişikliklere yol açtı? Neler öğrendiniz?

<u>Açıcı Sorular</u>

- Biraz daha detay verir misiniz?
- Bu konuda başka deneyimleriniz / örnekleriniz var mı?
- Daha sonra ne oldu?
- Nasıl hissettiniz?
- Size bunu söyleten tam olarak nedir?
- Nasıl tepki verdiniz?
- Şimdi olsa ne yapardınız?
- Farklı şekilde ifade etmek istediğiniz bir nokta var mı?
- Bununla ilgili paylaşabileceğiniz destekleyici materyal ya da doküman var mı?

Görüşme Notları:

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW FORM IN ENGLISH

Personal Information

1. Age:
2. Educational Status, University and Departments Graduated from:
3. How many years have you been working in total? How many years have you been working in managerial roles? How many years have you been working in executive leadership levels?
4. Who are you reporting to / what is the title of your manager now?
5. Company, Department, Positions, Working Periods you have worked in until this date:

Questions about Company and Position

6. Can you tell me a little bit about your responsibilities, your team, and your projects?
7. Can you tell me about your company`s governance / management structure and decision-making mechanisms?
8. Can you tell me about your connections with offices abroad and those who do similar work with you in those offices?
9. How are your company`s working routines? How are your routines? How are the existing networks of relations (management-employee, with other teams, top and bottom, etc.)? What are the significant ones for you among these?
10. How are your routines related to your role? Can you tell me about your daily, monthly, yearly routines?

Questions related to Learning

11. What is learning in your opinion? How do you know you have learned something?
12. How did you get to this position? Can you please explain about your process?
13. Which of your features do you think has an impact over your promotion to this level? How do your knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors impact improve in getting to this position? (What are your knowledge, skills and approaches that make you valuable to your company? How did you gain these?)
14. What triggered you to learn in your business life the most? Why did you learn? (What were the factors that made drove you to learn?)
15. Which applications, platforms or tools do you think contributed most to your learning? (What other services does your company offer other than structured training programs?)

16. What do you do to stay up to date in your position and job? How do you improve yourself?

17. What should be done to support employees' learning, which applications, platforms, and tools would be useful?

18. Try to remember a situation where you think your knowledge and skills are inadequate, not sufficient.

- Can you explain this situation?
- How did you deal with this situation? What kind of strategy did you follow?
- Who did you get support from? What resources did you use?
- What changes has this situation made for you? What did you learn?

19. Try to remember a situation that contradicts your values, in which you had to behave differently than you wanted or felt.

- Can you explain this situation in detail?
- How did you deal with this situation? What strategy did you follow?
- Who did you get support from? What resources did you use?
- What changes has this situation made for you? What did you learn?

20. Try to remember a situation that you describe with expressions such as I realized, changed, discovered, now I wouldn't have done it.

- Can you explain this situation in detail?
- How did you deal with this situation? What strategy did you follow?
- Who did you get support from? What resources did you use?
- What changes has this situation made for you? What did you learn?

<u>Opening Questions</u>

- Can you give me some more details?
- Do you have any other experiences / examples of this?
- What happened next?
- How did you feel?
- What exactly is it that made you say that?
- How did you react?
- What would you if it was now?
- Is there anything you`d like to express differently?
- Are there any documents, materials, tools you can share about this?

<u>Interview Notes:</u>

APPENDIX F

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Name	Origin of the Company	Function	Responsibilities	Scope of Role	Level	Gender	Age	Total Years of Experience	Years of Experience in Leadership	Education Level
Adil	Local	Management	* Strategy Development * Restructuring * Operational Excellence * Change Management	Turkey	N	Male	64	40 years	20 years	Graduate
Ahmet	Multinational	Management	All	International	N	Male	47	26 years	10 years	Undergraduate
Ayfer	Multinational	Management	* Project Management * Operational Excellence * Audit, Insurance & Risk Management	Turkey	N	Female	54	33 years	15 years	Undergraduate
Bahar	Local	Marketing and Communication	* Brand Management * Advertising	International	N - 1	Female	38	15 years	5 years	Undergraduate
Banu	Multinational	Human Resources and Internal Communication	* Center of Excellence * Strategy Development * Change Management	International	N - 1	Female	39	18 years	5 years	Graduate
Berrak	Multinational	Communication	* Strategic Communication * Internal Communication * Marketing * Advertising * Public Relations	International	N - 1	Female	49	26 years	12 years	Undergraduate
Burak	Multinational	Sales	* Store Sales * Stakeholder Management	Turkey	N - 2	Male	35	16 years	5 years	Undergraduate
Cansu	Multinational	Human Resources Strategic Planning	* Center of Excellence * Strategy Development * Change Management * M&A Project Management	International	N - 2	Female	35	15 years	5 years	Graduate

Name	Origin of the Company	Function	Responsibilities	Scope of Role	Level	Gender	Age	Total Years of Experience	Years of Experience in Leadership	Education Level
Ebru	Consulting	Project Management, Organizational Restructuring, Operational Excellence	* Project Management * Organizational Restructuring * Operational Excellence in Human Resources	Turkey	N - 1	Female	44	23 years	5 years	Undergraduate
Ercan	Multinational	Management + Sales & Business Development	* Sales * Business Development * Partner Management	International	N - 1	Male	38	17 years	5 years	Graduate
Feriha	Multinational	Supply Chain & Logistics + Purchasing + Operational Excellence & Quality	* Supply Chain & Logistics * Purchasing * Operational Excellence * Quality * Change Management	International	N - 1	Female	45	25 years	10 years	Graduate
Kerem	Multinational	Marketing	* Business Marketing * Client Management	International	N - 2	Male	38	15 years	5 years	Graduate
Meltem	Consulting	Management	* Tax Consultancy * Outsourcing * Partnership Management * Change Management	Turkey	N	Female	40	23 years	7 years	Undergraduate
Mete	Multinational	Management	All	International	N	Male	39	17 years	7 years	Graduate
Necdet	Multinational	Sales	* Sales * Business Development * Partner Management	International	N - 1	Male	44	24 years	10 years	Undergraduate
Nur	Consulting	Management	* Strategy Development * PR & Advertising * Marketing Communication * All Operations and Project Management	International	N	Female	36	16 years	7 years	Undergraduate
Oktay	Multinational	Financial Analysis & Planning + Strategy & Corporate Development	* Finance * Financial Analysis & Planning * Corporate Strategy Development	Turkey	N - 1	Male	36	13 years	5 years	Graduate X 2

Name	Origin of the Company	Function	Responsibilities	Scope of Role	Level	Gender	Age	Total Years of Experience	Years of Experience in Leadership	Education Level
Onur	Multinational	Project Management	* Services Delivery * Operations Management * Project Management * Operational Excellence & Quality	International	N - 1	Male	39	19 years	5 years	Graduate
Sevim	Local	Management	* All in Conglomerate`s Member Company * Corporate Strategy Development and Change Management in Executive Committee of Conglomerate	International	N	Female	49	29 years	20 years	Undergraduate
Suna	Local	Human Resources Internal Communication Corporate Academy	* Center of Excellence * Strategy Development * Change Management	International	N - 1	Female	41	21 years	6 years	Graduate
Tolga	Multinational	Digital Marketing, CRM, and Media Programs	* Digital Marketing * Customer Relations Management – Technology	International	N - 2	Male	37	15 years	6 years	Undergraduate
Yavuz	Local	Management	* Operational Management * Human Resources * Corporate Communication * Operational Excellence & Quality * Contracts & Technical Purchasing * Change Management	Turkey	N - 1	Male	63	38 years	19 years	Graduate
Zafer	Multinational	Finance + Operations (IT-Adm-Purchase-Internal Audit-Reporting) + Strategic Project Mgmt.	* Finance & Reporting * Information Technology * Purchasing * Internal Audit * Technology Restructuring * Operational Excellence * Change Management * Strategy	Turkey	N - 1	Male	53	35 years	24 years	Graduate

APPENDIX G

EMERGING THEMES, DIMENSIONS AND CODES

Themes	Dimensions	Codes
Acting and Performing as a Leader	Learning outcomes – Tasks and Responsibilities	12. Making decisions / providing directions 13. Solving problems 14. Communicating to get results (internal/external) 15. Building teams 16. Planning and coordinating 17. Delegating tasks 18. Evaluating the performance and outputs 19. Monitoring 20. Managing risks 21. Managing crisis 22. Analyzing needs
	Skills required	12. Communication and interpersonal skills 13. Emotional management 14. Analytical thinking 15. Dealing with ambiguity / unfamiliarity
	Knowledge acquired	16. Contextual knowledge 17. Management tasks 18. Organizational knowledge 19. Reservoir of knowledge for problems / solutions 20. Reservoir of knowledge for risks / preventions 21. Knowledge about teams / subordinates 22. Knowledge about how to access information
Thinking and Behaving as a Leader	Learning outcomes - Mindsets, understandings and capacities required to fulfill the leader role better (reflexivity)	23. Strategizing 24. Prioritizing and setting the direction 25. Executing judgement 26. Leading transformation and change 27. Adapting organization / self to stay up to date 28. Fostering the organizational culture 29. Managing diversity and differences 30. Engaging people 31. Empowering and developing people 32. Representing the organization
	Worldviews and perspectives about leadership	33. Reflecting about how to be a good leader 34. Reflecting about how to conceptualize leadership 35. Changing views on expectations out of leaders 36. Problematizing and revising leadership styles, behaviors, and attitudes 37. Understanding the significance of leadership values and principles 38. Revising leadership knowledge and skills

	Awareness and understanding about self as a leader, and relations with others	39. Defining the purpose and commitments as a leader 40. Discovering own values and principles 41. Practicing new ways/strategies of being a leader 42. Modifying styles, behaviors, and attitudes 43. Developing new knowledge, cognitive capacities, and skills for increasing role scope and complexity 44. Shifting perspectives and worldviews 45. Building self-knowledge/ self-awareness 46. Getting more confident by observing the impacts created / results taken
Factors and forces influencing learning	Individual Factors	47. Learning agility / growth mindset 48. Curiosity 49. Passion 50. Flexibility 51. Adaptability 52. Optimism 53. Success / result orientation 54. Meta-cognitive learning skills 55. History of learning 56. Self-evaluation 57. Self-management
	Contextual Factors	58. Matrix organizational structure 59. Availability of learning resources / opportunities 60. Sharing knowledge and expertise, collaborating 61. Cooperating with others 62. Attitudes of managers for learning 63. Support and tolerance for trials and mistakes

Ways of learning in leadership	Sources	64. Early work experiences 65. First managerial role 66. Challenging assignments 67. International experiences 68. Project groups / assignments with limited time 69. Bosses 70. Clients 71. Consultants / experts 72. Peers / colleagues 73. Other leaders 74. Direct reports / subordinates 75. Sources to read (Books, journals, blogs, articles) 76. Sources to watch (serials, videos) 77. Social Media 78. Company digital platforms / tools 79. Company processes 80. Conferences 81. Virtual learning platforms 82. Networks 83. Stories 84. Executive Coaching 85. Failures, Mistakes, Errors 86. Trials, Practices
	Strategies and Processes	87. Using company digital platforms / tools 88. Allocating time to social media 89. Asking questions 90. Assessing and evaluating self 91. Being coached / mentored 92. Designing and using company processes 93. Experiencing, trying things out, practicing 94. Fostering conversation / dialogue 95. Generating and examining alternatives / scenarios 96. Getting expert help / consultancy 97. Getting information / monitoring 98. Listening 99. Networking / being a member of the network 100. Observing 101. Participating in programs, conferences 102. Presenting 103. Reading 104. Reflecting 105. Reviewing data and experiences in other cases 106. Searching the internet 107. Self-directed learning 108. Listening to stories 109. Surviving the crisis and tough responsibilities 110. Watching 111. Working with other people, other leaders 112. Mind mapping

APPENDIX H

NARRATIVES IN TURKISH

1. İlk işim bütün süreçleri elden geçirmekti. Buradan başladım çünkü bu aksaklıklar verimliliği ve mutluluğu etkiliyor. Is akis adımlarımız doğru mu sorusu ile başladık. Kullandığımız teknoloji güncel mi, çalışanlar neyi neden yaptıkları ile ilgili eğitim almışlar mi, KPIlar doğru mu, etkili raporlanıyor mu hepsine baktık. Bir yandan is devam ediyor tabi. Devam ederken iyileştirmeleri nasıl yapacağız? Bunlar çok basit sorularmış gibi gözüküyor ama tam 6 ayımızı aldı. Beklediğimden uzun sürdü çünkü her bir süreç için orada bizzat aktif çalışan insanlarla birlikte hareket ettik, sorduk, bilgi aldık. Çözümler, isin içinde olanlardan gelmeli. En son da gelen önerileri bir süzgeçten geçirdik, nasıl hayata geçiririz baktık. Burada iki ilginç tespitimiz oldu. İlki kurumsal satış ve kurumsal pazarlama, tek şirket gibi değil de birbirine rakip gibi davranıyor, iş birliği yok. Süreçler de bu davranışları farkına varmadan desteklemiş. İkincisi, kullanılsın diye önerilen teknolojilerin bazılarını biz bile kullanmıyoruz. Çünkü user friendly değiller. (Kerem, Multinational, N-2)

2. Verdiğimiz hizmet kesin kuralları olan bir hizmet. Hatalar için yasal yaptırımlar var, bundan dolayı riskli bir is. Rekabetçi bir ortamda ve genç insanlar ile çalışıyoruz, isi burada öğreniyorlar dolayısıyla hata yapabilirler. Bunu nereden biliyorum çünkü ilk başladığım zaman çok ciddi hatalar yaptım. Stok ile veriyi karşılaştırıp rapor hazırlıyorsunuz müşteriye, o da sizin raporunuzu imzalıyor. Daha 25 yaşındayım, kıdemli uzman olarak çalışıyorum. O zaman ki mudur yardımcısı raporu kontrol ederken hatayı fark ediyor, 1 milyon fark çıkmış ama müşteri de raporu imzalamış. Müşteri ile ilişki güven üzerinden gider, bunu açıkça söyleseler sarsılacak ve bir suru zincir sorgulama gelecek. Ama söylemek de zorundalar. Çok ağladım, önce müdüre gittim, düzeltmek için her şeyi yapacağımı söyledim. Sonra müşteriye gittim anlattım bunun bir hata olduğunu. Müşteri samimiyetimize ikna oldu en sonunda. Bu bölümde ilk kıdemli mudur olduğumda ilk süreçlere bakma isine talip oldum. Nerelerde hata oluyor, olabilir, sureci değiştirmeli miyiz, nasıl değiştirmeliyiz diye baktım. Kontrol noktaları ekledim. Mesela raporları kıdemli uzman, mudur yardımcısı, mudur inceleyecek ve raporu müşteriye mudur sunacak. Scope olarak çok büyük olan projelerde direktör, partner onayı ekledik. Dokuman yönetimi yapabileceğimiz, is akışı tasarlayabileceğimiz bir teknolojik alt yapı satın aldık. Kısaca öngörü ile çıkabilecek sorunları önledik, riskler için önlemler aldık. O hatada hissettiğim duygu, düzeltmek için ortaya koyduğum emek ile bakış açım değişti. İnsan bu, hata yapabilir ama bir daha öyle hissetmemek için kontrol sistemleri olmalı. Bu bakış açısı temel, liderliğin ayrılmaz parçası ve beni bugüne, bu seviyeye getiren özelliklerden (Meltem, Consulting, N)

3. Problemlere karşı tepkisel olmaktan önleyici ve proaktif olmaya (Yavuz, Local, N-1)

4. Problemler! En çok zaman harcadığım müşteri ve çalışan problemleriydi. Bu problemleri görmezden gelmediğim, kafaya taktiğim ve çözmeye çalıştığım için bence su anda insan yönetiminde daha iyiyim. (Ercan, Multinational, N-1)

5. Bir problemle ‘başa çıkmak’ ile o problemi ‘çözmek’ farklı şeyler. Basa çıkmak, bir şekilde geride bırakmak ya da onunla yaşamayı kabul etmek. Çözmek ise ortadan kaldırmak. Bunun için zaman, emek harcıyorsun. Buna değer mi? Bunları başka yere de odaklayabilirim. Buradan olasılıklar çıkıyor. Bazıları değerlerinize dokunuyor, bazısına enerjiniz yok, bazısı kronikleşecek... Bu olasılıklara göre basa çıkmaya ya da çözmeye karar veriyorum. Örneğin çözüm, zaman zaman şirket içerisinde sevimsiz güç mücadeleleri gerektirebiliyor. Bu

mücadeleye girip girmeyeceğime olasılıklara ve kazanımlarına göre karar veriyorum. Problemlere bu şekilde yaklaşmak bence dengeli liderlik ve kazan-kazan durumu. Verimlilik ve mutluluk getiriyor. (Ahmet, Multinational, N)

6. Daha önceki işimde iki kriz atlattık. İlkinde, Türkiye'de yaşanan ekonomik kriz, satışları beklediğimizin çok üzerinde etkiledi. İkinci krizde ise markanın Fransız markası olması, o dönem Fransa ile yaşanan politik gerginlik satışlarda dibe çakılmamıza sebep oldu. Kriz yönetmeyi iyi biliyorum bu yüzden. Ekonomik krizlerde mindsetinizi değiştirmeniz, adapte etmeniz lazım. Growth değil saving odaklı düşünmeniz lazım. Aldığınız kararlarda vs. bu mindset etkili olmalı. Bir de sakin kalmalısınız. Stres ile hızlı kararlar almamanız lazım. Bunu bir kere yapınca daha iyi yapmaya başlıyorsunuz. Yani lider olarak, krizleri öğrenme fırsatları olarak ıskalamamak lazım. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

7. Sadece tam da kriz anında öğrenebileceğiniz var. Conflict management mesela, empati mesela. Teoride bilmek hiçbir isinize yaramaz, kriz anında yapabilirseniz öğrendiniz demektir. Pozitif yaklaşabiliyor, günah keçisi aramıyorsanız o anda öğreniyorsunuz. Aksi durumda insanlar ortadan kaybolup, sizden uzaklaşıyor. Kaos anında bile enerjik, güler yüzlü devam edip anlamaya çalışıyorum. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

8. Güvensizlik, korku, güçlü stres, kramplar, çaresizlik, özgüven kaybı… Bir süre kıvranıyorum... Hala... Ruh durumundan kaynaklı, normal bir durum bu. Orada bir kriz var, yaşıyorsunuz, örtük bir an gibi ama. Birleştirici unsurları yakalayamıyorsunuz. Sis bulutu geliyor ve her şey flulaşıyor. Hızlanamıyorsunuz. Aklınıza gelecek ile ilgili endişeler, şeytanca görüntüler üşüşüyor. Ben böyle anlarda bir dur diyorum artık kendime. Bir bak kardeşim, şu örtüyü kaldır da bir bak ama. Daha önce de kaç kere oldu, tamamen gerektiği gibi çözdük. Korkacak bir şey yok. Gerekirse zarar edeceğiz, para kaybedeceğiz, ama yeniden öğreneceğiz, ekibi tazeleyeceğiz, daha keskin sonuç odaklı olacağız ama çözülecek. Daha önce de yaptım bunları. Kendimi adapte etmeyi, bu durumla nasıl basa çıkacağımı öğrendim.

9. Etkili risk yönetimi, yapan ekibin iyi örgütlenmesi ve çıktıların üst yönetim tarafından sahiplenilmesi önemli. Birçok skandala, başarısızlığa bakıyorsun; altından mutlaka risk yönetimi ile ilgili bir eksiklik çıkıyor. Bu is şirket kültürünün bir parçası ama bağımsız bir birim tarafından yönetilmek zorunda. Ama bir yandan da o birim kontrol edilmeli, hesap vermeli. Dijitalizasyon, riski ölçme ve raporlamayı hızlı yapabilmek açısından önemli. Yapay zekâ falan tartışıyoruz yani geldiğimiz noktada. Bu metodolojiler üst yönetimin akıl hocası, yön vericisi gibi olmalı. Hata payı olmamalı ve tavizsiz uygulanmalı. Hangi riski alıp, hangisini almayacaksınız? Riskleri algılamakta da yönetmekte de iyi olursan, iyi hesaplanmış riskleri alırsan, lider olarak başarılı olursun. (Ayfer, Multinational, N)

10. Burada yeniden yapılanma projesi için bulunuyorum. Hedefimiz operational excellence ve digitalization. Şirketin alışkanlıklarını değiştirmeye çalışıyoruz ama ilerlemezsek değişemeyiz. Diğer taraftan da rekabet ve pazarda tutunmaya devam etmemiz lazım, ekonomik koşullar iyi değil ve sürekli ekonomik kriz senaryoları konuşuyoruz. Bu ortamda; benim risk olarak gördüğüm 3 nokta var: proje surecinin ilerlemesi, teknoloji ve insanların eğitimi. İnsanların eğitimi bence en problemlisi, bunu nasıl bir alışkanlığa çevireceğimi ve kalıcı olarak nasıl çözeceğimi şimdilik bilmiyorum. Ama bu alanda sorunlar çıkabileceğini, bu alandaki sorunların da projenin sustainable olmasını etkileyeceğini biliyorum. Şirkette bu restructuring işlerini herkes yeni öğreniyor. Benim bu konuda daha önce danışmanlık şirketim vardı, oldukça fazla sorun gördüm, riski engelledim, bu bana ne yapıyorsan öyle olacak gibi bir özgürlük alanı, bir güven getiriyor. Riskin ne olabileceğini biliyorum, nasıl önleyebileceğim konusunda da fikrim var. Bunlar beni değerli kılıyor. (Zafer, Multinational, N-1)

11. Çin'de bir pozisyon olduğunu gördüm. Yöneticime farklı bir ülkede çalışmak istediğimi söylemiştim ama Çin ani oldu. Uzak, ailemle gideceğim, ikizler 2 yaşında henüz. Eşime nasıl söyleyeceğimi bile bilemedim. Birkaç gün, bir şey demeden gittim geldim eve. Gidip başarısız olursam şirkette bir geleceğim yok. Başarılı olursam ise yeni iş modellerini ve teknolojiler öğrenirim. Başka bir coğrafyada yaşama ve çalışma tecrübem olur. Bu bizim şirket için değerli. Çin'e gitmek riskti. Hem benim hem ailem için. Kazançlar çok büyük, kayıplar da büyük ama yerine koyabileceğim şeyler yine de. Güzel önemli bir deneyim olacak hem dedim. Aileme de güvendim tabi, çok desteklediler. Hepimiz için iyi oldu… Bizi değiştiren bir deneyim oldu Cin. (Tolga, Multinational, N-2)

12. Asıl işimiz iletişim bizim. Kime, neyi, nasıl, ne zaman söyleyeceksin meselesi. Her ilişki bir müzakere, bir pazarlık. Müşteri ilişkisi öyle, ekip ilişkisi, baba – oğul ilişkisi bile öyle. Bunu iyi yapabiliyorsan, başarılısın. Sonuçların oluyor. Yok olmuyorsa, iletişim hatası diyorsun, başka şekilde, farklı stratejilerle yapmayı deniyorsun. Sonuçta istenen işleri birilerine yaptırıyorsun, hepsini kendin yapmıyorsun. (Kerem, Multinational, N-2)

13. 30 yıl öncesinin CEO'larını zaman makinesi ile bugüne getirsek, gerekli becerilerin değiştiğini net görürdük. İlk yönetici olduğumda güçlü olmaya, sert olmaya çalışıyordum. Dediğim dedik olmak doğru gözüküyordu. Zamanla bu değişiyor. Çalışanların beklentisi, şirket yapıları, hız, her şey değişiyor. Bu değişimde liderin, liderlik enerjisinin aynı kalması abes olur. İletişimin mucizesini anladım. Diplomatik olmayı, müzakere etmeyi, ikna etmeyi tercih eder oldum. Bunları neden bu kadar geç öğrendim, daha önce yapabilsem daha acısız olurdu diye hayıflanıyorum. Çalışanlar sizi izliyor. Neyi neden yaptığını anlatmanı bekliyor. Israr etmek, güç ve otorite ile bir şeyleri yaptırmaya çalışmak; etkili iletişim kurmaktan daha çok efor gerektiriyor artık. Daha yıpratıcı bir şey de ısrar etmezsin. Örneğin şirketin dili ile paralel giden, iç iletişim uzmanlığı ile oluşturulmuş bir lider iletişim planı artık çoğu şirkette var. Sert ve otoriter olmak ya da etkileyici olmak, insanları ikna etmek ya da bu ikisini birleştirmek, ortada bir yerde durmak. Tabi bunun bir dengesi var. Aslında önce ikisini de yapmayı sonra da denge kurmayı öğreniyorsun, kendi yolunu buluyorsun. (Ahmet, Multinational, N)

14. İletişimi yapa yapa, deneye deneye öğrenirsiniz. Bu konuda açıp okuyabileceğin bir kaynak yok. Yaparken değişirsin. İnsan etkileşimlerini dizayn etmeyi öğrenirsin ve daha iyi yapmanın tek yolu da bu. Bir süre sonra (deneyim kazandıkça) ilk tanışmada bile müşteriyi bir yere oturtabiliyorsun. O yere oturan müşteriye nasıl davranılacak kalıpların oluyor. Matematiksel. Aynı şey müşterilere verilen danışmanlıkta da geçerli aslında. Şirket yöneticilerine iletişimin nasıl stratejik bir iş olduğunu, planlanması gerektiğini, pratik edilmesi gerektiğini anlatıyoruz ki bir noktada hatasız, herhangi bir kayıp olmadan kendileri yapabilsin. Öncelik ne, mesajları ne olmalı, kritik audience kim, audiencelara göre neleri değiştirmesi lazım, hangi kanalla anlatacak... Birlikte planlıyoruz. Müşteri bir şey istiyor, sen senin pazarında o iş öyle olmaz diye anlatıyorsun. Örneklerle, müşteri ismi vermeden failureları anlatman lazım ki ikna olsun. Bu da bir öğrenme yöntemi, o şekilde yapmış ve fail etmiş olanlara ne olmuşa bakmak. (Nur, Consulting, N)

15. Şu anda mesela Ortadoğu bölgesinden de sorumluyum. Şirket dışında da yönettiğimiz ajans, medya vb. çok paydaş var. İş yaptırmak, çıktı üretmek zor. Özellikle kadın yöneticiler için. Hiç tarzım olmamasına rağmen, mesajı alması ve yapması için daha sert bir dille ilerliyorum. İletişimin sürekli gerilimli, ters gitmemesi için geri adım attığım anlar da oluyor ama zaman ve kaynak sıkıntısı çok. Ağırlıklı onların dilinde konuşmak zorunda kalıyorum. (Berrak, Multinational, N-1)

16. Sendika temsilcileri ile yılda iki defa toplantı oluyordu. Sorun çıkmaması için bir şekilde anlaşmak zorundayım. %3 zam mı %4 zam mı derken grev olur, üretim tamamen durur. Diğer taraftan %4'ün bütçe karşılığı da milyon dolar olabilir. Şirketin çıkarlarını da gözetmeliyim, onların yasam gerçeklerini de anlamalıyım. Biliyorum ki benim dünyam çok farklı. Benim dilimin orada bir karşılığı yok. Eğitim, beklentiler, tercihler... Her şey bambaşka. Bir kadın olarak o masada oturmak bir erkek olarak oturmaktan da farklı. Bu toplantı dönemleri yaklaşırken eskiden karnıma ağrılar girerdi. Sonra anladık biz birbirimizi. Ortak diyemem ama bir temelde buluştuk. Tartışa tartışa iletişim kurmayı öğrendik. O zaman kazandığım bu deneyim şimdi beni bu noktaya getirdi bence. Sendika ile iletişim kurabilen, pazarlık yapabilen HR bulmak zor. (Banu, Multinational, N-1)

17. Chief team builder gibi tanımlıyorum kendimi. Takım kurma ustası… Benim buradaki eski yöneticim, hiçbir şey öğrenmediysem bile doğru takım kurmayı öğrendim, liderlik başarısı için en önemlisi bu derdi. Ben de takım kurmayı ve geliştirmeyi öğrendim diyorum. Her şey o kadar hızlı değişiyor ki sadece kurmak yetmiyor. (Mete, Multinational, N)

18. İşe alım süreçleri çok uzun sürüyor ama öyle ya da böyle, doğru takımı kurmak zorundasınız. Özeleştiri yapalım, liderler de kendilerini aradıkları konusunda güncellemiyorlar. Tek taraflı bakıyorlar olaya. İşe alımda aday bizim gibi olsun istiyoruz ama bu doğru değil. Liderlerin farklı insanlara, farklı nesillere açık ve anlayışlı olması gerekli. Bizim alıştığımız yaklaşımlarda olmayabiliyorlar. Değerleri bambaşka olabiliyor. Bunu iyi anlamak lazım. Kendi çocuğumun olması avantaj, ondan öğrendiklerimi uyguluyorum ister istemez. Sorgulamadan bakmaya ve anlamaya çalışıyorum, onları ekibin bir parçası olarak hayal etmeye çalışıyorum ve onlardan ne öğrenebilirim odaklanıyorum. (Yavuz, Local, N-1)

19. Belirsizliğin içinde, belli karmaşıklığın üzerindeki konularda çalışabilme yetenekleri olmalı. Tekrar tekrar öğrenmesi gerektiğinin farkında olmalı ki kendisini farklı olgunluk seviyelerinde ileriye taşıyabilsin. Sürekli seyahat gerektiren bir iş. Bu hayat tarzına yatkın olması lazım. Bu özelliklerde çok sayıda insan yok. Olgunluk seviyesi dediğim bir çerçeve (tabloyu gösteriyor). Proje ekibi oluştururken ve ise alımlarda baktığım bir tablo bu. Her proje için sıfırdan takım kurduğumuz için, ortak yaklaşımımız olsun diye oluşturdum. Bu bir koçluk aracı, eşimden öğrendim, biraz değişiklikle bize uydu. Farklı taskler için farklı seviyeler lazım. Ağırlıklı know-how ve know-something düzeyinde çalışanlardan oluşması gerekli. Know-why`da olan kişilere karmaşık projelerde daha çok ihtiyaç var. Know-nothing olanlar ise yeni mezun, sektörde çalışmaya hevesli, öğrenme açlığı olanlar. Basit taskler olabilir, ama onların hedefleri öğrenmek. (Onur, Multinational, N-1)

20. 9 box gride bakıyorum. Herkesi performans, potansiyele göre yerleştiriyorum. Sonra kime ne sağlayabilirim diye bakıyorum. Her ikisinde de kötüdeyse, takım ya da proje için doğru bir fit değil. Onu şirkette başka bir ise yönlendirmek lazım, başka taskler vermek lazım, belki başka bir proje. Neyse ki bu bana bağlı yönetim ekibinde çok olmuyor. İkisinde de iyiyse, önemli bir projenin yönetimini, yeni bir fonksiyonu bağlama, global bir rotasyon, belki bir hot seat sağlamaya çalışıyorum. Takımdaki eksiklikleri de görüyorum bu sayede. Benim neye ihtiyacım var, elimde ne var. Mesela doer çok fazla ise ekipte, oradan bir strateji, inovatif bir dönüşüm, yaratıcı bir çözüm, bir yenilik beklemek gerçekçi değil. Çünkü bu insanlar sağlam takım üyeleri, beklediğinizi veriyorlar, ama ek bir katkı da sağlamıyorlar. Bu, yeni insanlara ihtiyacım olacağı anlamına geliyor (Zafer, Multinational, N-1).

21. Fikir birliği, full delegasyon, takip... Benim yönetim ilkelerim. Her yıl yönetim ekibi olarak bir araya gelip neye yönelmemiz gerektiği konusunda uzun tartışmalar yapıyoruz. Bu tartışmalar en üst düzeyde önemli... Nereye gittiğimiz konusunda doğru seçimler yapmakla ilgili.

Pekin mi, Roma mı veya New York mi, 3 tamamen farklı yon, hangisine gidersek birbirinden farklı. İkinci önemli şey fikir birliği. Bir konuda anlaşmak, onu sorumluluğuna almak anlamına gelir. Bunu yapmak için ortak sorumluluğumuz var demek. Bundan sonra, her ekip üyesi nereye gideceğini, nasıl devam edeceğini, neye hayır diyeceğini ve neyi kabul edeceğini, neyi nasıl dengeleyeceğini ve nasıl kararlar vereceğini bilir. Bunlar için hesap da verebilir. Anlaştıysanız, bunun arkasında durmanız gerekir, gerçekleştirmek için elinizden geleni yapmalı. Aksi takdirde öncesinde Pekin'e hayır gibi bir şey söylemeniz ve Roma için bastırmanız gerekirdi. Kararı etkileme şansın vardı o zaman, şimdi yok. Bu şekilde hem yolculuğumuza, insanlara ve onların sorumluluğu alacaklarına, gitmeye karar verdiğimiz yere varacaklarına güveniyorum. Gönül rahatlığı ile delege ediyorum, onlar accountable sonrasında. Anlaştığımız anda aynı yöne gittiğimizi bilmem gerekiyor. Oraya bir şekilde varacağız. (Burak, Multinational, N-2)

22. Ben kesinlikle rakamları veya iş performansını tek KPI olarak kabul etmem. Başka özelliklere de bakmaya çalışıyorum. Potansiyeller gibi, bir bütün olarak takım performansı, değerlerle uyum, nasıl başardıkları vb. Demek istediğim, genellikle yıl sonunda EBIT'e bakıp diyoruz ki, bu takım şimdiye kadar ki en iyi takım çünkü en iyi rakamlara sahipler. Ancak bu yanıltıcı olabilir. Bunlar gri alanlar ve yüksek performanslı ekipleri ve bireyleri değerlendirirken de dikkatli olmak lazım. Bu performansın maliyeti, bedeli neydi, sürdürülebilirlik asıl soru bence. Bu sonuçlar işinize çok iyi katkı sağlayabilir, ancak bir noktada böyle bir ekip sürdürülebilir olmadığı için bu sonuçlar ileriye dönük olmayacaktır. Birbirlerine güvenmiyorlarsa, ortak değerleri yoksa, olumlu bir ortamda değillerse, birbirlerine saygılı davranmıyorlarsa, birbirlerinden beslenmiyorlarsa kısa surede çok başarılı bir ekipten boş bir odaya dönüşürler. Yani yolculuk boyunca takımları ve çalışanları gözlemlemek, rutin takip sistemleri oluşturmak, sık iletişim kurmak, hedefte kalmak ve sonuç alabilmeleri için, onlar için ne yapabileceğimi sormak. Bunlar delegasyonda da execute ederken de değerlendirme yaparken de çok önemli. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

23. Yönetimde başarılı olan kişilerin ya geçmişte ya da devam eden aktif bir spor hayati var. Bu rastlantı değil, çünkü strateji geliştirme açısından liderlik spora çok benziyor. Disiplin ile, adım adım ilerlemeye devam ediyorsun ama doğru strateji ile ilerliyor muyum sorusu da hep aklini kurcalıyor. Bence burada önemli olan doğru soruları zamanında sormak. Sporun akışı içinde de bu disiplin, sorgulama ve zamanlama var. Bir şey ters gidiyorsa bunu zamanında anlama, adımını belirleme ve cesaretle ilerleme. Yetkinlik olarak bakıldığında da sorgulama, muhakeme, öngörü, stratejik kavrama ve tasarımcı düşünebilme. Design thinking yani... (Oktay, Multinational, N-1)

24. Şirketin gerçek ortağı olduğum bir yapıda çalışıyorum. Şirketin genelini ilgilendiren stratejik kararlardan sorumluyum. Kendi service lineim için aldığım kararlardan da diğer ortaklara karşı sorumluyum. Bu sorumluluk, sürekli sorgulama getiriyor. Stratejim doğru mu, ekibi doğru mu yönlendirdim. Hedefler tuttu mu, neden tutmadı,… buna benzer milyonlarca soru ile yasamak yöneticiliğin doğası herhalde. Bir de cevabını bulamadıklarım önemli. Ben görüyorum o neden görmüyor ya da ben nereyi görmüyorum dediklerim. Her yönetici aynı deneyimden aynı çıktılar ile ayrılır mı emin değilim. Başıma gelenlerden gelebilecek olanlar için öngörüler edindim, ama görmediklerim de olabilir. Bunlar beni ben yapıyor. (Meltem, Consulting, N)

25. Yöneticinin rolü stratejiyi belirleme ve uygulanabilir adımlara bölme. Ne olacak ve biz kendimizi nasıl hazırlarız. Trendlere bakarım, ne değişiyor araştırırım, okurum ve sırada ne olabilir tahmin etmeye çalışırım. Muhakeme çok önemli burada. Bir de assertiveness. Bunlar ise yarayan bir strategic thinkingin olmazsa olmazları. Aklımdan, gönlümden gecen şirkete uyacak mı, kültür bunu benimser mi? Şirketin neye ihtiyacı var. Bence çok gerekli ama kültür açısından

çok ters köşe bir şey mesela. Çok hiyerarşik bir şirkette reverse mentoring yapalım demek ya da gerçekleştirmek için bütçe bulmak zorunda olduğum ad hoc projeler. Bunları ben nasıl satarım diğerlerine, ikna ederim, nasıl oldururum. Muhakeme o zamana kadar ne getirdiğimle alakalı, bu gerekli bu değil diyebilmek için... Assertiveness ise kim olduğumla alakalı. Neden buradayım, ne yapmak istiyorum. (Banu, Multinational, N-1)

26. Beni bu rol için birisi önermiş, onlar da aramışlar. Aktif iş arayışım yoktu ama bildiğim, beğendiğim bir firma ve yine C-level bir pozisyon. Değişiklik iyi olabilirdi. İlk görüşmede sales ve HR direktör vardı. In principle her şey ok. Assessment center var sonra en son adım CEO görüşmesi dediler. Ortada başarılar var, aynı sektörde aynı krizleri atlatmışsınız, verdiğiniz kararlar ve somut sonuçları da ortada. Herkese market report gidiyor sonuçta. Ürünlerinizin pazar paylarını onlar da hemen hemen tahmin ediyorlar. Bu kadar veri varken assessment center'da yapay bir vaka üzerine çalışmak ve sunum çok saçma … Benim odağım execution değil, daha stratejik çünkü benden beklendiğini düşündüğüm bu. Benimle birlikte çalışan insanlar da bu tarafımın kuvvetli olduğunu söylüyor, ben bundan dolayı takdir görüyorum. Bundan dolayı da isteniyor olmalıyım. Uygulamada gelen sorular o kadar yüzeysel, o kadar detaydı ki ben şirketi de rolü de sorgulamaya başladım. Benden bekleneni, rolün yerini sorguladım. Bunu görüşme yaptığım insanlar ile de paylaştım, sonuçta bu assessorla ilgili de bir sorun olabilir ya da gerçekten beklenen de bu olabilir. Bilmiyorum. Ama sonuçta ben kendi isteklerimle, benden istenenleri örtüştüremedim. Onlar için iyi bir lider olmazdım. Soğudum. (Bahar, Local, N-1)

27. Değerleri hedefin kendisi gibi yaşamak lazım. Ne olursa olsun taviz vermeden, önceliği değere vererek. Değer ile yönetmek değil bahsettiğim. Bu araç olarak görmek. Bu kullanımı sevmiyorum. Bunun yerine değeri yaşatmak için liderlik etmek. Bu çok daha iyi bir cümle. Kendinize verdiğiniz değer de insanların lider olarak size güvenmesi de bununla alakalı. (Ahmet, Multinational, N)

28. İlk direktör olduğumda çok tecrübeli bir yönetici ile çalışıyordum, ekipte de yine çok tecrübeli bir İK direktörü vardı. Bana bağlı bir müdürü işten çıkarmamı istediler. Ben de attım. Oysa onun kalması gerektiğini, şirkete uygun ve başarılı biri olduğunu düşünüyordum. Kararlarını içselleştirmedim ama sorgulamadım da. Bayağı bir süre uyuyamadım sonrasında, kendimle kavga ettim, şunu deseydim belki ikna olurlardı, böyle yapsaydım olurdu diye. Nasıl bir lider olmak istiyorum? Bunu sorguladım. Eğer benden beklenen bir şey değerlerime uymuyorsa, I don`t move. Şu anda bu böyle. O zaman handle edemeyeceğimi düşündüğüm bir şeydi, yapmak zorunda olduğumu düşündüğüm için yapmıştım ama şu anda bunun için mücadele etmem gerektiğini biliyorum. Buradaki konu kendi değerleriniz. Kendinize rağmen bir adim atınca kendinize olan saygınız ve özgüveniniz sarsılıyor. Affedemiyorsunuz. Bu rolde geçirdiğim süre de başka insanların sorumluluğunu almanın ne kadar sancılı bir şey olduğunu öğrendim. İnsana saygıdan taviz olmayacağını… Bunun lider olarak nasıl göründüğünüz, nasıl algılandığınız ile alakası var. Yaptığım insanların benden beklemediği bir şeydi. Eminim sonrasında da çok konuşuldu. Böyle bir reputasyon ile insanlar size neden güvensinler? Bunu tamir etmenin bedeli çok daha fazla. Bu bir örneğe karşı belki 10 anti hikayeniz olmalı ki bu algıyı silebilesiniz. Anladım ki lider olarak samimi olunca seviliyorsunuz. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

29. Dibe düşüp battığın anlar çok öğretici oluyor. Bir önceki şirketimde 3 ay çalışabildim. Benim kişisel değerlerim ile şirketin değerleri uyuşmadı, tutkumu kaybettim ve hiçbir şeye katkı sağlayamayacağımı anladım. Mücadele etmek de istemedim. Ayrılınca fırsat buldum, profesyonel koçluk eğitimi almaya başladım. O tam bir kendimle yüzleşme, bir farkındalık eğitimi oldu benim için… O kadar deneyimden sonra bile... Kendiniz ile uğraşıyorsunuz eğitim

boyunca. Bir modül değerler ile ilgili, değerleri hep konuşuyoruz da gerçek anlamlarını anladığımızdan emin değilim. Ya da ben çok geç anladım diyeyim. Eski deneyimlerime baktığımda aslında bazı şeyleri fark ettim. Kendi kendinize lider olmuyorsunuz, çevreniz ile, onların tepkileri ile lider oluyorsunuz. Bu iste tam da değerler ile alakalı. Beklentiler tam olarak değerlerle ilgili. Ben kimim, ne istiyorum, değerlerim ne, bunlarla nerede değer yaratabilirim soruları çok önemliymiş. Çok sinirlendiğim bazı anlar mesela, aslında kimliğime saldırı olarak algıladıklarım. Gireceğin firma ile değerlerin örtüşüyor mu, seni sen yapan değerler var, sana sunulan ortam bunları yasamana izin verecek mi. Evet ya aynı yerdeyiz, yüzeysel olarak kolayca deniyor bu. Ama senaryolar üzerinden değerleri konuşmuyoruz aslında ne doğru ne değil ne emek sarf etmeye değer ne değmez ne için savaşırım, neye zamanımı harcarım, neyi boş verebilirim. En derinde ne var. Liderin değerleri ile, kültürü ile organizasyona oturması, fit etmesi lazım. Fit ettiğinizde de çok iyi işler çıkarabilirsiniz. (Suna, Local, N-1)

30. Kendiyle barışık olma, saygı, şeffaflık ve iş birliği. Bunlar benim kişisel değerlerim, olmazsa olmazlarım. Şeffaflık ve iş birliği aynı zamanda şirketin de değerleri, poster olarak her yerde asiliydi yani en azından. İlk üst düzey yönetim rolüm, organizasyonun merkez bankası gibiyim. Bütçe planlaması, operasyonel data, gelir, gider datası, hepsinin bir araya geldiği bir birimi yönetiyorum. Bunlar çok önemli datalar çünkü gerçekleşen performansı gösteriyor. Bu veriyle önemli kararlar alınıyor. Uzun bir planlama ve proje ile her birime, şirketin tüm performansını ve ayrı ayrı birimlerin performansını gösteren bir raporlama sistemi kurduk. O dönem aslında CEO bu data paylaşımının sorun olabileceğine dair uyardı beni ama ben yine de ilerledim. Şimdi hatamın herkesin değerlerinin aynı olduğunu düşünmek ve bu naiflik ile bilgi paylaşımına devam etmek olduğunu görüyorum. Aksi içime sinmezdi ama veriyi paylaşmaya devam etmek de beni mütemadiyen zor durumda bıraktı. Bu raporlar, bazı liderler tarafından diğer departmanlara karşı üstünlük sağlamada araç olarak kullanıldı. Farklı yöneticilerin yetkinliklerinin alenen sorgulandığı, hassas bilgiler içeren rapor konumuna düştü. Şeffaflık, iş birliği derken bambaşka bir yere geldik. Bu durumun önüne geçmek için gece gündüz çalıştım, raporları durdurmak kesin daha kolaydı tabi ama bence şirketin değerlerine de tersti, benim içime de sinmedi. Sonuçta harika bir raporlama platformu çıkardık ortaya. Departmanlara, farklı seviyelerdeki yöneticilere, farklı erişimlerle rapor imkânı sağladık. Tekil, customized raporlara odaklandık. Sonuçta ortaya çıkan benim içime sindi, şirketin de beklentilerini karşıladı. CEO`nun uyarısını dikkate alsaydım basta hepimizin başı daha az ağrırdı belki ama sonuçta en azından bazılarımız şirketin değerlerine uygun hareket etti, sahip çıktı ve korudu. Aynı bilgi iyi niyetli ve saygı ile ele alınmazsa, yarardan çok zarar veriyor. Bir şirkette var olmak, kişisel değerlerinizin orada yaşaması ve saygı görmesi ile alakalı. (Oktay, Multinational, N-1)

31. Ben çok matematiksel düşünürüm. Söylediğim şeyin karşı tarafta olan etkisini dikkate almadan söylerdim. Bu fact, sayılar ortada ve bu böyle. Herkes tarafından kabul edilmeli diye düşünürdüm, etkisini ve nasıl hissedecekleri önemli değildi. İlk yönetici olduğumda, insanların sizin hakkınızda düşündüklerinin şirket hakkında düşündükleri ile ne kadar bağlantılı olduğunu anladım, tersi de doğru. Yönetici olarak siz birçok insan için şirketin ta kendisisiniz. Bu vurucu oldu, dönüm noktalarından biri hayatımda. İnsan yönetmeyi buradan başlayarak öğrendim. İnsana dokunmayı öğrendim. Dokunmam gerektiğini fark ettim yani. Bunu şöyle öğrendim, bir gün İK müdürü bana geldi ve dedi ki inanılmaz kötü tanınıyorsun. Herkes senden nefret ediyor, seni hiç olmadığın biri gibi biliyorlar. Ben şok oldum tabi. Başladım kendim bölge ziyaretlerine. İnsanlarla konuşmaya, onları dinlemeye. O zaman insanların sizi sevmesinin, saymasının çok önemli olduğunu anladım. Çok önemli. Hele ki bu coğrafyada, Ortadoğu kültüründe daha da önemli. İnsanlar sevdiğinde iletişim kuruyor, her şey daha kolay oluyor, sözlerinizi yerine getireceğinize bastan inanıyorlar, yapmaya çalıştığınızı kolaylaştırıyorlar. Bu daha sonraları da bana çok vakit kaybettirdi. Bunun liderlik için önemli bir itici güç, bir değer olduğunu anladım. Bunun önemini erken anladım ama gerçekten yapabilmem çok geç mesela. Karakterim birçok

kez çuvallamama sebep oldu, daha sonra bile. Anlık tepkilerinizle, davranışlarınızla oluyor bu. Bunun için bakış açınızı değiştirmeniz, bildiklerinizi unutup, tekrar öğrenmeniz lazım. Sonuç almak için değişmeniz lazım yani. Bu zaman alıyor. Koçluk aldım, sürekli dediklerime dikkat ettim, eğitimler buldum, katildim. Sayılarla arama mesafe koydum resmen. Ona rağmen CFO oldum (gülüyor). Denerek ve birçok kez hata yaparak öğrendim. Bunu böyle dersem olur mu, nasıl anlaşılır, deneye yanıla. Liderlik iletişimi konusunda uzman kişiler var, onları takip etmem çok şey kattı. (Zafer, Multinational, N-1)

32. Gücü paylaşmak var. Bu toplantı ajandasını biri oluştursun, takip etsin gibi basit bir şey olabilir, çok stratejik bir projeyi emanet etmek de olabilir. Karar versin, yapalım... Her çalışanı bir talent olarak görüyorum. Yapabileceklerine güveniyorum, fırsat yaratmaya çalışıyorum. Bu yaklaşım, saygı ile alakalı, bizim şirket değerimiz. Mesela giriş- çıkış saatleri, hiç takıldığımız bir konu değil. İlerliyorsak, ortada sonuç varsa, ofise gelmiş gelmemiş, kaç saat çalışmış fark etmez. Sorumluluğu almış, yapmış. Güven karşılıklı. Çok basit bile olsa, ben güvenirsem takım da bana güveniyor. (Kerem, Multinational, N-2)

33. Pozitif gecen full bir hafta hatırlamıyorum. O gün nasıl gelecek, tahmin edemiyorum. Kararlar, aksiyonlar sürekli değişiyor. Bu haksızlık bence, saygısızlık. Birlikte çalıştığınız kişinin enerjisini, emeğini kotu kullanıyorsunuz, zamanını çöpe atıyorsunuz. Duygusal olarak da yıpratıcı. Basari, gurur, mutluluk bu duygular yok, bunların beklentisi bile yok. Her şeyi ertelemeye başlamıştım ki hiç bana göre değil. Çünkü inancım yok. Nasılsa yarın değişecek, ilerlesem ne olacak. Tutarlı davranmak güveni artırıyor. Bu saygı demek. Bunları yaparsanız insanlar sizinle çalışmak isteyecektir. Ben bu tip bir lider olmak istiyorum. (Bahar, Local, N-1)

34. Herkes tarafından güvenilen biri olmak zor. Özellikle de zor kararlar veriyorken; sevilen, sayılan, güvenilen biri olarak kalmak zor. Ben insanların hoşuna gitmeyen kararlar verdim ama dürüst, şeffaf ve adil olmak ile ilgili karizmam bence çizilmedi. Benimle çalışmak istemediğini söyleyen biri hiç olmadı. Kıyak yapmadım ama şans verdim. Hata yaptığımda sordum, dinledim. Ekibimden biri hata yaptığında yanında durdum, açıklıkla sorumluluk üstlendim, yalnız bırakmadım. Bende ki bilgiyi paylaştım. Bilgi eksikliği, dedikodu üretiyor. Dolayısıyla bazı zor kararları neden verdiğimi, yöneticilerime açıklıkla anlattım, onların da ekipleri ile bunları paylaşmalarını destekledim. (Ayfer, Multinational, N)

35. Doğru ekibi, doğru kişileri tek tek arayıp bularak oluşturuyorsunuz. Ama bu isin yine de kolay tarafı. Birlikte çalışmayı öğrenmeleri, birbirlerine inanmaya başlamaları zor. Yöneticiye gerek olmamasından bahsediyorum. Bu gönülden şirkete bağlanmaları ile, sahiplenmeleri, kendilerini adamaları ile oluyor. Olmadığınızda da işler tıkır tıkır gidiyorsa takım oldu demektir (Banu, Multinational, N-1).

36. Engagement, çalışanın gönül bağı ile alakalı, şirkete güvenmesi ve gurur duyması ile alakalı. 6 sene önce bizim sektörümüzün bütün kuralları değişti. Rekabete dayanabilmek için büyümeye, finansallara odaklandık, o kadar agresif hareket ettik ki hepimiz, o arada engagement meselesini fena halde atladık. Bütün yönetim ekibi önce bunun sonuçlarıyla yüzleştik tabi. Turnover yüzde 30larin üstünde, çalışan bağlılığı anket sonuçları da neredeyse 20 puan geriledi. 60 altı bir sonuç aldık. Son 4-5 senedir de bunu düzeltmeye çalışıyoruz. Bunu kendi yaptıklarımızın sonucu olarak kabullendik, düzeltmek de bizim sorumluluğumuz dedik. Bu önemli bir farkındalık ve değişim, bizim için engagementin değeri hakkındaki keşfimiz. (Meltem, Consulting, N)

37. Çalışan bağlılığı, performansı olumlu etkiliyor. Bu ilişkiyi gösteren çok araştırma var. Bundan dolayı engagement birçok şirket için stratejik öncelik. Her sene bütün holding şirketleri

için bağlılık anketi yapıyoruz. Çalışanlar şirket ile ilgili ne düşünüyor ne hissediyor, yöneticilerden ne bekliyor. Her kısmını detaylı analiz ediyoruz. Sorunların nerelerde olduğunu görüyoruz. Bunları asmak için planlar hazırlıyoruz. Bilgilendirme eksikliği, iletişim geçtiğimiz senenin kotu alanlarıydı. Bunlarla ilgili aksiyonlar, bütün yöneticilerin hedef kartlarına girdi. Is planının anlatılması, çeyrek sonuçlarının paylaşılması, town hall meetings falan her yöneticinin iletişim planına konuldu. Toplantıların ajandaları da belirli. Holding stratejisi, şirket hedefleri, ana bölümlerin sonuçları ve donem hedeflerinde durum. Bunların mutlaka anlatılmasını istiyoruz. Motive eden bir dil bekliyoruz tabi. Ben X`de (genel mudur olduğu şirket) bu bilgilendirmeleri daha sık yapmayı tercih ediyorum, aylık bültenler yayınlıyorum mesela, bölümlerin away daylerine mutlaka katılmaya çalışıyorum. Kendi direktörlerimden de her fırsatta büyük resmi anlatmalarını bekliyorum. (Sevim, Local, N)

38. Şirket iç iletişim planına aylık, quarterly, yani ne kadar yapabiliyorlarsa o kadar takım için iletişim aktivitesi yapma hedefi ekledim. Bizim ekibin isi iletişim, dolayısıyla biz geçiştirmeden yapıyoruz. Çünkü ben etkisinin farkındayım. Bununla birlikte yeni davranışlar aksiyonlar lazım. Benim takımın toplantılarında en dikkat ettiğim çok soru sorulması, benden çok onlar konuşmalı yani. Çünkü sorular sayesinde aslında biz takım olarak kimiz ve neden buradayız konuşuyoruz. Yönetici olarak bu soruları bütün resim ile ilişkilendirerek cevaplayabilirseniz, o zaman bağlılığa çok etkisi var tabi. Birey olarak sen kimsin, ben kimim, önceliklerim nelerin ötesinde, hepimizin bu takımdaki yeri ne, görevi neyi anlatmalısınız. (Berrak, Multinational, N-1)

39. Sadece en iyi sonuçları almak değil, bunu yaparken ekibin gelişimine de katkı sağlamak (Ayfer, Multinational, N).

40. Yeni nesil alışılmışın dışında bakıyor. Konuşurken bunu hissediyorsunuz. Hiçbirimizin başlarken olmadığı kadar cesaretliler. Saygı çerçevesinde haklarını arıyorlar, aralarında kendini çok iyi ifade edenler var. Canavar gibi bir genç, kendinden emin, göz temasını hiç kaçırmadan, hararetle anlatıyor. Ben bu proje için bunu seçtim diyorum içimden. Açık, dürüst, kontrolünü kaybetmeden anlatıyor. Bilmiyorum ama öğrenebilirim. Çok duyuyorum ve bu önemli bir cevap. Dijitalleşme, sosyal medyanın anlamlı kullanımında çok iyiler. Özellikle üst yönetime geri bildirim verme konusunda da oldukça rahatlar. Nasıl algılıyorlarsa açıklıkla paylaşıyorlar. Bizim kültürümüz çok geri bildirim almaya uygun bir kültür değil, ben kendimi onlardan dinlemeye, nasıl gözüktüğümü görmeye istekliyim. Kendim bu şirkette 25 yıldan fazladır çalışıyorum, körleşmiş olabilirim, pesin hükümlü olabilirim, dar bir bakış açım olabilir. Ne diyorlarsa benim için bir yarar. Bundan dolayı onlarla bir araya gelmekten büyük keyif alıyorum. Onlardan çok şey öğreniyorum. Güncel kalmamı, yenilenmemi sağlıyor. (Yavuz, Local, N-1)

41. Kendileri ile ilgili hayallerini soruyorum, kendilerini lider olarak nasıl düşünüyorlar. Ne yapabileceklerini anlarsam elimde olan işlere öyle bakarım. Ne fırsatlar yaratabilirim, hangi projeyi yönetir, ister mi, olmayan bir bölümü bile açabiliriz çünkü o yapabilir. Onları şirkete değil şirketi onlara uydurabilme bakış açısı. Bu sayede hepimizin elde edecekleri fazla. Ben geri çekileceğim, onlar yapabileceklerinin en iyisini yapacaklar ve daha iyi olacaklar. Ve hepimiz mutlu olacağız ve bu yönetim takımının bir parçası olmaktan onur duyacağız. (Adil, Local, N)

42. Birinin kriz yönetebileceğini kriz çıkmadan bilemem ki. Bu assumption olur. Bazen durum ortaya çıkmaz ve o kişi de böylece yetenek olarak tanımlanmaz. Bu kısıtlayıcı. Onun yerine kontrolümde olana odaklanmak bana daha mantıklı geliyor. Yani talent olduğunu bildiklerim ve talent olabileceğini düşündüğüm kişiler, ne fark eder. Hepsini talent kabul edip ben onlar için ne yapabilirim diye sormayı tercih ediyorum. Örneğin o sene ilk yönetici olarak atanmış olanlar, belli ki başarılılar, onlarla daha fazla vakit geçirmeliyim. Bana bağlı ekibe kendi

takımlarını geliştirmeyi bir hedef olarak koyabilirim, bunu yapanlara bonus gibi farklılaştıran destekler sağlayabilirim. O sene için kompleks olduğunu bildiğim projeler ya da sorunlu olduğunu bildiğim müşteri ilişkileri, oralarda çalışan ekipler ile daha fazla bir araya gelebilirim. Önerilerimi paylaşabilirim, tavsiye verebilirim, ya da sadece orada olabilirim. Hataları, başarısızlıkları görünür kılıp açık yüreklilikle tartışabiliriz, bunlardan herkes öğrenir. Koçluğu bir kültür olarak yaşatmak için İnsan Kaynakları ile birlikte çalışabilirim, bunun için sunulan bir proje varsa destekleyebilirim, kaynak yaratabilirim. Enerjimi, zamanımı bunlara ayırırsam engagement da doğal olarak artacaktır. (Mete, Multinational, N)

43. Bir direktörüm vardı. Çok zeki, teknik bilgisi kuvvetli, insan ilişkileri iyi... Kendi pozisyonu ona dar geliyordu, benim yedeğim aslında ama daha 3 senesi var diye konuşuldu yetenek komitesinde. Bütünü görmek, bir şirketin her şeyinden sorumlu olmak yaşayarak öğreneceğiniz bir şey. Tamam hazır dediğinizde o kişiyi o role promote etmiş olmuyorsunuz ki? Hakkettiğini kendisine vermiş oluyorsunuz, bunun gelişimsel bir tarafı yok. Siz hazır diyene kadar belki başka bir yere gidecek ve kaybedeceksiniz. Fırsat vermeniz lazım. 2 ay sonra falan genel müdürlerimizden biri emeklilik kararı aldı, holding içinde biraz daha küçük bir firma. Ben kendisini o role önerdim. Kendisine de bunu gelişim için bir fırsat olarak anlattım. Kabul edildi. Sonuçta bunda risk var mı evet var. Ama bu riskleri şirketin geleceği ve yeteneklerin bağlılığı için almak lazım. (Sevim, Local, N)

44. Başarılı olmak için birilerine öğretmem gerekli. Öğrenmeli ki delege edeyim. Potansiyeli yüksek, iyi yöneticilerin ekibimde olmasından hiç korkmadım. Dürüst olmak gerekirse, çoğu yönetici korkar. Yerlerini alacaklarını düşünüyorlar. Benim ilerlemem için back up lazım, bunu biliyorum. Bu yüzden, bu kişilerin bağlılıklarını, geliştirmeyi, güçlendirmeyi önemsiyorum. Ben gittiğimde insanların beni fark yaratmış, onlarla birlikte çalışan, koçluk yapan ve onlara çok şey öğreten bir lider olarak hatırlamalarını istiyorum. Bu hem şirkete hem de kendime yaptığım bir yatırım (Banu, Multinational, N-1)

45. Direct reportlarimin, onların yöneticilerinin gelişimini çok önemsiyorum. Ben hala koçluk konusunda kendimle uğraşıyorum, eğitimlere gidiyorum, okuyorum, pratik yapıyorum. Kendi yöneticilerimden de bu konuda iyi olmalarını bekliyorum. Gecen ay, bir müdürüm ile performans görüşmesi yaptım. Zayıf olduğu konu kötü performansı olana kötü diyememek. Kötü demezseniz, daha iyi yapması için geri bildirim vermezseniz hiçbir şey değişmez ki. Adam da her şeyin yolunda gittiğini zannediyor, ona da haksızlık. Önce adının konulması lazım ve bu da onun için bir yüzleşme demek, zor bir iletişim olacak bundan dolayı kaçıyor. Bir sebebi de hedefler. SMART hedef belirlemek gerçekten düşünüldüğünden zor. Öyle bir gri alan var ki, her şeyi ölçülebilir kılmanız mümkün değil. Ama bir şekilde iyi gitmediğini söylemek ve nedenlerini anlatmak zorunda. İyiyi cezalandırıyorsunuz bu sefer bir de. Bu ekipte de dengesizlik yaratıyor, durumu düzeltmek için iyi performans gösterene her isi veriyorsunuz. Her işi ona veriyorsunuz, çünkü iyi olanla çalışmak kolay. Bu sefer o kişi overload olup isyan ediyor. O da haklı. Kötü performansın bir yaptırımı, iyi performansın da bir ödülü olduğunu göstermeniz lazım takıma. Koçluk becerileri bundan dolayı çok önemli. (Bahar, Local, N-1)

46. Kendi projelerim var, ekibin projeleri var, yönetim rolü, ek olarak ev-çocuk, seyahatler… Çok yoğun. Zaman yönetimi eğitimlerinde kullanılan bir öncelikler, aciliyetler tablosu vardır. Benim hayatımda bu tablo dengesiz gidiyor ve bundan dolayı ciddi anlamda mutsuzum. Gün aciliyetleri halletmekle geçiyor, öncelikler öteleniyor. Günün sonunda elde ne kaldı, hiç. Bu tablo mesela (tabloyu gösteriyor). Takımın da çalışanların da know-nothingten know-why'a kadar bir pathi var. Bu pathe katkı sağlamak öncelik, takımdaki herkesi know-why`a doğru adım adım taşımak gerekli. Ama burada bir kısır döngüsü oluşuyor. O önceliğe zaman ayıramadıkça o işi yapmaya devam ediyorum, çünkü delege edemiyorum o isi. Bu da

başka bir önceliğe ayıracağın zamanı o aciliyete kitleme demek. Sonuçta ben işi yapmaya devam etmekten, ekip öğrenememekten mutsuz. Dolayısıyla bu tabloyu kullanmaya ve haftayı buna göre planlamaya, gereksiz kısımları atmaya ve önemli kısımlara zaman kaydırmaya çalışıyorum. (Onur, Multinational, N-1)

47. Quick and dirty öğrenme ve soru sorma. Ben bunu bilmiyorum, sabrınızı rica ediyorum deyip her türlü aptalca soruyu sormak lazım. Konuştukça önemli noktalar, neye dikkat etmek lazım çıkar ortaya. Dışarıda neler oluyor sormak, benchmark şirketlerde neler var sormak. Sanki o firmayı hiç tanımıyormuşsun gibi sorular sormak, improvement alanlarını bulmak ve not etmek. Outside in bakış açısı. Dışarıdan içeriye bakınca ne görüyorsun. Bu dünyada yaşıyorum gibi değil de ne değişmeli ne adapte olmalı, nasıl bir ilişki sellik var gibi. Şirket hakkında dedikodu bir nevi. Şirketi değiştirme için oraya konuldun, değişmesi gerektiğini biliyorsun da. Sorarak insanları rahatsız etme potansiyelim yüksek benim ama artık biliyorum ki rahatsız oluyorsa demek ki orada monitör edilmesi gereken de bir şey var. Bırakırsan daha büyük bir problem olarak karşına çıkabilir. Bunları zamanında görmek için hep sahada, insanların yanında olmalı ve hep sormalısınız. Bir rahatsızlık varsa üstüne gitmelisiniz. Bunları deneyimle öğrendim. Hep restructuring işleri ile uğraştım. Hep sarsmak, değiştirmek, adapte etmek ve yeniden kurmak vardı işlerimde. Bir lider olarak nasıl düşünmem gerektiğini öğrendim. (Adil, Local, N)

48. Ortaklık şirketinin, yapıya bağlı bazı sıkıntıları var. Yani bu bizim UK ofisimizde de Almanya ofisimizde de Kanada ofisimizde de var. Ne bu sıkıntı? Siz ortak olarak kendi hizmet alanınızın finansal, kalite, insan, satış her şeyinden sorumlusunuz. Başka bir ortak da kendi alanından sorumlu. Herkes kendi öncelikli hedeflerini gerçekleştirmeye çalışıyor. Müşteri ihtiyaçları bu kadar net ayrı değil ama; onlar bütünsel bir hizmet almak istiyor. Siz kendi hizmetinizi, onlar kendi hizmetlerini verecek ama müşteri tek danışman olarak bu şirketi görecek. Ama bizim finansal takip sistemlerimiz buna izin vermiyor. Bilgi paylaşım sistemimiz yok. Pazarlama da herkesi toparlayan bir yaklaşım yok. Kim ne yapıyor, hangi hizmeti veriyor tam bilmiyorduk bile. Müşteri benden bir şey istiyor, ben vermiyorum diyorum ama şirkette başka bir ortak veriyor o hizmeti, haberim yok. Anladık ki müşterilerin beklentilerini karşılayamıyoruz, böyle devam edemeyiz. Müşterinin karşısında da komik duruma düşüyoruz, aynı şirketin ortakları birbirinin müşterisini almaya çalışıyor, birbirlerinden haberleri yok. Ben ve birkaç ortak bu sorunu dile getirdik, toplantı talep ettik. Ortaklar olarak bir araya gelmemiz, değişim konusunda anlaşmamız sancılı oldu. Herkes prensipte hem fikir aslında ama değişime çok gönüllü değil. Sonunda 3 senelik bir plan oluşturduk. Pazarlama ekibi yeniden yapılandırıldı, toparlayıcı oldu, hedefler koydu. Sorunun ne olduğunu şirkete anlattı. Destekleyen ortaklar olarak biz hikayelerimizi, deneyimlerimizi anlattık. Konuyla ilgili bir farkındalık oldu. Sonrasında performans yönetim sistemini güncelledik. Bunun kabul edilmesi zor oldu, epey direnç oldu, uzun tartışmalardan sonra oldu. Sonuçta ortak olarak kazancınızın önemli bir kısmı bonustan, kar paylaşımında geliyor, Bu da performansınız ile hesaplanıyor. Pazarlama hedefleri şekillendi, satış hedefleri merkezi bir bakış açısı ile hazırlandı. Mesela, cross-sales ve knowledge sharing hedefleri aldık. Değerlendirmede ağırlıkları arttık bu kısımların. Ortaklar, hangi hizmetleri veriyoruz sunumları yaptı, makaleler yazdık, şirket içi iletişim materyallerini, dergileri falan hazırladık. Sıfırdan başladığımız için performans sistemine eklemek zorundaydık, aksi durumda hiç kimse sahiplenmezdi. Hala bu konuda çalışmaya devam ediyoruz. Şirketin kültürünün adaptasyonu ve dönüşümü bu. Adım adım oluyor. Bu boyutta ve çapta bir süreçten herkes, ama özellikle de onu gerçekleştirenler öğreniyor. (Meltem, Consulting, N)

49. Elimde ne var, ne olmasını istiyorum sorgulaması. Ben gerekli her detayı sorar, planlar programlarım. Burada beni farklılaştıran yeniliğe açık olmam ve şans vermem. Ekibe rağmen

değil onları yanıma alarak hareket etmem. İnsanlar benimle bu yüzden çalışmak istiyor. Bugünden yarına insanların alışkanlıkları, düşünceleri değişmiyor. Dirençler olacak, normal. Ama yavaş yavaş oluyor. Gerekli adımları atıp sabır ile bekleyeceksin. Bir de pazar bilgin varsa adapte oluyorsun. Değişmen gerektiğini hissediyorsun en başta. Pazarda ne oluyor? Sosyal medyayı takip, kitap, gazete, dergi, blog okumak, internette kaliteli zaman geçirmek. Ben bu konularda iyiyim. Bunlarda iyi olduğum için kurumsal strateji belirleme konusunda iyiyim. Herkes ayakta uyurken senin uyanık olman lazım, uyanırsan şirketi de, müşteriyi de, ekibi de uyandırırsın. Aciliyet duygusu, itmek için enerji. (Nur, Consulting, N)

50. 50 yıl önce yıla bağlı değişimler vardı, günümüzde artık günlük değişimler ve belirsizlik var. Yani her şey herkes için yeni. Tek adam temelli liderlik anlayışı yaşamıyor artık. Her şeyi ben bilirim, doğru bilirim, karar benimdir otoritesi olmuyor. Çok seslilik, takım, iş birliği, kolektif öğrenme, sorumluluğu paylaşmak önemli. Tek bir çözüm değil, farklı kişi ve ihtiyaçlar için farklı çözümler ve kombinasyonlar önemli. Ben farklı fonksiyonların katılımını, her leveldan. Her ülkeden adam olmasını önemsiyorum. Diversity ve synergy. Bu seslilik kuvvet artık. Bana hayır bu yanlış, aslında sorun bu diyebilirler. Sonuçta hepsi çok kıdemli liderler, kendi alanlarında isi benden daha çok biliyorlar. Aynı gemideyiz, ortak hedeflerin belirlenmesi ve ilerlediğimizden emin olmak, değiştiğimizden emin olmak benim sorumluluğum, ama onların da lider olarak sorumluluğu. Kompleks bileşenler var, herkesin bir tarafından yakalaması lazım. Birlikte keşfedeceğiz. Ama bunları yapsanız da bazen olmuyor. Çünkü bu bir risk. Pozisyon ve güç ile ilgili, duygusal, egosal bir risk. İnsanlara gelin başka bir şey yapalım, alışkanlıklarınızı da bir tarafa bırakın derken sadece hayal satıyorsunuz. Böylesi daha iyi, buna ihtiyacımız var ya da olacak, karşılığı bu söz. Size güvenmeleri lazım ki iş birliği yapsınlar, benim de empati yapmam gerek. Anlamam lazım. Sonuçta bütün yöneticiler yeni yapıda benim rolüm nerede olacak, ben ne olacağım diye düşünür. Ama (liderler) hepimiz biliyoruz ki değişmeliyiz ve bizim burada bariz bir sorumluğumuz var. (Mete, Multinational, N)

51. Ne olursa olsun pozitif kalmak, iyimser mesajlar ve umut vermek ve takım içinde sinerji sağlamak (Bahar, Local, N-1)

52. Purpose beni çok etkileyen bir dönüşüm projesi. Yaptığım isin bir anlamı var, bunu fark et, bu farkındalığını da ise yansıt. Özünde bu. Bu bir perspektif değişimi. Bundan dolayı da şirketin her fonksiyonuna, yöneticilerin davranışına, kültürüne ve süreçlerine değecekti. Faz faz. Her bölümden yöneticilerin olduğu bir proje ekibi olarak başladık, ama iç iletişim bana bağlı olduğu için en çok is bana düştü. Ben sahiplendim projeyi. Diğer ülkeler neler yapmışa baktık, materyalleri Türkçe` ye cevirdik, tasarımları hazırlandı. Şirketin her köşesini giydirdik. Lansman toplantısında bir key note speakera, çok keyifli bir şekilde amaçlarımızı anlattırdık. O gün herkeste bir etki kaldı. Değerler ile ilgili farkındalığı artırmak için bir yarışma yaptık. Sonrasında yönetici sohbetleri, hikayeler geldi. Yöneticilerin is ile ilgili deneyimlerini bu perspektiften değerlendirip paylaşması önemliydi. Ama sadece süreçler ve iletişim aktiviteleri ile kültürü dönüştüremeyiz. Bir commitment, bir iş birliği ruhu olmalı. Ben ise farklı bakmayı keşfettim, kimliğime, kişiliğime de dokundu bu proje. Herkeste öyle olmadı. Ne olursa olsun pozitif kalmak, burada kilit. Bunu yaparken çok yorulduğum, bos verdiğim anlar oldu. Bazen ne yaparsam yapayım aynı tutku ile sonuç alamadım. Negatif iletişim çok hızlı yayılıyor. Bir yönetici bile inanmıyorsa, proje ekibinde bir çatlak ses, criticism varsa bu yansıyor. Ben de yorulduğumda bunları sordum kendime ama sesli dile getirmedim. Yönetici olarak dile getirseydim sonrası bas aşağı. Herkes yavaşlardı, çatışmalar baslar, bahaneler ortaya dökülürdü. Her kişinin motivasyonu çok önemli. Bunu da benim sağlamam lazım. Ben modum düşük olunca, ortadan yok oluyordum, ise gitmiyor, görünmüyordum. Beden dilime yansıyacak. Ben yaparsam herkes daha fazla yapar. Ne olursa olsun bir de su iyi tarafından bakalım demek, ilham vermek önemli. (Banu, Multinational, N-1)

53. Benim sektörümde, şirketimde öğrenme kültürü çok belirgin ve olması gereken de bu. Diyelim ki dünyanın herhangi bir enerji üreten tesisine gidin, bu sektörde insanlar ve kültürel alışkanlar ülke dinamiklerinden bağımsız birbirine çok benzer. Bir başkasının deneyim ve bilgisine dayanarak hayatınızı riske ediyorsunuz çünkü. Bizim bulunduğumuz iş kolunda kendi kariyeriniz ve geleceğiniz birilerine bir şey öğretmenize bağlıdır. Öğretme isteğinin temeli de o öğrensin devir alsın ki ben başka bir yere giderimden gelir. O benim yerime gelsin, ben de başka bir yere gideyim ve orada yeni şeyler öğreneyim mantığında kurulu bir yer. Öğrenme bu isin en kıymetli yeri. Bundan dolayı şirket stratejilerini tartışırken öğrenme mutlaka oradadır. Öğrenme kültürünü destekleyecek bir projeyi önceliklendiririm. Ekibimi oluştururken de öğrenme merakı var mı yok mu, yönetici olarak öğretme isteği var mı, bu kültürü paylaşacak ve destekleyecek vizyonu var mı? Bunlara bakarım. (Yavuz, Local, N-1)

54. Multinationallarda çalıştığım için şanslıyım. Öğrenme fırsatları çok yaygındı, çok fazla seçenek sunuldu. Bazı firmalarda bunlar vardır da göstermeliktir, yani katılmak istediğinizde kimse destek olmaz. Benim firmalarım gerçekten öğrenme kültürü olan, bir şeyler denemenizi destekleyen, hataları daha fazla tolere edebilen firmalardı. Su anda bu ortamı sağlaması gereken noktada ben duruyorum. Yönetim ekibi olarak hepimiz bu kültürün, bu değerlerin yaşamasından sorumluyuz şirkette. Öğrenmek bir değer, uzun vadeli değişimi ve basariyi getiriyor. Mesela bir bölge müdürüm var, sonuçları çok çok iyi ama ekibinle hiç ilgilenmiyor, öğrenmeleri için cesaretlendirmiyor, memnuniyet anketlerinde gelişim kısmı yerlerde… Ona müdahale ediyorum. Bu kültürü benimseyecek ve yaşatacak. Ya da gidecek… O kadar netim bu konuda, çünkü uzun vadede organizasyonun öğrenmeye devam etmesi en az aldığı sonuçlar kadar önemli. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

55. Bu karışık bir yapı ama bence zenginlik. Esneksen, keyifli bir öğrenme ortamı. Farklı kültürlerden insanlar ile çalışma fırsatın oluyor, değişik liderlik stillerini görüyorsun. Liderliğin kültür ile ne kadar çok ilişkili olduğunu anlıyorsun. Genel müdürler olarak bir araya geliyoruz, hepimiz için önemli olan konuları tartışıyoruz. Değerli bir beyin fırtınası. Çok farklı bakış acıları ortaya atılıyor ve sonrasında hepimiz kendi kararlarımızla ilerliyoruz. Karar verme inisiyatifi ülkelerde. Matrix ve otonom. Fevkalade... (Ahmet, Multinational, N)

56. Satış ekibi ile üzerinde anlaşamadığımız konular vardı. Bu konuları, müşteri ile pazarlıkta kullandılar. Bu bizi de şirket reputasyonunu da zorladı. Müşteriye verilmiş sözlerin arkasında durduk mecbur. Ama istediğimiz karlılıkta kapatamadık projeyi. Başka projelerden kişiler kaydırdık, diğer projelerin ekiplerini bozduk. Herkesin hayati etkilendi, sadece proje değil kişisel planlar da bozuldu. Adam Ürdün'e mi gidecek Nijerya`ya mı belli değil. Projelerin takvimleri de farklı, gidecek ne zaman dönecek. Herkes haklı olarak mutsuz oldu. Şirket içi unsurlar, şirket dişi unsurlardan daha fazla zarar verebiliyormuş, hepimize ders oldu. İş birliği benim için çok önemli. Proje bittikten sonra da bir kenara bırakmadım bu isi. Önce satış direktörüne gittim, yaptıklarının projeye ve ekibe etkilerini anlattım. İnsanlar bilmedikleri işler hakkında doğru tahminler yapamayabiliyor. Sonra şirket içi eskalasyon mekanizmasını kullandım. Konuyu yönetim kuruluna taşıdım. Her fonksiyonun kendini kurtarmaya çalışması ile olmaz, bunu düzeltmemiz gerekiyordu. Benim önerim iş birliği konusunda bir değişim başlatmamızdı. Süreçler, is akışlarına bu gözle bir bakmak, cross functional iş birlikleri için farkındalık yaratmaktı. Yıllık plan yapıldıktan sonra, kaynak aktarmanız gerekecek bu tarz işleri ajandaya sokmak zor ama oy çokluğu ile kabul edildi. Bizim isler özelinde; proje ve satış ekiplerinin her müşteri temasında ve satışın son aşamasında birlikte hareket etmesi kaçınılmaz oldu. İmza-onay mekanizmaları ile bu isi sansa bırakmayacak şekilde düzenledik. Büyük projeler için cross functional takımlar oluşturulmaya başlandı. Proje yönetiminde kullandığımız takip sistemlerinde is akışlarını güncelledik. Sağlıklı dijital dokümantasyonun sağlanması için

bazı sistemler alindi. Konuştukça başka başka vakalar da çıktı tabi ortaya. İşbirliğinin şirkette önemsendiğinin altını da iletişim aktiviteleri ile epey çizdik. (Onur, Multinational, N-1)

57. Ben-sen, benim takımım-senin takımın, benim basarim-senin basarin… Sürekli bunların kavgasında olan bir ekip. Sürekli senin hatan-benim hatam tartışmasındayız. Hepimiz ama… çünkü kültür birlikte oluşturulan bir şey. Herkesin değerleri, anlayışları buna dahil. Bir toplantıda ben bunu açıkça söyledim. Artık nasıl delirdiysem. Böyle böyle, örnekler bunlar, sizce bu normal mi diye sordum. Tabi böyle sakin sakin değil. Uzunnnn bir sessizlik tabi, sonrası başka itiraflar. Yani önce biz yönetim ekibi olarak bir kendimizle, birbirimizle yüzleştik. Bu biraz sancılı oldu tabi. Böyle değişimler kolay olmuyor, adım adım… bu değişimin yönetimden başlaması lazım, çünkü muhtemelen sorunun kökü orada bir yerde. Herhalde 2 senede 20 seans falan takım koçluğu almışızdır, ben hala devam etme taraftarıyım. Çoğumuz bu seansların çoğuna katildik, ne denirse yaptık. Bunu adım adım yapmak ve arada kopup gitmemek de kolay değil. Kendi bakışımı, değerlerimi, etkimi anladım. Etki önemli burada, bununla yüzleşmek ve kabul etmek önemli. Mesela ben çok soru soruyormuşum, aslında bunu koruma refleksi ile yapıyorum, yani ben sorarsam diğer yöneticiye gittiğinde afallamayacak, o sormadan hazırlıklı olacağız, ama bunu yaparken aslında kendimi de eleştirilerden korumaya çalışıyorum. Soru sormam böyle algılanmıyor ama, onların yaptıkları ise güvenmediğimden dolayı soru sorduğum, bir noktadan sonra hatta eleştirdiğim gibi algılanıyor. Benim küçük yapı taşım kendi ekibimdi mesela. Takım koçluğunda bir şeyleri anladıkça, geri donup takıma sordum, yani bu böyleymiş, e çok da iyi değil tabi, ama sizce de böyle mi? Ben bunu yapmaya devam ettiğimde bir süre sonra paylaşımlar da arttı, evet böyle, hayır değil aslında böyle gibi. Biz takım olarak daha çok vakit geçirmeye, daha çok konuşmaya başladık. Başladığım noktaya göre daha güçlü hissediyorum tabi. Kişisel olarak da yönetici olarak da. Çünkü ortada bir değişim, iyiye giden bir şey var (Bahar, Local, N-1)

58. Aile şirketinde çalışmaya başladım. Satış mühendisi olarak girdim. O zamanki yöneticim benden bir yazılım istedi. Aynı zamanda şirketin de sahibi. Satış ekibinin kullandığı bir takip, sipariş sistemi oluşturmam gerekiyor. Bu benim kâbusum oldu. 1-2 yazılım dersi almışım, hiçbir fikrim yok nasıl yapacağım ile ilgili. Bayağı bunaldım. Sonra korkunun ecele faydası yok dedim. Programlama öğrendim, yazılım öğrendim kitaplardan. Arkadaşlarıma sora sora, deneye yanıla. Gece, gündüz ofisteyim ama. Artık yöneticim heyecanını anlıyorum ama eve git demeye başladı bana. Ben o programı yaptım ve kullanıldı. Tek başıma yaptım ya bir güven geldi tabi. Kendime bakışım değişti. Ondan sonra hep dedim ki yapamazsın der iç ses ama sen onu duymazlıktan gel ve yola devam et. Bir şekilde olduracağımı öğrendim. (Feriha, Multinational, N-1)

59. Üniversitenin keyifli ve rahat ortamından sonra bana başka bir dünya gibi geldi. Stresli. Sürekli zaman baskısı var, gece gündüze karışık. Gelen işlerin hepsi acil, hepsi öncelikli. Hangisinden başlayacağım diye soramıyorum bile. Çok çalıştım. Ofiste sabahladığım, 4'te kalkıp ofise gittiğim günleri bilirim. İş hayatına giriş 101 gibi bir şeydi o şirket benim için. Sonunda ne oldu tabi… Cuma düğünüm vardı, çarşamba akşam hala çalışıyorum. Perşembe kibarca beni işten çıkardılar. Bu kazıkla da birlikte tabi; is hayatinin her zaman adil olmadığını bundan dolayı kendimi de önemsemem gerektiğini öğrendim. Zamanla belli bir düzen oturtuyorsun, zamanı yönetmeyi, önceliklendirmeyi öğreniyorsun. Daha az çalışma ile daha çok sonuç almaya başlıyorsun. Bu aldığın her yeni, daha büyük rol için böyle. (Bahar, Local, N-1)

60. Bilgiyi, araştırmayı, öğrenmeyi önemseyen, uzmanlıklara önem veren ve tersine beyin göçünü hedefleyen bir yerdi. Çok keyifli, harika bir ortamda, çok iyi insanlarla çalıştım. Kendim ile ilgili çok şey keşfettim. Beni ne mutlu ediyor, nasıl bir ortam bana iyi geliyor, hayattan ne istiyorum. Akademik bilgi ile iş dünyası çok ayrı düşünülüyor ama bence öyle değil. Teori ile

pratiği nasıl bir araya getirdiğiniz ile alakalı bu. İki dünyanın da birbirinden öğrenecekleri çok, sürekli birbirlerini beslemeleri lazım...Bu bakış açısında olan iş yerlerinin bana uygun olduğunu öğrendim. Bilgiye saygı duyan, öğrenme kültürü olan, agresif ilişkilerin olduğu değil de gerçekten birlikte iş yapmaya, öğrenmeye çalışan insanların olduğu yerlerde mutlu olacağımı keşfettim. Böyle yerler benim değerlerime uygun. Sonraki seçimlerim de hep bu şekilde oldu, su anda yönetici olarak bu ortamı yaratmayı önemsiyorum. (Cansu, Multinational, N-2)

61. İlk X'de (uluslararası, perakende firması) yönetici oldum ben. Orada çalışırken tüm HR artık merkeze bağlı olacak ve olduğun bölüm de kapanacak dendi. Yurtdışını böyle olmaması için ikna etmem gerekiyor ama nasıl? Farklı şirketlere, vakalara baktım. Merkezi yönetilen HR`lar ile ilgili makaleler, blog yazıları, forumlar, araştırmalar... Ne bulduysam okudum. Topladığım bilgiler ile stratejimi, temamı çizdim. Bu kararın Türkiye özelinde kaos yaratacağını, daha basit ilerlememiz gerektiğini örneklerle anlattım. İstenen hızı yakalayamayacağımızı söyledim. Çıkabilecek sorunları sadece HRci olarak değil de, strateji departmanı gibi, büyük şirket resmi ile ilişkilendirerek anlattım. İkna oldular ve yapı aynı kaldı. Ben iletişimin stratejik bir is olduğunu, nasıl anlattığımın da ne anlattığım kadar önemli olduğunu anladım. Sonuçta iki taraftan birinin iknası, kendi isteğini karşıdakinin isteği yapabilmesi başarı oluyor. (Banu, Multinational, N-1)

62. İnsan yönetimi, ilk yönetici olan herkesin zayıf noktasıdır. Siz operasyonel bir işi yönetmede başarılı oluyorsunuz ve yönetici oluyorsunuz. Ama insan yönetimi tecrübeniz yok. Çok serttim ve bunu iyi is çıkarmada olmazsa olmaz zannediyordum. Beni sert bulan, söylediğim bir şeyden dolayı iplerin koptuğu insanlar az değil. Onların tepkilerinden kendimle ilgili çok şey keşfettim. Değiştim ama önce değişmem gerektiğini kabul ettim. Kitaplar okudum, insan yönetirken de bir sistematik kurmaya çalıştım, koçluğu öğrendim. Geri bildirim vermeyi öğrendim. Sadece sayılardan, çıktılardan bahsettiğimde takımın ruhunu öldürdüğümü gördüm. Hata yapmalarına, risk almalarına izin vermeye, çok detaylı takip yapıp bunaltmamaya başladım. Mikro managementtan vazgeçtim yani. Doğru kişiler ile doğru yönetim ilişkileri kurarak sonuca gitmeniz lazım. (Burak, Multinational, N-2)

63. Şirketlerin kendi kültürleri var. Yazısız kurallar, ilişki dinamikleri... Kimileri daha uzun surede bunu anlar, kimileri daha kısa surede. Ben de bir yerin kültürünü 1-2 günde anlarım, en fazla 1 haftada az- çok fikrim oluşur. Ama dürüst olayım hemen uyum sağlayayım yaklaşımında değilim. Artık değilim. Doğruluğuna inandığım factlerim var artık. Is yapış şekillerim var. Olmazsa olmaz değerlerim var. Bunları empoze etmeye çalışırım, böyle bir tarafım var. Yanlış bir şey varsa, kusura bakmayın bu değişmeli derim. O iş yerinde her şey süperse neden beni dışarıdan getirdiler. Benden beklenen bunları değiştirmem bence. Yetki, tecrübe ve gücünüz var artık bir şeyleri değiştirmek için. Kültüre uymak, o organizasyona fit etmek basari için önemli. İlk yıllarımda dinamikleri anlayıp buna göre hareket etmeyi öğrendim. O pozisyonlarda öyle yaşanmalı. Ama su anda buna kaptırmamak lazım diyorum. Yani bu beceri farklı bir boyutla hala geçerli basari için. Şu an için bu yetkiyi ve gücü doğru kullanabilmem, değişim yaratabilmem için dinamikleri anlamam önemli. (Burak, Multinational, N-2)

64. Bakü projesi. Bakana bağlı gibi gidiyor proje. Çok yoğun hükümet ilişkileri var. Yasal, yasal olmayan dinamikler var diyelim. Ben de control freak olarak bölümleri ve sistemleri kurmaya çalışıyorum. Üstelik kadınım. Bakanın akrabası var projede bana raporluyor güya. Bir yandan da benim yaptığım işleri ona raporluyor. Daha önce daha küçük bir Kazakistan projesinde böyle çetrefilli bir durum yaşadım, oradan biliyorum ki ilişkileri germek bir yere götürmüyor. Çıkmaz sokak. Bir şekilde idare etmem lazım. Toplantıda yine karşı karşıya geldik, herkesin ortasında, masanın üstündekileri yere attı falan. Saçma sapan hareketler. Otoritemi zaten zor kurmuşum, sarsıldı. Delirdim tabii. Ama çok sakin kaldım. Bir şey desem yutmam

gerekecek. Her şeyin her zaman yöneticinin istediği gibi olması bir yanılsama. Yapabileceğim kendimi ve duygularımı kontrol etmek, egomu yönetebilmek. Sinirle tepki verirsem, is uzayacak, bin tane dert, Bakü'de devam. Bu proje de bu çetrefilli sorunlara rağmen zamanında bitecek, politikalarda anlaştık, neyi nasıl yapacağımızı biliyoruz. Gözlem yapma, kültürün dinamiklerini okuma ve ona göre davranabilme becerisi, insanların davranışlarını anlama, kendi duygularımı ve tepkilerimi kontrol edebilme. Bunlar hep bir olayın öğrenmesi. Bir şey yasamışım, değişmişim ve o değişimin sebebini de dun gibi hatırlıyorum. Tepkilerimin sonuçlarını yaşadım, el yordamı ile yaparak, deneye yanıla, toslayarak öğrendim. Ama değiştim, daha da yapmam dediklerim bunlar. (Feriha, Multinational, N-1)

65. Önceki şirketimde sıfırdan bir bölüm kurdum ve yönettim. Danışmanlık sektöründe bu şekilde işleyen bir iş geliştirme, pazarlama bölümü yoktu benchmark olarak alabileceğimiz. Networking, self branding ve thought leadership temelinde işleyen bir pazarlama nosyonu başka bir sektörde de yok, bu danışmanlığın ihtiyacı. Önce kurulacak olan departmanın nasıl bir görev tanımı olması gerektiğini, hangi çerçevede çalışması gerektiğini netleştirmeye çalıştım. Herhangi bir benchmark, bir örnek olmadığı ve ben de konuda yeni olduğum için epey zorladı. Sonra diğer ülkelere baktım, İspanya ofisinde bir şeyler var. İspanya'ya gittim. Orada, bayağı departman ile birlikte çalıştım. Ne yapıyorlar, hedefleri ne, hangi iş sonucuna etki ediyorlar, bu etkiyi nasıl ölçüp de ortaya koyuyorlar. Zorlukları ne bu isin. Hepsini anlamaya çalıştım. Sonra da Türkiye'deki ihtiyaçlar neler. Türkiye'de ki dinamikler açısından bakıldığında bu iş nasıl uyarlanabilir, nasıl bir iş modeli ve organizasyonel yapı bu departmanı şekillendirebilir bakıp buna kafa yormaya başladım. Sonra organizasyonel dizayn konusunda uzman olan bir danışmanlık şirketi ile iletişime geçtim. Görüştüm, gözlemlerimi aktardım. Bana nasıl bir organizasyon ve görev tanımı ile başlanabileceğine dair fikir verdi. Bunlar üzerinden birkaç alternatif model çalıştım. İş geliştirme, pazarlama ve kurumsal iletişim fonksiyonlarını bünyesinde barındıran bir departman olarak önerdim. Networking, personal branding ve thought leadership öncelikleri belirledim, bunları nasıl hedeflendirebilecegimizi hazırladım. 3 tane stratejik pillar üzerinde duran bir yapıdır deyip, uzmanlığı, hedefleri bunlardır diye anlattım. Kim yapabilir bu işi profilleri de çalıştım. Ama bu modeli yönetime kabul ettirmek için çok uğraştım. Anladım ki liderlik önemli bir güç; ya fark yaratıyor ya da işleri çıkmaza sokuyor. Pozitif yaklaşım önemli. Bazen iyi bir şey yaptığınızdan eminken bile yalnız kalabiliyorsunuz. Argümanımın arkasında duran sebepler neler. Şirketin hedeflerine ve vizyonuna baktığımızda, beklentilere baktığımızda ki yönetim bunu net ifade etmemişti aslında ben anlayıp şekillendirdikten sonra bile, bunun onayını almak için mücadele ettim. Kabul edildikten sonra da organizasyonu hayata geçirmek için mücadeleye başladım. Her peerımı tek tek ziyaret ettim, anlattım, ikna ettim. Benim motivasyonum, konuya inancım ve bununla ilgili çalışma arzum çok yüksekti. Bu yapılanmaya ve işleyişe de yansıdı. Hala devam ediyor, güzel bir şekilde gidiyor. Orası tarih yazdı ve hala kurguladığım o yapıda devam ediyor. Benim boyumu aştı gitti orası. Ama beni de buraya getirdi. Şu anda da bana sıfırdan bir departman kurma, süreçleri hazırlama işi verildi ama şu anda kendime daha fazla güveniyorum tabi. (Ebru, Consulting, N-1)

66. Büyük denizde büyüyeyim mi yoksa küçük denizde büyük balık mı olayım. Aldığınız sorumluluklar, öğrendikleriniz ve karar yetkileriniz açısından çok farklı bu ikisi. İkisini de denedim ben. Kararımı ikisini de denemekten yana verdim. İlk yıllarda büyük denizde küçük balıktım ama o kadar küçüktüm ki o beni yıprattı. Çok büyük şirketti herkes vay diyordu ama ben katlanamıyordum. İnisiyatif alanınız sınırlı, her şey daha belli. Ama müşteriler de çok büyük, onun için sürekli krizler var. Bir şirketi, bir gecede batıracak krizler, iletişim hataları. Göre göre, duya duya öğrendim. Sonra ben küçük denize gideyim dedim. Kararlar benim olsun. İnisiyatif istedim. Hazır hissettim kendimi buna. Yine de ilk şirketimden sonra orası aslında göldü. Basta herkes ne yapıyorsun dedi, ben de başta ne yaptım dedim. Küçük sandım kendimi. Ama sonra gördüm ki çok da küçük değilim. Karar veriyorum, müşterilere gidiyorum, yanlış

karar verirsem sonuçları büyük oluyor, bunun stresi var. Ama o krizleri ben tek başıma yönettim. Basta iyice panik oldum ama bu sefer de yapa yapa öğrendim. 8 yıl sonra orada öyle bir balık oldum ki, büyük denize aynı karar yetkileri ile daldım. Tamam dedim. Hazırım ve vakit geldi. Sonra o büyük denizde ben 2 senede genel müdür oldum ve arkası geldi. İyi ki bu kararları almışım, cesaretle o işleri yapmışım, iyi ki söylenenlere kulak asmayıp o riskleri almışım. İyi ki ben kendimi tanıyıp, ben böyle mutlu olacağım demişim. Bu kadar farklı vaka görmeseydim bu değişimi bu kadar kendinden emin yaşayamazdım, su andaki güvenim olmazdı. (Nur, Consulting, N)

67. Private Equity işi ve ben ilk defa o sektörde, o işi yapıyorum. Kendisine ait dinamikleri olan, kuralları farklı bir alan orası. Yönetici olarak farklı düşünmeniz lazım, başka bir perspektifle yaklaşmanız lazım. Bizim hedefimiz çok netti. Şirketi en kısa sürede satılabilir hale getirmemiz gerekiyordu. Şirket battı batacak ama. Türkiye'de bu satış işleri çok abartılarak yapılıyor. Gerçekte 2-3 senede bir şirketin dönüşmesi ve karlı hale gelmesi gerçekçi değil. Bir şirketi ezici rekabete insan kaynağı taşır, insan kaynakları süreçleri taşır. Bu kadar kısa sürede bu alanların değişmesi, dönüşmesi olmaz. Sustainable üzerine çalışıyor benim kafam. Yani uzun süreli olsun, kalıcı ve etkin olsun. Bu işte kafamı bugün ile sustainable yaklaşım arasında sürekli shift ettirmem gerekiyordu. İlk her şeyin doğrularını belirleyerek başlıyorsun. Çıpa yok, referans yok, üstüne build edilecek temel yok. Şirketin ilk sahibi Private Equity, ama sonra oradan buradan profesyoneller girmiş şirkete. Bu şirkette ucube bir kültür yaratmış, insanlar arasında iletişimler tutarsız. Şirketin genel müdürü değişti bu arada, yeni gelen CEO çok toksik bir liderdi. İnsanlara karşı güvenilirim. Beni tanıdıktan sonra insanlar güvenir bana. PE ve ailenin bana olan güvenini bile bu süreçte sarstı. Elemanlarıma gidip beni şikâyet ediyordu falan. Bu işi beceremeyeceğimi söyledi herkese. Beni ben yapan mindseti, toolları, becerileri, özgüveni aldı aslında. Ama bu beni üzerimden tankta geçse, kafamı kaldırıyorsam devam derim diyecek bir hale taşıdı. Bu süreçte ben toksik bir lider ile nasıl çalışacağımı, onu nasıl yönlendireceğimi öğrendim. Büyük bir şirket satışı için pazarlık yapmayı öğrendim. İnsan ilişkilerinde pratik yaptım, toksik ilişkilerden başarılı ile sonuç almayı öğrendim. Hep uluslararası şirketlerde çalışmıştım, bilmediğim bir dünyayı öğrendim. Oralarda maliyet sorunumuz yoktu ama bu şirkette karar alırken, maliyet en belirleyici unsurdu. En ucuza kaliteyi bulmayı öğrendim. Global kaynaklar keşfettim. Finansal durumu sıkıntılı olan bir şirketin paralarının yönetimini öğrendim. Mesela banka ile iletişime hiç battı batacak bir şirketin CFO'su olarak geçmedim. Ciddi bir meblağ ile satıldı en sonunda şirket. O para eder miydi, etmezdi aslında ama öyle bir business plan yaptık ki ve bunu öyle bir hikâye ile besledik ki satıldı. Orada ben çok büyük dönüşüm, çok büyük farkındalık yaşadım. Şunu öğrendim. Ben finansallardan bakıyordum şirketlerin her şeyine ama şirketin finansallardan öte bir hikayesinin olması lazım. İş yapan değil, o hikâyeyi realize edebilecek kişiler lazım bana. Ama biz tam da bu süreçlerde o kişilerden vazgeçiyoruz. Temel yanlış bu. Hikâyenin sağlam olması lazım. O sorumluluk binince üstüme, taktik ve yöntem biriktirmişim farkına varmadan. Ortaya koyduğum ürünün ezici kalitede iyi olması lazım ki prestiji geri kazanalım. Kusursuz olsun diye çok çalıştım aslında ama oldu. Her konuya gerektiğinin on katı kadar çalıştım. Bir yanlış yapsam olmazdı. Her detaya on kere baktım, on kere sundum, gece gündüz kendime satışın hikayesini anlatıyordum artık. Ama oldu. Olunca, bunları şimdi ne yapacağım dedim. Yaptıklarım, kazandıklarım ve farkındalıklar, beni şu andaki sorumluklarıma, pozisyonuma getirdi. (Zafer, Multinational, N-1)

68. Otorite gerekli ama doğasında bazı şeyleri yıkmak var. Bazı şeyleri inşa etmek için ikna etmek ve motivasyon gerek. Bir denge olması lazım bu ikisinin arasında. Her şey, her zaman sizin kontrolünüzde değil ama en azından onlar için elinizden geleni yapma niyetiniz ve isteğiniz olduğunu anlatmanız, inançlarını kazanmanız lazım. (Zafer, Multinational, N-1)

69. Bizi alan firmada benim karşımdaki (peer) zorlayıcı bir profil. Biz onlara entegre olmaya, çalışıyoruz ağırlıklı yani aslında ben daha dezavantajlıyım. Ben bu geçişte aslında assessment sürecindeyim, kaygılıyım. Günün sonunda devam edecek miyim etmeyecek miyim bilmiyorum. Onu bırak, bugün ne olacak acaba dediğim bir dönem bu. Her gün bir istifa geliyor aklıma, neden uğraşıyorum ki diyorum, sonra ama bak bunları öğreniyorsun, yeni deneyimler kazanıyorsun devam diyorum, biraz daha… Bir suredir birlikte yaptığımız çalışmalarda bilginin bana eksik geldiğini fark etmeye başladım. Gözler üstümde, paylaşım ve destek yok, çok belirsizlik var ve sağlıklı ilerlemek için bilgi kaynağım yok. En büyük sorun da ortam güvenilir değil. İlk mümkün olduğunca açık oldum. Açıklıkla yanlış yaptığını ifade ettim. Daha çok çatışmalar yaşadık, negatif reaksiyonlar aldım. Bu strateji basarisiz oldu. Sonra aslında bu ilişkiyi güven üzerine inşa etmeye çalışmakla yanlış yaptığımı anladım. Sonuçta is yapmak için birbirimize güvenmek zorunda değiliz. Geçici bir durum bu, bu şekilde de yaşanabilir. Yani aslında keyifli bir ortam olsun, güven olsun gibi değerlerim su anda karşılık bulmuyor ama yaşamayı öğrendim, kendimi ve ekibimi korumam lazım. Su anda her şeyi bir proje ekibine dönüştürdüm, her şeyi proje takibi olarak ilerletip sorup kayıt altına alıyoruz. Sözel olarak konuştuklarımızı yazıp, maille gönderiyorum mesela. Tanıklıklar elde ediyoruz yani. Diğer ülkelerle daha çok ilişki kurmaya başladık, her şeyi tekrar tekrar soruyoruz farklı kişilere. Bilgiyi teyit etmemiz lazım. Artık daha sakinim, daha az kafaya takıyorum. Karşımdakinin iyi niyetinden emin değilsem, onunla daha veriye dayalı ve politik bir ilişkide kalmam gerektiğini çok iyi öğrendim. Önemsiz noktaların kaos yaratmasına izin vermemeyi... Buna bir öğrenme ortamı olarak bakmalı. (Cansu, Multinational, N-2)

70. Direktör olduğumda oldukça kotu hissettim. Beni en çok sorumlu olduğum insanlarla ilgili meselelerde basarisiz olmak korkuttu. İlk düşündüğüm bana bağlı 500'den fazla kişi var, ben onları tanımasam bile hepsi bana bakıyor. Benim kariyerim ne olacak diye düşünüyor. Birisini terfi ettiriyorsun, hayatı değişiyor. Başka birisini başka bir şehirde ataman gerekiyor, farklı bir bölgeye gidiyor, hayatı değişiyor. Çok büyük bir sorumluluk… Başka insanların sorumluluğu hayatının kocaman bir parçası oluyor. Verdiğin kararları, özellikle insan ile ilgili olanları, doğru vermekten başka şansın yok. Para batırmak, risk almak, hedefler bunlar zor ama geri dönüşü var. Ama insan ile ilgili kararlar böyle değil. Başka şirketten aldığın kişinin uygunluğundan sorumlusun, şirkete uyumundan sorumlusun, eğitiminden her şeyinden sorumlusun. Çünkü onu oraya senin kararın getirdi. Ben önce daha sabırlı bir adam olmayı öğrendim. Bir karar alacaksan belirli bir süreyi geçirip öyle karar vermek gerekiyor. Adim atmadan durman gerektiğini biliyorsun. Bu benim için çok önemli bir değişim çünkü satış içinde deadline her zaman dundur. Yani hep geç kalmışsındır. Bu noktadan, durup beklemeyi bilen bir noktaya geldim. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

71. Değiştim, yönetici gibi düşünmeyi, hareket etmeyi öğrendim (Mete, Multinational, N).

72. Bilgi ve bakış açısı, geçmiş tecrübelere ait. Her terfiinizde yenilemeniz, unutmanız, bazılarını tekrar öğrenmeniz lazım. Yoksa insan hep anıları ile, eski tecrübeleri ve çözümleri ile hareket etmeye çalışıyor. Bunlar önemli ama yeterli değil. Aynı anda o kadar fazla işten sorumlusunuz ki, zaman olarak en başta yetişmeniz mümkün değil. Finansal öncelik ile aldığınız karar; kaliteyi, müşteri ilişkilerini, çalışanların mutluluğunu etkiliyor. Bunların da bir costu var, görünmez. Sarmal gibi, tahmin etmediğiniz ama etmeniz gereken başka noktalara dokunuyor. Ben daha iyi bir dinleyici oldum, beni daha iyi bir lider yaptığını düşündüğüm kazanımım bu. İyi bir fikri olduğuna inanan herkesi dinliyorum. Dinlemek aslında basit bir şey değil, duymaktan değil gerçekten anlamaya çalışarak dinlemekten, on yargısız dinlemekten bahsediyorum. Hiç fark etmediğiniz bir noktayı sadece doğru insanları dinleyerek bulabilirsiniz. Siz artık hands on, isin içinde değilsiniz. İşin içinde olanlar daha etkili çözümler getiriyor. Siz onları dinlediğiniz için kendilerini sorumlu hissediyor, sahipleniyorlar. İyi liderlik her şeyi bilmek ya da hâkli

olmakla değil, mümkün olduğunca çok kişinin sonuçtan mutlu olmasını sağlamakla alakalı. (Ercan, Multinational, N-1)

73. Projede bütün süreçleri yani IT'den tutun, finans, satış, lojistik, İK, satın alma aklınıza ne geliyorsa hepsini değerlendirip, gerekirse revize ederek yeniden tasarlayacağız. Son hedefimiz bu süreçleri otomatikleştirip, dijital ortama aktarmak. Bu zaten benim isim, sonunda benim rolüm olduğundan, öncesindeki analizi de bana verdiler. Teknik bilgim var ama bu iş süreçlerinin hiçbirini bilmiyorum. Bu bilmezlik halim, bunun farkında olmam bence başarıyı getirdi. Açık açık teknik bilgim var ama sizin süreçlerinizde cahilim dedim. Birbirimizden öğreneceğiz dedim. Bunun için ben bilmiyorum demekten çekinmeyeceğim ve soru soracağım, siz de aynı açıklıkla, salakça diye düşünmeden aklınıza gelen her şeyi sesli söyleyin dedim. Zaten hepimizin kendi iş hayatları yeterince yoğun, herkesin bir de bu çıktı diye düşündüğünü tahmin ediyorum. Ben de öyle düşünmedim değil. 35 kişiyle hızlı nasıl çalışacağınızı, kimin nerede kuvvetli, nerede olmadığını anlamanız gerekiyor. Aynı ekibin parçası gibi hissetmemiz lazım ki öyle davranmaya başlayalım. Motivasyon sorunları oluyor. Umursamıyorlar, sürekli projenin önemini anlatmanız gerekiyor. Kişiselleştirmeden iletişim kurmak gerekiyor. Bir de insanlara güvenmek gerekiyor. Her şeyi öğrenmem lazım, öyle karar alacağım deseydim olmazdı. (Tolga, Multinational, N-2)

74. Olasılıkları, riskleri şirket kültürüne uygun değerlendirmek gerektiğini gördüm. Adaptasyon çok önemli. Bir çözüm her yere uymuyor, o şirketin dinamiklerine cevap vermeyince havada kalıyor. Bunun içinde oralarda zaman geçirmek gerekli. İnsanları dinlemek, merakla sormak, anlamaya çalışmak gerekli. Inclusion önemli. Bu önemli bir zaman ve efor gerektiriyor tabi. Farklı görüşleri sabırla dinlemeniz lazım. Derin Demokrasi metodu mesela. Özellikle strategy setting workshoplarında kullanıyoruz. Herkesi bilinçli bir şekilde dinlemenin ötesinde azınlıkta kalanları bile duyma, karara dahil etmeye çalışma... Bazen çok mutsuz bir çalışan öyle bir fikir atıyor ki ortaya, bunu oldurmam lazım diyorum. Uygulanması mümkün olanlar, olmayanlar, mümkün değilse neden, mümkünse nasıl… Farklı açılardan, tarafsız ve sabırla sormak lazım. Bu sayede iç görüler oluşuyor ve tabi bulduğunuz çözümler, bir şeyleri değiştirdiği için sahipleniliyor. (Sevim, Local, N)

75. Bütçe toplantılarında, P&L'i okumayı, finansalları yorumlamayı istiyordum. Bir yerin içindeyim ama konuları anlamakla mücadele ediyorum, dinliyorum ama iyileştiremiyorum, bir şey katamıyorum. Böyle ortamlarda çok kötü hissediyordum. IDP / Individual Development Plan yapmam istendiğinde, finansa rotasyon istediğimi söyledim. Bu çok rutin bir istek değil, kendi alanının dışında bir zaman geçireceksin, o arada ekip ne olacak, işler ne olacak falan. Neyse bir şekilde bu fırsat bana verildi. Rotasyonda finansçı olmayanlar için finans eğitimi alma fırsatım oldu, bilgisine güvendiğim insanlara soru sormaktan çekinmedim, raporlar üzerinden çalıştım, CFO'nun asistanı gibi o dönem toplantılara girdim. Finans ekibi ile iyi ilişkiler kurdum, ilerleyen zamanlarda da gidip sorabileceğim ilişkiler yarattım. 6 aylık bir süreydi ama çok faydası oldu bana. Şu anda çalışan giderlerinden dolayı şirket bütçesinin önemli bir kısmını tek başıma takip edebiliyorum. Neyin nereyi etkileyeceğini öngörüp en azından doğru soruları zamanında sorabiliyorum. Bu rotasyon, bir yatırımmış aslında. Liderlik becerilerimde gelişti. Ekip kurma mesela. Ekipte her zaman sayılarla arası iyi olan kişileri tutmam gerektiğini anladım. Deneyimleyerek öğrenmeye zaman yaratmak gerektiğini anladım. Şu anda şirket içinde tasarladığımız her liderlik eğitiminde, katılımcıların bazı şeyleri deneyimlemesini sağlayacak somut adımları mesela gönüllü çalışmalar, rotasyon, stratejik proje task force grupları, NGO rolleri, bazı simülasyonlar. Bunları programa mutlaka ekliyoruz. (Suna, Local, N-1)

76. Tek bir kulvarda değil de farklı farklı kulvarlarda çalıştım. Denetim yaptım, finansal bakış açısı kazandım. Finansalları yorumlamayı öğrendim. Aynı şirkette belli bir dönem

danışmanlık bölümüne rotate ettim. Orada bütünsel yaklaşma, neden – sonuç ilişkisi kurma becerisi kazandım. Bu rotasyonda danışmanlık ilgimi daha çekmeye başladı, burada devam ettim. Danışmanlıkta is geliştirme ve iletişim konusuna merak sardım ve spesifik olarak bu alanda çalıştım. Sonra fark ettim ki ben danışmanlık sektörünü çok seviyorum, iyi biliyorum ama pazarlama ile ilgili devam etmek istiyorum. Şirket içinde pazarlama bölümüne geçmek istedim. O sırada başka bir şirket çıktı karşıma, bu iki ilgi alanımı birleştirdim ve çok güzel değerlendirebileceğim bir ortamı bu yeni şirkette kendim sağladım. Motivasyonum, konuyla ilgili çalışma arzum o kadar yüksekti ki yeni bir fonksiyon, yapılanma kurdum sıfırdan. Orası benim boyumu aştı. Akademide roller aldım, eğitimler vermeye başladım, insan ile uğraşmanın ve liderliğin bir kavram olarak ilgimi çekmeye başladığı zaman da bu. Hemen akabinde bu yeni işim biçilmez kaftan oldu. Rotasyonlardan, ek rollerden, farklı işleri deneme açıklığımdan çok şey kazandım. Bu deneyimlerimi de bu isime yansıttım. 16 yıllık deneyimimin her alanını, her kulvarımı avantaja çevirdiğim, herkes ve şirket için değer yarattığım bir yer oldu burası. (Ebru, Consulting, N-1)

77. Çin bambaşka bir kültür. Şirketin kapısından girince bir benzerlik var. Dünya vatandaşı herkes, kurum değerleri net, insani değerler evrensel. Ama farklı. Çok resmi ve oldukça yavaş. Şirket kültürü bunu biraz kırsa da kültürün hiyerarşik yansımasını hissediyorsunuz. Saygı kuralları var, toplantıların başında uzun bir selamlama, giriş konuşması var. Bu saygı göstergesi aslında anlıyorum ama benim oldukça sabrımı zorlayan bir şeydi. Siyah – beyaz kurallar, bunu biraz düşüneyim çok uygun olmayabilir dediğinizde bu direk hayır olarak algılanıyor. Bana ünvanlımla ile hitap eden çalışanlar vardı. Başta oldukça tuhaf geldi sonra alıştım. Böyle, küçük detaylar gibi gözüken şeyler aslında çok önemli. Öğrenmek zorundasınız, çünkü yadırganırsınız. Sonuçta oraya giden ve uyum sağlamak zorunda olan benim. Ailece heyecan duyarak gittik ama başlayınca; ev bulmak, çocuklara okul bulmak, ehliyet vs. her şeyi sıfırdan öğreneceksiniz. Bir gecede cahil olmak var ya, tam bu işte. Alfabeyi okuyamamak en zoru, sürekli translator ile, telefon ile gününüzü geçirmeye çalışıyorsunuz. Market alışverişi sorun. Sürekli bir şeyler öğrenmek, sormak, problem çözmek durumundasınız. 1 birimde yapacağınız iş 10 birim sürüyor. Kişisel olarak da kariyer olarak da çok öğretici ama. Kendimle ilgili bir sürü şey keşfettim, bir suru şeyi yapabileceğimi keşfettim. Daha dirençli, esnek ve güvenli döndüm bence. (Tolga, Multinational, N-2)

78. Gayet normal bir şey yaparken bir anda bakışları üzerimde yakalıyordum. Bir şey farklı geliyor bu insanlara ama ne? Örneğin ben çalışanlarıma, ailelerini pek sormam. Bu bence özel hayata bir saygı göstergesi… Orada ise tam tersi. Yapmazsanız ilgisiz, sadece iş odaklı, soğuk yöneticisin. Sadece nasılsın dediğimde yüzleri düşüyordu resmen. Fikirlerini sormak da şaşkınlıkla karşılanıyor. Çünkü yönetici mutlak otorite gibi. Benim her şeyi bilmem gerekiyor. İç savaşın hala ciddi etkisi var, din, politika çok hassas konular… Aslında bu konularda konuşmayı da çok seviyorlar ama kendi düşüncelerini belirtmeden. Bu dolaylılık yerleşmiş ama, yaşadıkları, bunu böyle yapmaları gerektiğini öğretmiş. Bunu kıramadım da. Karar alırken en zorlandığım kurdukları bağlantıları anlamak oldu. O kadar dolaylı ki, yani bir alaka var mutlaka ben kaçırıyorum tedirginliğim vardı sürekli. Beden diline, şaşkınlıklara, gülümsemelere, kaçamak yanıtlara falan dikkat edince el yordamı ile yapmam gerekenleri buldum. Bu detaylara bakmak bir alışkanlık. Açıkçası hep de isime yarıyor. (Mete, Multinational, N)

79. Ben sürpriz bir şekilde Azerbaycan'a geldim. Kendimi burada buldum. Arkadaşımın anlattığı hikayeler var, oradan çıkardığım sonuçlar var ama deneyimleyince daha da farklı tabi. Kendi şaşkınlıklarımdan öğrendim önce. Kadınlar pazarlık edemez, itiraz edemez. Her şey son dakika, deadline yaklaşınca ortada alakasız bir şey olduğunu fark ediyorsun. Milyon dolarlık sözleşmenin içeriğini konuşuyorsun, ciddi olarak sorular soruyorsun ama çok dikkatli konuşmak zorundasın çünkü kadınsın. Otorite olarak kadına hiç alışık değiller. Kültürün özelliklerini

öğrenip ona göre davranma becerisi geliştirdim. Panik yapmadım. Kaynak araştırdım, okudum, arkadaşlarıma sordum, buradaki expatlara sordum. El yordamı ile stratejiler belirledim, konuştuğum ton hep sert, elbise-topuklu ayakkabı hiç giymedim. Bir de ben bildiğiniz Azerice öğrendim. Hocayla geceleri çalıştım. Çevirmene gerek kalmadan, direk kendim söylemeliydim çünkü. Belirli bir yaş üstü, devlet erkanı ile kadın olarak anlaşma yapabilmenin tek yolu dili öğrenmek. Bu süreçte gözlem yeteneği, değişen dinamiklere göre davranma becerisi geliştirdim. (Feriha, Multinational, N-1)

80. Hastane sektöründe çalışıyorsan, mobilya fuarına gideceksin. Mobilyacıysan ve hep mobilya fuarına gidersen orada kalırsın, yeni bir şey çıkmaz. Amerika'da ki şirket için hep Amerikan şirketlerini incelemek olmaz, uzak doğu şirketlerini incelersen olur. Benchmark karar alırken çok önemli, her şeyi deneyemeyeceğinize göre... Pazarda kalmanın yolu bu. Ben bu veriyi farklı kanallardan almayı tercih ederim. Ama köşeli bir şekilde, bu olur, bu olmaz dersem yanılırım. Etkili olan senden farklı olandan ne öğrenebilirim bakmak çünkü. İşim restructuing, ben hep bir ortamı dağıtmak ve yeniden yapmak üzere bir şirkete gittim. Zor kararları kolaylıkla aldığım zamanlar oldu. Eskiden ağır talepkârdım, çok emek sarf ederdim ama o kişinin de sarf ettiğini görmem lazım. Bu noktada bir idrak seviyesine ulaştım. Herkesin bir yaşam durumu, aktif gündemi, bir kapasitesi var. Eski halimle ukalalıklar yaptım, kibir gösterdim, zorladım insanları. Şimdi o halime üzülüyorum, neden o insanları o kadar zorladım diyorum. Farklılıkları göre göre, daha esnek ve toleranslı bir yaklaşımım oluştu. Şimdi biliyorum, öfke ile hareket eder, ne olacak dersen bir kez bitti. Her kararını böyle meşrulaştırabilirsin. Rüşvet alan adam bile bunun iyi bir şey olduğunu söyleyebiliyor günümüzde. Ama aslında olan kendinin öğrenme ihtimalini ve o insanın sana bir daha yaklaşma ihtimalini öldürmek. Saygıyı, birlikteliği öldürmek. İnsana saygı, açıklık, adalet, esneklik, accountability. Mülk âleminde ve ahirette hesap verme. Bunların değer olduğunu, bunlardan vazgeçtiğinde aslında kim olduğun ile çatıştığın artık biliyorum. Onun için de start-uplar ile çalışmaktan keyif alıyorum artık. Start-up korkunç muazzam bir şey. Başka bir kültür. Her şey anlık değişiyor, korkunç bir hız ve farklılıkların hepsini içine alıyor. Her kafadan bir çözüm duyuluyor ve buradan kolektif bir şey çıkıyor. Herkes birbirini dinliyor. Herkes değerli hissediyor. Çok değerli bir öğrenme ortamı. Her şey yeni, her şeyi ilk seferde doğru kurma şansın var. (Adil, Local, N)

81. Abroad linklerini kurmak ve ilişki yönetimi konusundaki başarımdan dolayı, insanları okuyabildiğim ve derin ilişkiler yaratabildiğim için buradayım. Bu projede matrix bir yapı yönetmeye çalışıyorum. Farklı kültürlerden, farklı ülkelerden insanlar var. Proje içerisinde peerlarim var, onların sonuçlarından da sorumluyum. Ortak payda corporate citizenship ve projeyi başarmak istememiz. Aynı şirket kültüründe yasamaktan mutluyuz sonuçta, bu da önemli bir gösterge. Entelektüel seviyelerimiz aynı, yaşam stillerimiz benzer, değerlerimiz ortak. Dünya vatandaşıyız yani hepimiz... Bundan dolayı farklılıklar sorun yaratmıyor. Proje takımını kurarken zaten nereliler diye bakmıyorsun. Ne biliyorlar, neyi önemsiyorlar ve nasıl davranıyorlar diye bakıyorsun. (Suna, Local, N-1)

82. Yazıda referans verilen testleri yaptım merakla. Bunları, kendi bilinçdışı tercih ve tutumlarınızı anlamanız için oluşturmuşlar. Ben mesela cinsiyet için olanı merak ettim, yaptım. Elde ettiğim sonuçlar beni şaşırttı. Aile ile kadın arasında kurduğum bağ, kariyer ile kadın arasından yüksek çıktı. Kadınlar ile sosyal bilimleri de daha çok örtüştürdüm nedense. Ve ben mühendis bir kadınım (gülüyor). Sonrasında bu unconscious bias meselesini epey araştırdım. Kendinizin bile farkında olmadıklarınız kararlarınıza yon veriyor. (Sevim, Local, N)

83. Dubai'de bir müşteri mesela, bir event planlarken, Arap model istemiyorum dedi. Ben ona o zaman tamam dedim şimdi olsa hayatta demem, sorgularım, karşı çıkarım. Ne demek Arap model istemiyorum, Arabistan'da yaşıyorsun, hedef kitlen orda ama Arap model istemiyorsun.

Ayrımcılık bu. Saygısızlık. Sonradan bu racism içime dert oldu ama o dönemde daha toyum, zaten bir şey demem zor. Bir de ben de kendi kendime bu sorgulamalardan geçiyorum. Türkiye'de ailelerimizin, okulun falan Arabistan ile ilgili bir duruşu, bir yargısı vardı. Kendilerinin diğeri gibi hep böyle, modern değil, geri falan... Böyle bir kültürel arka plan ile geliyorsunuz ve benim kendi oğlum Arapça adını yazmayı öğreniyor, ben bir tuhaf hissediyorum ama İngiliz eşim bunu anlamıyor, dil öğreniyor avantaj falan diyor. Kendiniz, geçmişiniz, kültürünüz, aileniz, hepsi ile ilgili bir ön yargı bu sonuçta. Önyargılarınız, değerleriniz ile çatışıyor bazen, farkına bile varmıyorsunuz. Yurtdışında yaşadıktan sonra bu rahatsızlık anlarının üstüne gitmek gerektiğini anladım. Şimdi bu ön yargı nereden kaynaklı, benden mi nerden didikliyorum. Sonra artık yönetici olarak bir duruşum ve olgunluğum var, müşteriye ayar verebiliyorum, eğitiyorum. Müşteri yönetiminin bir parçası aslında bu önyargıları fark ettirmek. Liderliğin parçası da değerleriniz ile ilgili geri adim atmamak. (Nur, Consulting, N)

84. X (yönetici adi) ile birlikte çalışma fırsatım olduğu için şanslıyım. Rol modelimdir. Strateji belirleme, o stratejiyi şirket içinde satılabilir hale getirme ve adım adım hayata geçirme. Soruları, çalışma tutkusu ve arkanda durması. Bunlar bir yönetici için çok önemli özellikler. Ben bunları, onu gözlemleyerek ve birlikte yaparak öğrendim. Şirketten ayrıldığında çok üzüldüm. Böyle ortada kaldım sanki. Ama onun rolünü almak için hazırdım. Çok uzun değil ama çok yoğun bir deneyim yasadığım için hazırdım. Beni de zaten o önerdi kendi pozisyonu için. (Banu, Multinational, N-1)

85. Adam müşteri yönetiminde guruydu. Bazı anlarda hala bu is öyle yapılır iste diyorum. Bugün is konuşabilmek için aslında çok daha uzun bir sure güven ilişkisi inşa etmek gerektiğini ondan öğrendim. Bir gün yoldayız, telefon geldi. Kurduğumuz üretim tezgâhlarından birinde sorun var, müşteride bütün üretim durmuş. Benim ilk aklıma gelen birini yönlendirelim çünkü çok büyük bir müşteri değil, ertesi günün programı çılgın gibi. Biz gidelim dedi, rotayı değiştirdi. Ben tabi içimden ne gerek vardı, yorgunuz şimdi diye söyleniyorum. Benim patron açıklıkla şuralarda yanlış düşünmüş olabiliriz dedi. Müşteri sakinleşti. O kadar açıklıkla söyleyince karşı tarafın zaten söyleyecek fazla bir şeyi kalmadı. Onlar sohbet ederken biz sorunu çözdük. O gün oraya gitmek müşteri ile ilişkimizi sağlamlaştırdı, bize başka müşteriler pasladı. Şimdi biliyorum ki evet, o gün oraya gitmekten daha önemli bir şey yokmuş. (Ercan, Multinational, N-1)

86. Doğrucu Davut durumum vardı, bu yanlış değil belki ama bunu hep anarşist bir şekilde, uçlarda dile getiriyordum. Hatırladıkça gülüyorum, biz ise girerken çok uzun soluklu hayaller kurarak bir şirkete giriyorduk. İlk şirketime başlama motivasyonum da böyle. 2,5 yıl zam almadım ve performansım da iyi. Artık farklılaşmalıyım diye düşünüyorum. Bunu müdürüme de direktörüme de ifade ediyorum ama değerlendirildiğini, herkesin aynı olduğunu falan soyluyorlar. Artık bir gün dayanamadım, bordromu aldım ve adamın camına astım. Sarı ile de aldığım parayı higlight ettim ve istifamı verdim. Kendimce kesin çizgiyi çektim. O donem bir arkadaşım var, artık bana dil dökmekten sıkılmış, bari bir babanı ara bir sor akil al falan diyor ama yok, yapmıyorum. Cuma indirdiler bordroyu, Pazartesi tekrar astım. Müdürüm 68 kuşağı bir X'lı (Üniversite adı), içten içe bence hoşuna gidiyor yaptığım ama is yeri yani. Normal şartlarda direk atmaları lazım beni. Benimle konuştu, anlattı, elinde olanı ve yapabileceği söyledi, nedenlerini anlattı. Beni ne kadar iyi tanıdığını, önemsediğini ve bana ne kadar inandığını fark ettim ben o konuşmada. Ben devam etmeye ikna oldum, dersimi de aldım. Tabi başka bir taşkınlık yapmayım diye beni 6 ay gözetimde tuttu, ama sonuçta beni sahiplendi, arkamda durdu ve ben atılmadım. Ben duyguları kontrol etmenin, tepkileri doğru şekilde ifade etmenin ne kadar önemli olduğunu ondan öğrendim. Kariyer beklentilerinizi günün koşulları ile dengelemeniz gerektiğini... Ama en önemlisi benim hangi değerler ile bunu yaptığımı anlamaya çalışması, empati kurması ve yol göstermesiydi. Su anda yöneticiyim, başıma böyle bir şey gelse ne tepki

veririm su anda kestiremiyorum. Ama bazen bugünkü olayda acaba ne yapardı ne tepki verirdi diye düşünüyorum. Bunun hakkında düşünmek bile farklı bakış açıları görmeye, alternatifleri değerlendirmeye yardımcı. Bu egzersiz bile aydınlatıcı. (Feriha, Multinational, N-1)

87. O role tekrar atandım. İlk karar bir takım politik müdahaleler nedeniyle iptal olmuştu. Öyle bir pozisyona atandığınızda çiçek-çikolata gelir, hayırlı olsun diyenler, 3-4 gün öyle nezaketle geçer. 10 gün oldu bana, benim bağlı olacağım patrondan ve onun yönetim kurulunda iyi olduğu 2-3 kişiden herhangi bir hayırlı olsun gelmedi. Bir sorun var. Neyse haftanın sonunda beni çağırdı, odasına gittim. Benim patron ve 2 tane de yönetim kurulu üyesi oturuyor. Şimdi kabaca soyluyorum ama söylediklerinin meali su seni buraya biz getirdik, bundan sonra biz ne dersek o olacak. Atanmışım, hak ettiğimi düşünüyorum ve biliyorum. 2 sene önce de olacaktı, olmadı ve ben emeğimle tekrar aldım bu pozisyonu. Bizim sayemizde geldin ve biz ne dersek o deyince ben üzüldüm ama daha çok sinirlendim. Bunu bana nasıl söylediğinizi, ne cesaretle söylediğinizi bilmiyorum. Oradan bakınca zayıf ve kişiliksiz, hak etmediği role gelen biri gibi mi gözüküyorum. Ben ne doğru ise onu yapacağım dedim. Kapıyı sessizce kapattım ve çıktım. Bu olaydan 3-4 ay sonra ayrılma kararı verdim. Bu olayla anladım ki değerlerimiz, tarzlarımız çok farklı. Birlikte çalışamayacaktık. Ben bu keskin ve net durusu göstermeseydim ezilirdim ve sonra çok pişman olurdum. Zaman zaman yönetebilir miydim bu ilişkileri diye düşünüyorum ama yok, o donemde mümkün değildi, değerlerimden çok odun vermem gerekecekti. Kendimi bir daha böyle bir diyalogun içinde görmek de istemiyordum, şirketten ayrıldım. Ama sonra geri geldim, tepe yönetime bu sefer. O odada olanlar emekli oldu, birisi ile hala yazlıkta karşılaşıyoruz. O günü unutturmak adına, saygı ve sevgi adına yapmadıkları şaklabanlık kalmadı. Şirkette 45-50 yıllık donemde kendi isteği ile o kadar üst düzey pozisyondan ayrılan bir ben varım. Ya atılmış ya sürülmüşler. İstifa geleneğinin kapısını açan benim. Ayrılırken birçok çalışanım bana veda mektubu yazdı, bunlar varken bize bir şey olmaz dedikleri, şirket doğru yola gider diye düşündükleri 3-5 yönetici varmış, biri de benmişim. Saygım tazelendi. Yönetici özeti gibi yaparsak; değerleriniz var ve üst yönetimde bunların faturasını ödüyorsunuz. Yanılıyorsunuz, aldatılıyorsunuz. Bir daha bu duruma düşemem dediğiniz anlar için radikal kararlar alıyorsunuz, bedelini ödüyorsunuz ama buna rağmen saygı duyulmak, güvenilir olmak çok önemli. Sizin yaşınızda bu çok anlaşılmıyor ama benim yaşımda artık daha net. İyi anılmak, kendiniz ile barışık olmak, bunlar değerli duygular, bunları herkes yaşayamıyor. Mesela o odadaki 3 kişi, benim patron, yasayamıyor, bu kafa rahatlığını. Üst düzey yöneticinin değerlerine bağlı olması, taviz vermemesi, adil olması ve faturası ne olursa olsun ödemeyi göze alması lazım. Ben bunu bu deneyimlerden, ilişkilerden öğrendim. (Yavuz, Local, N-1)

88. Genel mudur ile kâbus gibiydi. İstifa bile ettim sayesinde. Ama ondan ekibime nasıl davranmamam gerektiğini, neyi yapmamam gerektiğini öğrendim. Zor müşterileri yönetme becerilerim de arttı bence sayesinde (gülüyor). İyi, en iyinin düşmanıdır derdi. Doğru da ama daha iyi olmak için o kadar sorguluyordu ki artık rasyonellik boyutunu asmış, is yapamaz hale gelmiştik. Bir gün ne kadar detaylı düşündük deyip, ikinci gün bugün hayata geçiremeyeceğimiz istekler ile gelip hiç long term değilsin diye beni eleştiriyordu. Sadece sayılarla, datayla, factlerle konuşmanın etkili olduğunu keşfettim. Bir kararını sorguladığımda da hep hazırlıklı, sayılarla gittim. Kopma noktam bir rapor. Şirkette kimsenin tecrübesi yok ve konu bir şekilde bana geldi. Karamsar yaklaşmadım, direk hayır demedim. Farklı bölümleri bir araya getirdim, bilgileri birleştirdik, UK ekibine sorduk falan. Birkaç gece uykusuz geçirdik, araştırdık. Süper kaliteli bir şey değil ama bir şey çıktı ortaya. Bu kadar kısa sürede, almak zorunda olmadığım ve bilmediğim bir alanda bu kadar olabildi. Kendisine anlattığımızda o kadar kritik etti ki... so critical. Soru sormak iyi bir şey ama o bile orantısız yapıldığında olmuyor. Sayesinde anlatırken is bilmez gibi gözüktük, çok kotu hissettim, çok sinirlendim. Ama sakin kalmaya çalışarak çıktım yanından. Her şey daha iyi olabilir, bunu hepimiz biliyoruz ama bu çok yorucu. Sürekli çalışıyorsunuz ve ortada elle tutulur bir sonuç yok. Bir tane iyi bir şey duymamışsınız.

Sonrasında hep direk conflictten kaçındım. Ne ekibe ne bana faydası olmayacağını bildiğimden sabırla ve kaçarak yaşadım bir sure. Şirketi seviyordum, kalmak da istiyordum. Burada emeğimin çok olduğunu, şirket için çalıştığımı, onun için çalışmadığımı hatırlattım durdum hep kendime. Sürekli bu gerginlikte, bu küçük düşürülme durumu ile yaşayınca, ekibime karşı davranışlarım değişti. Tamamen değişti. Bence daha pozitif ve yapıcı bir yönetici oldum. Başarıları kutlamayı öğrendim. Anladım ki benim rolüm hatalardan, başarısızlıklardan dersler çıkarabilmelerini, o öğrenme fırsatını yakalamalarını sağlamak, eleştirmek değil (Meltem, Consulting, N).

89. İhtiyacım olan tüm bilgiyi yasayarak öğrenmem imkânsız. Tepe yönetimde öğrenme ihtiyacı, sanılanın aksine artıyor da... Ama yalnız da kalıyorsun. Ben diğer ülke genel müdürlerine yaklaştım. Onlar da aynı şeyleri hissetmiş olacaklar ki çok iyi, besleyici ilişkiler kurduk. Bana açıklıkla bunu yap, bunu yapma dediler. Eski yöntemlerimle dediğimin, yaptığımın nasıl algılanabileceği konusunda fikir verdiler. Çok uzun suredir bu şirketteyim. Sorunları, benzer yöntemlerle çözme eğilimim var, yani çekici iyi kullanabiliyorsan sana her şey çivi gibi gözükür. Bunu kırmamı sağladılar. Ama öncesi için aynı pozitif şeyi söyleyemem, bu peerin rakibin değilse mümkün. (Ahmet, Multinational, N)

90. Teknoloji serbest bölgesinin özel kuralları var. Çalışanlara da yansıtılan bir vergi avantajı söz konusu, bunu alabilmek için proje bazlı personel maliyeti hesaplamak gerekli. Bir yandan da genel merkezin finans ve insan kaynakları bölümleri ile entegre çalışmamız bekleniyor. İki tarafın da istekleri, öncelikleri farklı. Kaos ortamı ve sürekli raporlar gidip geliyor ve benim sayılarla aram hiç iyi değil. Finansın başında olan kişi bana inanılmaz destek oldu bu süreçte. Şirket kültürünü anlamamı sağladı, kim kimdir anlattı, sistemleri ve raporlamaları öğretti. Bunun ötesinde yönetim kuruluna neyi nasıl sunmam gerektiği, kime nasıl anlatmam gerektiği, kimin ikna olacağı, kime dikkat etmem gerektiği konusunda uğraşsam çok uzun surede, düşe kalka, deneye yanıla ve hatalarla öğreneceğim bilgileri hap gibi verdi. Sayesinde benim oryantasyonum çok hızlı oldu. (Suna, Local, N-1)

91. Toksik insanlar var is dünyasında, hem de üst yönetimde daha çok. Burada böyle insanlar ile tanıştım, bu insanlar ile çalışmayı öğrendim. Is hayatında sadece altını yönetmiyorsun; altını, üstünü ve en çok da peerini yönetiyorsun. Naif ve farklı normlar ile girdim bu yapıya ama negatif olaylar yaşadım. İlk Ortadoğu bölgesi için bir yapı ve süreç sunumu yaptım. İyi niyetli olmadığını düşündüğüm soruların hepsi peerlarimdan geldi. Üstelik sunum öncesinde fikirlerini almıştım. Dış iletişimde olan her şeyin öncelikle bizimle görüşülmesi, bizden onay alınması lazım. Bunu oturtana kadar şirket liderleri ile çok karşı karşıya kaldım. Hepsi bir deneyim. Bunların beni güçlendirdiğini, daha kendimden emin yaptığını düşünüyorum. Çatışma yönetimi ve insanları ikna konusunda daha iyi olmam lazım. Şimdi bu konularda çok okuyorum. (Berrak, Multinational, N-1)

92. Organizational political savvy kuvvetli alanım. Öğrenmeme en çok destek olan özelliğim de bu. Kim kimi nasıl etkiler, kimin üzerinde etkisi vardır. En tepede olan liderin yaklaşımlarını, diğerlerinin önceliklerini anlamalıyım ki ona göre nasıl anlatmalıyım, nasıl plan yapmalıyım şekillendireyim. Genel müdürün backgroundu mesela, çok şey söyler. Satış ise başka finans ise başka. Peerlarınızı kim olduğu, onlarla ilişkileriniz çok önemli. Management team `de herkesin bambaşka motifleri var, yaklaşımları var ve ben almak istediğim sonuçlar için, buna göre behave ederim. Detayları ne kadar anlatacağıma, nasıl anlatacağıma buna göre karar veririm. Satışta işe başlamak, insanların özelliklerini önemsemek gerektiğini hızlı kavramanıza sebep oluyor. Bu bir avantaj. Satış kökenli çok CEO olmasının sebebi de bu bence. İlk isimde daha bunu fark ettim ama yönetim kuruluna girdikten sonra, board ilişkilerini, peerlari

yönetmeye, genel de de çok destekleyici değil, çalışırken çok daha fazla öğrendim, geliştim. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

93. Ben yönetici olduğumda müstakil, tekil bir adamdım. Herkesin de aynı olduğunu düşünüyordum. Gelen eleştiriler ile takımın gelişiminden de sorumlu olduğumu anladım. Bu benim için önemli bir farkındalık. Bizim isimiz case by case gidiyor, vakaları yaşayarak, görerek öğreniyorsunuz. Eskiden ise başlayan herkesle mağazaya gider, onları temas ederken izler ve akabinde bu oldu bu olmadı derdim. Şimdi bana bağlı yöneticilerin bunu yapmasını bekliyorum. Birlikte çalıştığım yöneticiler kıdemli insanlar, isle ilgili ne yapmaları gerektiğini zaten biliyorlar. Ben onlara biraz daha geniş bir perspektiften baktığımda ne gördüğümü, nasıl gelişim alanları gözlemlediğimi söylemeliyim. Su andaki sorumluluğumun onları güçlendirmek olduğunu düşünüyorum. En çok gerekli öğrenme fırsatını sağlamaktan sorumluyum. Bunu yapmaya çalışıyorum. Takımın yapması gereken üst düzey bir sunum var diyelim, kimin bu alanda gelişim noktası varsa o iste onunla çalışırım. Tepe yönetime sunum hazırlama, bizim isin önemli bir kısmı, iyi olmak zorunda olduğumuz bir alan. Bu benim ekibimde olan yöneticilerin bir sonraki adimi, bunun için kendilerini geliştirmeliler, hazırlanmalılar. Ben de onları desteklemek için buradayım (Burak, Multinational, N-2).

94. İkimizin de zamanı az, ikimizin de zamanı kıymetli. İkimiz de deneyimliyiz. Kalkıp da bu böyle olmalı demek sinir bozucu, küstahça olur. Mid level biraz daha farklı, tek taraflı daha çok öğretiliyor. Şimdi karşılıklı daha çok öğreniyoruz. Ama aranızda güven ilişkisi kurulduysa ve diplomatik dili aştıysanız. Birbirimize bunu yanlış yapıyorsun diye çıkıştıktan sonra gidip kakara kikiri öğle yemeği yiyebilmeliyiz. Egoları bir tarafa bırakıp, kişisel olarak algılamıyorsak eleştiriyi, bu böyle. Karşılıklı bu. Şu anda toplantı öncesinde daha çok hazırlanıyorum. Zaman kıtlığında toplantı ayarlamışız, bunun verimli geçmesi lazım. Sorularımı hazırlıyorum, beklentilerimi detaylandırıyorum, olmazsa olmazlarımı anlatıyorum sadece. İkimizin de performansı buna bağlı, gün sonunda neyi ölçeceğiz net konuşuyoruz, anlaşıyoruz. Bu toplantı sonrası ikimizde aynı şeyi savunmalıyız, yan yana durmalıyız. İkincisi, açık uçlu sorular sadece. Anlatırsa daha çok öğreneceğim…. Direktörüm bir şey dediğinde, ben kendimi daha çok hırpalıyorum. Derin sorular geliyor, pros cons tartışırken bazen öyle bir yorum geliyor ki bunu hiç düşünmedim, nasıl düşünmedim diyebiliyorsun. Bu ilişkiyi ben hala öğreniyorum. (Mete, Multinational, N)

95. Şirketin sınırları, geleceği çerçevesinde düşünürsem o kişiden öğrenebileceklerim belli. Odaklanmama ket vuruyor. Bunun yerine açık uçlu sorular soruyorum ve anlattırıyorum. Bizim topraklarda geri bildirim alma, birbirinden öğrenme kültürü yok, en iyi liderler bunu yapabilenler. Öğrenmek için diri ve teyakkuzda olmak lazım. Zinde olmak. Bir kedinin fare deliği önünde bekleyiş hali vardır ya. O an meselesidir, kedi onu bekler ve yakalar. Öğrenmeyi öyle beklemek ve bu insanlar ile öyle çalışmak lazım. (Adil, Local, N)

96. Çok fazla is aldık ve ekibi de çok hızlı büyütmemiz gerekti. Bizim alanımızda İngilizcesi iyi, proje yönetiminden anlayan eleman bulmak çok zor, onun için sürekli bir arayış var. Ama bunun ötesinde havuz problemi gibi. Ben ise alimi hızlandırdıkça o kadar çok ayrılan var ki, yöneticiler ayrılıyor… Turnover % 40lara dayandı. Artık İnsan Kaynakları pazardaki herkesle görüştük başka bir sıkıntı var ekipte demeye başladı. Ben o zaman ekibe dondum ve hiç hoşuma gitmeyen şeyler keşfettim. Mesela bazı takımlar da sürekli bir dedikodu hali, sürekli eleştiriyorlar ama sadece eleştiriyorlar. Bazı müdürler, arayı kapatmak için kendileri o kadar çok çalışıyorlar ki hem mutsuzlar hem de ekibe karşı agresif tavırlar içerisindeler. Staff artık bu müdürlerle çalışmak istemiyor resmen, dediklerini dinlemiyorlar, laf sokmalar ve sürekli bir gerginlik. Ben çok genç mudur oldum, ortak olana kadar da öncelik hep müşteri yönetimiydi. Bu pozisyonumda bir anda insan yönetiminin önemini fark ettim. Açıklıkla söyleyeyim. Kendi

kendine bu kadar sorunu çözmene imkân yok, bir yardım al dedim ve danışmanlık talep ettim. Takımda iyi yöneticilere ihtiyaç var. İnsan Kaynakları koçluk için bana birisini önerdi, ben onunla çalışmaya başladım ve müdürlerim de bire bir çalışmaya başladı aynı kişi ile. Under staff olma, overtime gibi yapısal birtakım işlere çözümleri hayata geçirirken, bir yandan da birlikte çalışmayı öğrendik. Bu süreçte ben ne olursa olsun ne kadar zor olursa olsun insan ile ilgili problemleri görmezden gelmemem gerektiğini anladım. Çünkü yayılıyor, buyuyor, bütün ekibi kontrol altına alıyor. Öğrendiklerimin biri ignore etme. İkincisi kişiselleştirme, bir kişi pasif agresif davranıyorsa bu o kişi ile ilgili olabilir evet ama çalışma ortamı ile ilgili olma olasılığı daha fazla. Direk sor ve anlamaya çalış, assumption yapma. Üçüncüsü de ihtiyaçları ve ne yapacağımızı birlikte keşfedelim, karar verelim. Yöneticiler kararları takipten sorumlu olsun ama ne oluyor ne bitiyor şeffaf olarak ekibi bilgilendirsin. Dokümantasyon ve iletişim çok kritik. Takımın moralini yükseltmek için takım aktiviteleri yaptık, away day, happy hour, learning week... İletişimi kuvvetlendirmek için newsletterlar yayınlamaya başladım. Ben açık kapı politikasına geçtim, gelin direk benimle konusun, bu konuyu ben takip ediyorum mesajını çok net verdim. Müdürleri insan yönetimi ve proje yönetimi becerilerinde güçlendirmek için, çok kaynak ayırdım, sadece eğitimler değil. Onlarla birlikte çalıştım. Yan yana. Bu ilişkilerden ben de insan yönetimi, liderlik ile ilgili çok şey öğrendim. Ve insanlar geldikçe de bu açıklığın arkasında durdum. Sonuçta çok emek verdik. Turnover düştü, engagement arttı, sonuçlar güzel. Müdürlerden 2 si ile yollarımızı ayırmak zorunda kaldık ama... (Meltem, Consulting, N)

97. İç terfiinin en zorlayan tarafı ilişkiler. Eski ilişkilerin yeni hali. Herkes açısından hataya çok açık. Ben mesela oldukça naif olarak, birlikte çalışmak için bunun bir avantaj olacağını düşünmüştüm. Böyle olmuyormuş. İki gün önce birlikte bir şeylerden şikâyet ettiğim arkadaşıma şimdi başka bir şapka ile konuşmam gerek. Yeni rolle tansiyonu düşürmem, otorite ve güven kazanmam gerek. Bu çok zor ama çok öğretici. Bir çalışma arkadaşım, en az benim kadar deneyimli, kendisini bu role aday görüyordu. Ben de öyle görüyordum aslında. Onun motivasyon düşüklüğü, pasif agresif davranışlarıyla çok uğraştım. Başka bir arkadaşım iyi ilişkimize güvenip olmadık işler yaptı, mailler attı falan. Bunlara da göz yummamı bekledi. Epey tartıştık. Aldatılmış, kullanılmış hissettiğim çok oldu. İlk 3-4 ay sadece bunlarla uğraştım. En son bir arkadaşımla birlikte çalışmama kararı aldık. Bir yerde vazgeçmem gerektiğini anladım. Bunu kabullenmek de önemli. Ekibin geri kalanı ile oldu, onunla olmadı. Kendisine saygı duyduğumu, anladığımı ama bu şekilde devam edemeyeceğimizi, davranışlarını değiştirmesi gerektiğini çok anlattım. Olmadı. En son kendisine outplacement hizmeti sağlayarak, mümkün olduğunca iyi kalmaya çalışarak şirketten ayrılmasını istedim (Oktay, Multinational, N-1).

98. Öğrenmede okulu ayıralım. O zorunlu bir süreç aslında. İş hayatında öğrenmek ancak istek ile olur. Açıklıkla ve kendi isteğiniz ile olur. Yaş ile alakası yoktur mesela, öğrenmek genç tutuyor insanı. Eğer bu yaklaşım siz de yok ise, öğrenemezsiniz ve gerilersiniz. Öğrenmek, özellikle de iş hayatında başarı için öğrenmek, kişilik özelliğidir yani bir yerde. Öğrenme bakış açınız var ise her yerde ve her şeyden öğrenirsiniz. Öğrenme açlığı ve iç motivasyon bir araya gelince, birleşince ilerlersin. (Berrak, Multinational, N-1)

99. Öğrenmeyi sevmek, merak, öğrenirken geçirdiğiniz keyifli zaman… Bunlar kişisel özellikler olabilir. Ancak öğrenmeyi öğrenmek, bu mindset sayesinde geliştirebileceğim bir deneyim. Hepimizin yaşayarak geliştirdiği bir şey. Bunu defalarca yaptığım için daha hızlı ve daha etkili yapıyorum. Yapabildiğimde kendime güveniyorum ya da olmazsa ne olacak korkusuyla hareket etmiyorum. Örneğin, yalnızca yapıcı eleştirileri dinlemeyi öğreniyorsun. Sonra sonsuz bir tutku ve merakla tekrar tekrar öğrenmeye odaklanıyorsun (Mete, Multinational, N).

100. Öğrenme nedir…Bilgi, bence ihtiyaçtan geliyor. İhtiyaç varsa öğrenme var. Ben hep öncelikle kendim öğrenmeliyim dedim. Bu özellik sayesinde, bunun bir yan etkisi gibi para kazandım. Bu kadar bilgi edinmeseydim, farklı farklı işler yapmasaydım, konfor alanımdan çıkmasaydım, kendimi eğitmeseydim burada olmayacaktım. CFO koltuğunda girdiğim şirkette, şirketi restructure etmeye soyunmayacaktım. Assesmentlara girdim mesela, bana senin profilinde bir CFO hiç görmedik dediler. Çünkü CFO daha kuralları ve düzenlemeleri uygulayandır, sabittir. Benim sorgulama, yaratma ve inovasyon tarafım kuvvetli. Daha dinamik. Bu öğrenme sayesinde. (Zafer, Multinational, N-1)

101. Sürekli öğrenmek zorundasın, sürekli.. Yeni bir pazara giriyorsun; değişik dinamikleri var. Resmi kurallarından tutun da, iletişimde işleyen yöntemlere kadar başka. Mecbur öğreniyorsun. Takımına yeni biri geliyor, yöneticin değişiyor, peerın gidiyor. Her bir değişimden iletişimle ilgili bir şey öğreniyorsun. İş yapış şekilleri değişiyor teknolojiye bağlı. Google ads mesela, hayatı değiştirdi bizim dünyamızda. Pazarlama başka bir hal aldı. Ben başladığımda doğru düzgün cep telefonu yoktu. Sonra ekip başka yerde, birlikte çalışmayı öğreniyorsun. Hayat kolaylaştıran şeyler öğreniliyor hızlıca ama bu öğrenme için en başta değişimi olumlu karşılamak lazım. Esnek olmak, anlamaya çalışmak, uyarsam ne kazanırım diye bakmak lazım. Whatsapp iş yapış şeklini değiştirdi. Eğer hızlıca uyum sağlayıp kullanmaya başlamasaydık, bu kadar dağınık bir ekipte bu kadar hızlı olamazdık. (Bahar, Local, N-1)

102. Neden bu noktadayım çünkü çok firma, bölge ve iş değiştirdim. Önceki şirkette çok gezdim, satışın her alanını gördüm, farklı bölgelere gittim, fonksiyonları gezim, rotate ettim, pazarlama, reklamda çalıştım. Esnek olduğum için gelen her rolü kabul ettim ve her birine çok hızlı uyum sağladım. Bu yaklaşım ile daha donanımlı hale geldim. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

103. Her durumu yeni bir değişim olarak ele almak ve yönetmek. Sen oraya gidiyorsan sen yenisin, aslında sen değişim aracısın. Alışkanlıklardan, kafanda olan kalıplardan kurtulma hali. Öğrendiklerini unutmak ve tekrar öğrenmek. Esnek olma hali. Çok farklı şirketlerde, farklı mecralarda çalıştığım için öğrendim bunu ben. Performans Yönetimi mesela. Her şirkette, her ülkede farklı olmak zorunda. İlk şirketimden ayrıldığımda ben iyi biliyorum bu işi derdim, şimdi başka düşünüyorum. İyi iş yapma, başarılı olma isteği hep var ama her değişime aynı heyecanla, ayrı dinamikleri olacak farkındalığı ile yaklaşmak lazım. Bu öğrenmenin onunu açıyor. (Cansu, Multinational, N-2)

104. Tevazu ile, haddini bilerek daha başka nasıl olabilir sorusunu sormak. Sürekli sormak. What can go wrongu düşünmek. Riskleri ne bu işin, nerede patlarız, patlarsak b planı ne olur düşüncesi. Her insanda olduğu gibi bunlar embedded. Ama ehven kılan koşullar var bu özelliklerinizin ortaya çıkmasını. Aldığınız aksiyonlar, motivasyonlarınız, ortamınız gibi. Kötü bir durumdasınız, oradan kurtulmayı becerebilmek gibi. Karşıtlıkların olduğu, çarpıştığı bir yerde ortaya çıkıyor bu. Bunlar olurken kapalıysanız bitti. Sensörleriniz açık ise güzel. Üşenmeyeceksiniz, vazgeçmeyeceksiniz, ertelemeyeceksiniz. Muhakkak gidip bulabileceğinizi bulacaksınız, yapabileceğinizi yapacaksınız. Tatmin edici bilgiyi bulana kadar kovalayacaksınız, sonra o wisdom olacak. Özünde, öğrenme açlığı, obsesifliği, bu tutku, derin bir merak. Müşteri bir sorundan bahsediyor, şirkette bir şeyler oluyor. Siz orada bir karar veriyorsunuz, bir secim yapıyorsunuz ve her şey buna göre değişiyor. Bu beni önemli yapıyor işte. Mesele o karar anı değil. O karar anına kadar getirebildiğim bilgi ve deneyimler (Adil, Local, N)

105. Proje yönetimi beni heyecanlandırıyor. 20 sene oldu, her projeye hala aynı tutku ve enerji ile başlıyorum. Hala öğreneceklerim için heyecanlanıyorum. Merak ediyorum, araştırıyorum, öğreniyorum, daha iyi olmaya çalışıyorum. Projenin bittiği gün hüzün ve gurur aynı anda yaşanıyor. Ama bir sonraki için merak da başlıyor. Geçenlerde kendi

üniversitemdeydim. Proje yönetimi kariyerini ve yaptığımız işleri, çalışma seklimizi anlattım. 3 saate yakın anlattım. Yaptığım isi sürekli, aynı enerji ile anlatabilirim. Bu başka bir tutku. (Onur, Multinational, N-1)

106. Tepe yönetimdekilerin kendilerini sürekli güncel tutmaları lazım. Buna rağmen öğrenmenin nasıl bir şey olduğu ile ilgili bilgimin çok az olduğunu düşünüyorum. Derya deniz bir konu bu. Tamamen şans eseri elime gecen bir kitap ile konuyu araştırmaya başladım. Meta learning aslında öğrenmemen en can alıcı noktası... Bu bilgi o kadar değerli bir bilgi ki... Kendi kendine öğrenirken ne yapman gerektiğini görüyorsun. Öğrenmenin temeli. Bu zamana kadar aldığım eğitimlerin hiçbirinde nasıl yer verilmez diye kızdım açıkçası. (Ahmet, Multinational, N)

107. Nasıl öğrendiğinizi öğrenmek süper güç kazanmak gibi bir şey. Bu hız kazanmak ve zaman demek. Mind mapping ile çok etkili öğrendiğimi keşfettim. Görsel bir şeyler yarattığımda o aklımda kalıyor. Konu bazlı mind maplerim var. Bu görsel gözümün önüne geliyor. Araba kullanırken, toplantıda falan aklıma bir şey gelirse, mind mapin ilgili köşesine iliştiriyorum. Bilgileri düzenle raflara yerleştirmek ve istediğinde aradığını bulmak gibi bu. Mind mapi kendim keşfettim, koçluk aldığım kişi bu şekilde notlar alıyordu, ilgimi çekti. Ama bunun gibi başka araçlarda olabilir, görsel olarak kuvvetli araçları özellikle öğrenmek istiyorum. Bu konu çok hayati ama nedense yeni yeni gündemde. (Ayfer, Multinational, N)

108. Uzun suredir aynı şirkette çalışıyorsanız dışarıda ne oluyor diye bakmak öğrenmek. Sonra kişisel farkındalık. Bu yeni ortama adapte olmak için size ne lazım, neyi bilmiyorsunuz bilmek. Bunlar üzerine de kendi kendinize öğrenebilmek. Öğrenme hedefleri belirliyorum, kendim araştırıyorum, insanlar ile iletişim halinde olarak sektörü oradan takip ediyorum, liderlik için LinkedIn en çok kullandığım araç. Orada raporlar, araştırmalar ne var ne yok okuyorum. Ağırlıklı yurtdışı kaynakları kullanıyorum, beni daha çok besliyor. Sonra kendi hayatıma neyi alabilirim, neyi adapte edebilirim diye bakıyorum. Çok sevdiğim quotelar var, beni motive eden, bunlar öğrendiklerimi hatırlamamı sağlıyor. Görsel olarak odanın her tarafına asıyorum, seyahatte bile yanımda taşıdığım bir defterim var, orada tutuyorum. Görmek, gözümün önünde olması hatırlamamı sağlıyor. Gerektikleri anda pozitif etki yaratıyorlar. (Berrak, Multinational, N-1)

109. Uyku haricinde zamanımın en az %15-20'sini kendimi geliştirmeye, kendi kendime öğrenmeye ayırmaya çalışıyorum. İşimle alakalı güncel bütün magazinleri takip etmeye çalışıyorum. Sosyal medyayı bir bilgi edinme ve paylaşma aracı olarak kullanıyorum. Online eğitimlere ve videolara zaman ayırıyorum. TED Talks izliyorum. Alanımla ilgili sertifika programlarını takip ediyorum, katılamasam da içeriğine bakıp son kitap ve caseleri okumaya çalışıyorum. Öğrenmek benim için öncelikli. Amerika`da MBA yapabilmek için evimi sattım gittim. Ama yine de yetmiyor, çünkü çok fazla bilgi, öğrenecek şey var. Yapmanız gereken hızlı elemek, gerçekten isinize yarayacaklara odaklanmak ve bunları hatırlayabileceğiniz gibi düzenlemek. Like mapping your own mind... (Oktay, Multinational, N-1)

110. Kültürel olarak arka planı anlamak çok önemli. Önyargısız olmak, yapıcı yaklaşmak, kişisel algılamamak. Bunların hepsi global liderlik ile ilgili. Ben bu konuda kendimi geliştirmek istiyordum. Sonra fark ettim ki çok yakın gelecekte bu hepimizin sorunu olacak, sadece liderlerin değil. Araştırdık, bir tool aldık, şirket üyeliği yaptık. Culture Wizard. Gerçekten ilginç. İntranete koyduk, isteyen kullanıyor. Culture Wizard`da kültürel dinamikler, is ortamına nasıl yansır görebileceğiniz ülke profilleri var. Mesela ben Fransa`ya gideceğim diyelim. Anketi dolduruyorum, benim için önemli değerleri ve öncelikleri işaretliyorum, sonra size bir karşılaştırma raporu geliyor. Benim yaklaşımım ve oranın kültüründe ne çakışacak, değerler ve

liderlik stili ile ilişkili benim zorlanacağım neler olacak. Ne kolay olacak. Kendimi anlamak ve ona göre dikkat etmek için çok güzel bir guideline. Videolar var, diğer insanların deneyimlerini, hikayelerini falan da dinleyebiliyorsun. (Ayfer, Multinational, N)

111. En çok kendi kendime öğreniyorum. İnternetten, videolardan, düzenli notlar alarak, kitap okuyarak öğreniyorum. En temelde kişisel farkındalık var, bu yoksa gelişim alanını göremezsin bile. Bunun için IK`dan istediğim projeler var. 360 Feedback, assessment center uygulaması, liderlik envanterleri, benchmarklar ve sonuçların individual development planlere bağlanması. Bireysel öğrenme hedeflerinizin, bir planınızın olması iyi. (Mete, Multinational, N)

112. Farkındalık… Öğrenmenin ateşlendiği nokta. Bu anahtar ve sizinle ilgili, kendi kendinize başlattığınız bir durum. Eğer kendinizle ilgili bir merakınız yoksa ve bununla hareket etmiyorsanız öğrenemezsiniz. Hayatiniz hakkında, liderlik hakkında meraklı değilseniz, hiçbir zaman daha iyi olamazsınız. Zayıf olduğunuz noktaları biliyorsanız, o zaman etkisini azaltmaya yönelik önlemler alıyorsunuz. Önemli itemlari etkilemesin diye yollar buluyorsunuz. Planları, kararlarınızı etkiliyor. (Cansu, Multinational, N-2)

113. Bu durum hep karşıma çıkmaya başlamıştı. Üst, ast, peer herkese tosladım bir donem. Aileme bile tosladım. Tekrar tekrar basarisiz oldum...Değişmem gerektiğini kabul ettiğimde başladım öğrenmeye. Neyi neden yaptığımı sorgulamaya başladım. Duygusal zekâyı araştırdım, online eğitimlere katıldım, okudum, izledim. Bayağı yoğunlaştım. Şimdi birkaç yöntemim var. Birine bir tepki vermeden önce pause. Karar vermeden önce yoğun duyguların geçmesini beklemeyi, gerekirse kararları ertelemeyi öğrendim. Uzun vadeli düşünerek anlık tepkilerimi, duygularımı kontrol etmeye çalışıyorum. Ertelediğimde ortaya çıkan, beni rahatsız eden duygular ile yasamaya çalışıyorum. Bu tepkiyi verdikten sonraki toslamaları toplamaktan daha kolaymış (gülüyor) (Feriha, Multinational, N-1)

114. Öğrenmenin kendisi zaman alan bir şey, bundan dolayı ertelenebilir gibi oluyor. Ama böyle bir lüks yok. Feedback bu noktada çok çok önemli, çünkü günün içine entegre. Anlık, zahmetsiz. O anda sorabilirsiniz, o anda aklınızdakini söyleyebilirsiniz. Bundan dolayı çok etkili. Kendi kendinize yönetici olmuyorsunuz, başkalarının sizi nasıl gördüğü önemli. Feedback buna ulaşmanızı sağlıyor. Feedback alabildiğim için şanslıyım, bunu öğrendim diyelim, herkes yapamıyor. (Zafer, Multinational, N-1)

115. Feedback alabiliyor ve bunun üzerine aksiyon alıyor olması çok önemli. Benim yöneticimde mesela bu özellik çok yüksek, duydukları üzerinde kafa yoruyor ve kendisini geliştirmeye çok açık. O seviye de bile. Bu 20 yeldir kazandığı deneyimden daha önemli bence. Ben de aynısını yapmaya çalışıyorum, soruyorum ne düşünüyorsun diye. Biraz daha perspektifi anlamaya çalışıp, bunu nasıl düzeltirim diye kafa yoruyorum. Neden böyle düşünüyor, neden böyle bir algı yarattım ben bu adamda, neden bunu söylemeye ihtiyaç duydu, ne yaparsam olur… Ekipten de aynı yaklaşımı bekliyorum, defensive değil yapıcı olmalılar. Feedback size bir yerden bir yere taşıyor. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

116. Sormanız lazım, sormazsanız kimse size durup dururken bunu değiştirmen lazım demez. Bu konfor alanından çıkmak tabi. Daha ne duyacağınızı bilmeden o riski almak demek. Ben kendimle ilgili, benden beklenenlerle ilgili, nasıl bir yönetici olduğum ile ilgili en çok şeyi geri bildirimlerden öğrendim. Bazı şeyleri unutmam gerektiğini, başka bir perspektiften bakmam gerektiğini öğrendim. Self-assessment testler de çok önemli. Kendimle ilgili onlardan da çok şey öğrendim. O raporlardaki benchmark bilgisi, kendinizi karşılaştırmak için çok önemli. Bunun için de şirkette böyle araçların olmasını istiyorum ki geribildirim alınıp verilsin. Geri bildirim kültürü olmalı şirketin. Bunla ilgili eğitimler düzenledi, bütün ekip, her leveldan çalışan katildi.

Mudur ve ustu seviyeler için 360 sistemini kurduk. Biz proje bazlı çalışıyoruz, proje bazlı değerlendirmeyi yazılı yapabileceğimiz sistemimiz var. Aynı zamanda spontan feedback diye, kayıt tutmayan chat gibi bir aracımız da var. Bunların olması önemli ama yapıcı bir kültürde eşlik etmeli. (Meltem, Consulting, N)

117. İyi ki öğrenmişim dediğim şey sistem yaklaşımı ve reflection. Bunları profesyonel anlamda koçluk eğitimi alırken öğrendim. Duygularına, bedenine önem gösterme, sadece ilk aklına geleni değil de daha derinini sorma. Kendini tanıyorsun bu surecin içerisinde, tam olarak ne istiyorum kafa patlatıyorsun. Kendimle ilgili maskelerin altına koymuyorsun bazı şeyleri, daha fazla ve net ifade etmeye çalışıyorum. Bu caba daha çok öğrenmemi de sağlıyor. Oradaki prosesler ve öğrenme stilleri bana yaşamımın her alanında yardımcı oldu. Yazma mesela, jurnal tutma. Orada bu tekniği öğrendim, aklına ne geliyorsa yazma. Bir olayı alıp detayları ile analiz etme ve ne öğrendin diye sorma. Koçluk ve yaptığınız sunumlar için mesela, video çekip o videolarda kendinizi değerlendirmek de reflection. Reflection kendine dürüstlükle, açıklıkla ayna tutmak. Buna her gün zaman ayırmak. Araba kullanırken, uyumaya hazırlanırken, bazen gün içerisinde aralarda. Bu tekniği içselleştirdim ben, değişime zemin oluşturdu. Tasarladığım liderlik programlarına da koçluk seanslarıma da eklemeye çalışıyorum. Öğrenilenin havada kalmaması, anlamlı bir derse çevirebilmesi için reflection çok önemli. Dialogue in Darkness, uçakta kriz yönetimi simülasyonu, kamp yapmak, escape oyunları gibi daha önce yapılmamış şeyleri bu programa koyup, sonrasında ne yaşadın ne yaptın ne hissettin gibi sorular sormak örneğin. Reflectionu bir alışkanlık haline getirmesini isterim herkesin. (Suna, Local, N-1)

118. Ne iyi gitti de ne iyi gitmedi kadar önemli bir soru. Yapım gereği ben olumsuzu sorgulamaya daha meyilliyim ama pozitif olanı ortaya koymak da epey öğrenmenizi sağlıyor. Ne iyi gitmedi çok sonuç odaklı bir soru. Sonuçları iyileştirmek için yola çıkınca da insanların duygularına respond etmeyi, motivasyonları atlıyorsun. Bunun için ben kendi reflection yöntemimi icat ettim. Olay sonunda negatif olanları listelerken her birine karşılık bir tane de pozitif item koyuyorum. Mutlu olduklarım, sevindiklerim, takdir ettiklerim. Hatta buna rol modelim, yöneticimi de ekliyorum. O olsa ne yapardı, bana ne derdi diye de ekliyorum. Bazen başkalarının gözünden bakma egzersizi kendinizde ki artıyı, enerjiyi görmenizi sağlıyor. (Ercan, Multinational, N-1)

119. Liderlik düşüp kalkarak öğreniliyor. Hatalar çok önemli. Öğrenmek için hatalara ihtiyacımız var, yani sürekli kazanıyorsanız, sürekli kazanan bir takımsanız, insanlara hata yapmaları için alan açmıyorsanız, bu iyi haber değil. Ama bunların üzerine düşünmüyorsanız, öğrenemezsiniz de. Karşılaştığım kötü sonuçlar ile ilgili kendimi hiç sorumlu hissetmediğim, yenilgiyi hep dış faktörlere atfederek yasadığım zamanlar oldu gayet. Self serving bias… Basariyi sahiplenme yanılgısı diyelim buna. Bu kavramı fark ettiğimden bu yana hem iyi hem de kotu sonuçlar için otopsi yapıyorum. Ne öğrendim ne hissettim ne düşündüm, nasıl davrandım, neyi farklı yaparım…Önemli olan hatalarınızı derslere çevirebilmek, reflection bundan dolayı gerekli. Bunu başka liderlerin hataları üzerinden de yapıyorum ben, caseler üzerinden. Decision making bias mesela. BP`nin hataları, Enron skandalı gibi büyük şirket çöküşlerinde ne olmuş, bu liderler ne yapmışlar da öyle olmuş, ben ne düşünürdüm diye soruyorum. (Ahmet, Multinational, N)

120. Büyük ihtimalle gelecek sene Fransa olacak. Tek satış değil, daha fazla sorumluluğu olan bir rol olacak. Hızlı adapte olmak, keyifli bir deneyim yasamak ve başarılı olmak istiyorum. Bunun için de daha önce çalıştığım koçumu aradım. Kendisi ile ilk yönetim kuruluna atandığım zaman çalışmıştık, çok olumlu katkıları oldu bana. Soru sorarak karşındakine kendi kendine söylediğinin işlemeyeceğini fark ettirmek olabilecek en etkili ikna yöntemi. Koçluk bana bunu ve senaryolar hakkında düşünmeyi sağlıyor. Kendi planlama ve execution potansiyelim açığa

çıkıyor. Buna zaman ayırabiliyorum. Profesyonel tarafta en az 3 sene sonra next move yaratmalıyım kendim için. Fransa`ya oryantasyonum nasıl olacak, ilk adımlarım ne olacak vs. şimdiden düşünmüş durumdayım bu yüzden. Arada durup iyi tamam da bu deneyimi kendim için, ailem için Fransız filmine nasıl çevirebilirim de diyorum ama bunu unutacağımı da biliyorum. Koçluk ayna tutan yol arkadaşı gibi, yüzleşmenizi sağlıyor. Hızlı akıyor hayat, uzun vadeli hayaller kurarken hayatin tam içinde ne oluyor ıskalamamak da lazım. Bu noktada koçluk olduğu için şanslıyım. Hem başarılı olmak hem de bu deneyimi Fransız filmine döndürmek için çalışıyorum. (Necdet, Multinational, N-1)

121. Bundan önceki şirketimden hayal kırıklığı ile ayrıldım. Hak ettiğimden emin olduğum bir terfi bir turlu olmadı ve ikinci senenin sonunda ben ayrılma kararı aldım. Biraz ara verdim ve o donemde koçluk almaya başladım. Sinirliydim, içimde sürekli kavga ediyordum. Koçlukla kendi iç yolculuğuma odaklandım, farkındalıklar oldu. Olumsuz duyguların bir patterni var ve ben o kısır döngüden çıkamadığım için, o donemde yaşanan krizleri de fırsata çeviremedim. Self worthtu sorguladım, yani kişisel algıladım. Olaylara tekrar tekrar dondum. Olumsuz duyguların yoğunluğundan kurtulunca kendi yaptığın hataları da görüyorsun. Son zamanlarda ne kadar büyük on yargılar ile hareket edip olayları kendimin körüklediği gerçeği ile de yüzleştim, ama kontrol edemediğim bir olaya duygularımı bağlamak, beni bu kadar etkilemesine izin vermek de benim sorunum. Hep öğretilen duyguların profesyonel hayatta yeri olmadığı ama is hiç öyle değil, aksine çok önemli bir parçası. Kararları etkiliyor. Bazen tek bir soru ile bir saat kendi kendime konuştuğum anlar oldu. Koçun orada olduğunu bile unuttum. İşte o bir soru ile başlayan görüşmenin içinde değişiyorsunuz sanki. (Kerem, Multinational, N-2)

122. Koçluk eğitiminde öğrenmeyle alakalı elim kuvvetlendi diyebilirim. Farklı yöntemler ile soru sormayı öğrendim, bunun ekip üzerinde de olumlu etkisi oldu. Disney diye bir yöntem var. Planlama yaparken kullandığımız bir yöntem ekip olarak. 3 şapka dediğimiz, farklı perspektifler ile bir olayı sorguluyor ve planlıyorsunuz. Bu 3 şapka birbiri ile konuşuyor ve birbirini sorguluyor. 1 şapka analiz eden taraf, gerçekten olabilecekleri sorguluyor. 1 şapka hayalperest taraf, keşke şöyle olsaydı, ideali bu olurdu diyor, 1 taraf da kritik eden taraf, diğerlerini challenge ediyor, neyin neden olmayacağı ile ilgili sorular soruyor sürekli. Arada yaşanan diyaloglarda bazen düşünceler değişiyor. Yanlış bildiğinizi fark edip, shiftler yaşanıyor. En sonunda gerçekçi ve uygulanabilir çözümler çıkıyor ortaya ama. Consensus oluşuyor, katılan kişilerin birbirlerine karşı tutumları, çevreye karşı bakış açıları değişiyor. Geçenlerde ekibimden biri sorduğunuz o soru ile her şey değişti dedi, koçluk bakış açısı farkına varmadan sizi ve çevrenizi değiştiriyor. (Suna, Local, N-1)

123. Story telling son 2-3 yıldır oldukça popüler bir konu liderlikte. Hikâyenin mucizesi keşfedildi yani. Her şeyi yasayarak öğrenemeyeceğimi anladığımdan beri hikayeler benim için önemliydi. Geçenlerde Luis Urzua diye bir madencinin hikayesini okudum, liderlik hikayesi olarak çok etkileyici. Maden göçüyor ve 70 gün, 33 madenci bu adamın liderliğinde yaşıyor. Bu krizde Urzua şeffaflıkla her durumu anlatıyor ve karar almak için oylama yapıyor, her kararda herkesi dahil ediyor. Şikâyet etmek yerine herkesi çözüme odaklıyor, herkesi sakinleştiriyor. Bu uzun dönemli bir yasam savaşı, bir kriz ve oradaki liderin kimliği, değerleri sayesinde aşılıyor. O ortamda şeffaflık ve demokratik yaklaşımdan bahsedebiliyorsak her yerde uygulayabilmemiz lazım bu prensipleri. Bahanesiz. Çok önemli bir liderlik dersi (Ahmet, Multinational, N).

124. Bununla ilgili kafa yoran kişileri takip ediyorum. Blanchard mesela. Konuşmacı oldukları konferanslara gidiyorum. TED Talks izliyorum. Hem bireysel hem şirket hikayeleri anlatılıyor. Biyografileri çok okuyorum. Bir liderin yaşadıklarını, o krizin içinde olmadan ya da sorumluluk sizde değilken, rahat koltuğunuzda hikayelerden öğrenmek keyifli tabi. (Nur, Consulting, N)

125. Şirketin kültürünü, isin katkısını, anlamını öğrenebileceğim en kuvvetli yöntem hikayeleri dinlemek. Kurumun hafızası, kimliği orada. Purpose projesinde çalışanlardan, çok basit olsa da önemli gördüğü bir olayı, bir başarısızlığı ya da komik anini, gurur duyduğu bir olayı paylaşmasını istedik. Bunu günlük rutinin bir parçası gibi yaptık. Mutfaklarda konuşulur kildik, kampanya yaptık ve bu hikayelerin paylaşılmasını sağladık. Herkes hikâye toplamak için dinledi birbirini, gözlemledi. Öyle hikayeler geldi ki, yapılan isin basit bir rapor ya da finansal bir Excel üretmekten çok daha öte bir etkisi, bir katkısının olduğunu gördü insanlar. Ben ise şirkete bağlılığın tam olarak nerede olduğunu gördüm, çalışanların beklentilerini anladım, keşfettim. Bu hikayeler engagement için ne gerekli, şirkete ne uyar ne uymaz kararlarında çok yardımcı oldu, liderler de (liderlik stillerinde) bile (Banu, Multinational, N-1).

126. Networkum kuvvetli ve bu avantaj sağlıyor. Network derken optimize edilmiş, doğru bir networkten bahsediyorum. Diğer yöneticiler, liderlik konusunu tartışan influencerlar, şirkette ne biliyim Güney Amerika`da benimle aynı isi yapan kişi... Yoksa Linkedinde 5000 kişim var ama bu sayının bana hiç faydası yok gibi bir durum değil. Aradığınız bilgiye hızlıca ulaşabileceğiniz, neyi bildiğinizi neyi bilmediğinizi anlayabileceğiniz üretken bir ağdan bahsediyorum. (Kerem, Multinational, N-2)

127. Liderlerin oluşturduğu topluluklar çok önemli. Bu bir is özelinde, bir fonksiyon özelinde, biz de olduğu gibi global bir endüstri özelinde olabilir. Şans eseri bulduğunuz bir sosyal ağ grubu, kişisel bir blog, bir webinar olabilir. Buralarda fikirlerinizi, bakış açınızı, planlarınızı test etme fırsatı yakalıyorsunuz. Soruyorsunuz. Bambaşka bir bakış açısı geliyor, bir kitap paylaşılıyor, bir makale gönderiliyor, uzman biriyle kontak kuruyorsunuz. Buralardan hep öğreniyorum. Ve bu bilgi çok değerli, çünkü tam aradığınız şeye cevap veriyor. (Yavuz, Local, N-1)

128. Karar vermekte zorlandığım anlar oluyor. Ekonomik tahminler yapmak bazen oldukça güç. Ek bir göz ile bakmak iyi oluyor. Yönetici arkadaşlarımı, aynı zorlukları yasayanları arıyorum. (Sevim, Local, N)

129. Benim pozisyonumda olan bir İngiliz, bir Amerikan şirketinin yöneticisi ne yapıyor, gündeminde ne var… Biz rakip olsak da isin içinde barındırdığı tehlikelerden ve hayati risklerden dolayı bilgi paylaşırız. Kongrelerde herkes kendi deneyimini açıklıkla anlatıyor çünkü yeni tanışmış bile olsanız birbirinizi biliyorsunuz. Herkes dünya vatandaşı…İnsana verdiğiniz değer aynı. (Yavuz, Local, N-1)

130. İşe başladığımda önemli olan know what ve how`di, teknik bilgi ve enformasyon önemliydi. Bunlar artık yeterli değil. Know-who, when, why ve what if soruları da var masada. Bu çoklu perspektifi Khan diye birinin webinarinda gördüm ben, bir network modeli aslında bu. Başka bir ülkede proje yapmak için anahtar kişiler kim, bu kişiler bana hangi enformasyonu sağlar. Nasıl karar alırlar, senaryolar ne olabilir. O ülkenin is kültürünü biliyorsam bu neyi neden yaptığını anlamamı sağlar. Bütün bunları aynı anda toplamak için kuvvetli bir network gerekli. Artık bu önemli. En basitinden takımdaki herkes başka bir ülkede, başka bir köşede. Şirketin diğer regionlarinda proje yönetimi yapanlar var. Herkes networkun bir parçası. Takım olarak her hafta mutlaka teams (virtual tool) üzerinden toplanıyoruz, arada tech talks yapıyoruz öğlen. Başka ekiplerden insanları davet ediyoruz. Proje yönetimi özelinde learning week yapıyoruz. Herkes bir konuyu alıyor, anlatıyor. Mesela ben Amsterdam`da çalışan bir yöneticinin sessionina katildim, agile working in teams konusunda kendi deneyimini anlatıyordu. Dünyanın dört bir tarafından insan katildik, birbirimizle tanıştık, en az eğitim kadar o tanışmada önemliydi çünkü dertlerimiz benzer ki oraya gelmişiz hepimiz. (Onur, Multinational, N-1)

131. Networking eğitimine katildim, orada eğitmen o kadar matematiksel olarak bu isi anlattı ki. Tanıdığım kişinin kimi tanıdığı da çok önemli. Bir ağ görüntüsünde bu bağlantılar. Mühendisim ben, o eğitimden sonra gözümde canlanmaya başladı. Doğru network, sürekli öğrenmek demek. Tam da günümüze uygun, çok hızlı ve etkili bir öğrenme ağı. Mesela bir önceki şirketimden bir is arkadaşım, SGK danışmanı olarak çalışıyor şimdi, aradı. Mesleki eğitime devam eden yeni mezun çalışanlara devletin maaşların 3'te 1`ine yakınına teşvik vereceğini, vergi avantajları sağlayacağını anlattı. Salı günü yasalaşıyor dedi. Her sene 300 yeni mezun alıyorduk o donemde ve hepsi bu statüde. Vergi avantajı ile birlikte hesapladığınızda alt toplam gerçekten önemli bir meblağ. Türkiye'de projelendirip başvuran 2-3 firmadan biriyiz. Kar üreten bir departmanın başında değilim ben, ilk defa bütçelere artı olarak geçtim. Şirket bu basariyi gördü. Networkum olmasa, bu avantajı elde edemem. Network kurmak, iyi ilişkileri devam ettirmek için caba sarf ediyorum. Uzmanlar, danışmanlar, diğer yöneticiler ile iletişimi canlı tutmaya çalışıyorum. Yazılarını takip ederim, aklıma takılanları sorarım, özel günlerde ararım, şirkete davet eder sohbet ederim. (Banu, Multinational, N-1)

132. En çok bağlantılarımdan öğreniyorum. Yönetim kurulunda olan diğer arkadaşlarımda da bu durum geçerli. Bir önceki şirketimde is planını yaparken learning culture, knowledge management ve go to marketi stratejik pillarlar olarak belirledik. Özellikle danışmanlık şirketleri için bilmek, öğrenmek çok önemli çünkü müşteriler size bu yüzden geliyor. Öğrenmenin de günümüzdeki yolu networkten geçiyor bence. Bunu yapabilen şirketler başarılı oluyor, olacak. Çalışanların birbirlerini tanımaları, birbirlerinin ne yaptıklarını bilmeleri çok önemli. Global olarak da soyluyorum bunu. Bu pillarlarin altını doldurmak için ben şirkette bir hareketlilik, bir iletişim ağı oluşturmak gerektiğini düşünüyordum. Önce intranetimizi güncelledik, formatı her çalışanın sorularını sorabileceği, önerilerini gönderebileceği bir hale cevirdik. Diğer çalışanları da global ve yerel arayabiliyorlar bu portalde. Hangi projeleri yapmışlar, neyi biliyorlar, neyi öğrenmek istiyorlar gibi profiller oluşturdu herkes. Şirket içi facebook kurduk mesela, bu öğrenmenin eğlenceli olması lazım ki insanlar hızla kullanmaya başlasın. Müşteri ile teması olan her liderin kendi personal brandini oluşturması gerekiyordu. Bunun satışlara katkı sağlayacağını öngördük. Network inşa etmeleri gerektiğini, Linkedin gibi sosyal ağları çok kuvvetli kullanmaları gerektiğini anlattık. Hepsine thought leadership hedefi verdik mesela. Bu su demek, kendi uzmanlık alanı ile ilgili öğrenecek, öğrendiğini aktardığı makaleler yazacak, kitaplar yazacak, bilgi üretecek ve networku ile paylaşacak. Ayrışmanın yöntemi bu su anda. Bunları şirket içinde magazinler yayınlayarak paylaşmaya başladık ki çalışanlar da kendi networkleri ile paylaşsınlar. Bir nevi organizational network analysis ve planning yaptık yani. Bu yaptıklarımızın etkilerini hem şirket içi iletişim ve iş birliğinde, hem pazar payımızda görüyoruz. Networks yaklaşımı işe yarıyor. (Ebru, Consulting, N-1)

133. Dijital kütüphaneler, uzaktan eğitim platformları, bunlar her büyük şirkette var. Şirkete özel yapılması gereken ise herkesin bir şeyler öğreneceği bir yaklaşımı, kültürü, ortamı nasıl hazırlayacağınız sorusudur. Biz farkındalık oluşturmak için şirketin sağına soluna interaktif panolar astık, haftalık konseptlere göre yazılar hazırlıyoruz, takım arkadaşlığı, birbirinden öğrenme gibi konuları buralarda gündeme getiriyoruz. Kurum içi çıkarılan bir dergi var mesela. Arkadaşlarının anlattıklarını öğreniyorsun, paylaşıyorsun. Merak edilen konuların işlenmesinin desteklenmesi lazım. Bunu yapan çalışanların desteklenmesi lazım. Bunlar ekstra bir caba ama şirkette herkesin öğrenmesine ciddi katkı sağlıyor bu insanlar. Liderlerin bu noktada hayati kolaylaştırması lazım. Mesela 5 kişi, 1 ay çalıştılar ve kendi inisiyatifleri ile bir platform oluşturdular. Şirket wikipediasi gibi, videolar ve applicationlar var. İşi yapan insanların videoları var, kendi işlerini öğretiyorlar. Bunu hazırladığımızdan kimsenin haberi yok, sendika da karşı çıkabilir ama bizce bu olmalı dediler. Ben çok etkilendim, ikna oldum ve sonsuz destek verdim. Bu çekirdek ekip basta 5 asama planlamıştı, günün sonunda 1800 kişinin kullandığı, sorularını

sorduğu, birbirini tanıdığı bir platform çıktı ortaya. Önce onlar sahip çıktı, kendi kendilerine oluşturdular ve öğretirken öğrendiler. Sonra hepimiz öğrendik, kim ne is yapıyor öğrendik. Bizim isimiz için çok önemli bu, bence üretimde oluşabilecek riskleri bile engelledi. Sonra bu ekip bir de şirket sözlüğü çıkardı. Okuldan çıkan birinin bizim çalıştığımız üretim mekânını bilmesine imkân yok. Riskleri görmesi için öğrenmesi, arkasındaki sistemi anlaması lazım. Bazı teknik konuları burada tekrar öğrenecek, her bir sureci buraya özel olarak öğrenecek. Bu sözlük, bütün bu ilişkiler ağını teknoloji sayesinde dijital ortama taşıdı. Anonim olarak bile soru soruyorsun, bunu birisi anlatsın diye önerilerde bulunuyorsun, bu burada ne anlama gelir, kısaltmalar nedir. Sorduğu sorunun sorumluluğu çalışanda, takip edip cevabini oraya girene kadar uğraşıyor. İnsanlara ulaşıyor, emek sarf ediyor. Yeni gelen birisi nasıl sorayım şimdi bunu der ya, hepsinin cevabi orada oluşuyor, o dijital ortamda bir hayat akıyor. Kitap öneriyorlar, video paylaşıyorlar, makale paylaşıyorlar. Ortak zekâ ile inşa edilen bir şey bu, ortak bir akil. İnsanlar şimdi bos zamanlarında sözlüğe destek veriyor, yasatmaya çalışıyor. Çünkü oradan herhangi bir sınıftan ya da kitaptan öğrendiğinin çok ötesinde öğreniyor. Bunun üstüne şirkette de sosyal mekanlar oluşturduk, kafeler açtık, keyif alarak kullanılabilecek dershaneler oluşturduk (Yavuz, Local, N-1).

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