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Sport leadership in Finland

Case: Mestis ice hockey league

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<p>The aim of this thesis was to study Mestis ice hockey league's general managers' perceptions of leadership. Mestis is the second highest league in Finland and is professionalizing rapidly and therefore interesting topic to study. General managers were chosen since they are in the leading positions in their organizations.</p> <p>The study was implemented during the year 2016 with a qualitative approach by using half-structured interviews. The qualitative approach was chosen since the aim was to gain understanding of the interviewed Mestis general managers' leadership perceptions, and not to generalize the findings. Four general managers from different Mestis Ice Hockey clubs were selected to be interviewed.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of this study consists general definition of leadership in elite sport and a description of the distinction between management and leadership. The analysis is based on the previous discussion of sport leadership, and especially on five high-order leadership themes in elite sport developed by Arnold et al. (2012).</p> <p>The findings indicated that the interviewed general managers saw leadership in Mestis as an ongoing process. Their stressed the importance of building relationships and creating an environment where working was enjoyable. Results indicated that company resources had an important impact on how leadership was practised.</p>		
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<p>Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on tutkia jääkiekkoliiga Mestiksen toimitusjohtajien käsityksiä johtajuudesta (leadership). Mestis on Suomen toiseksi korkein jääkiekkoliiga, missä toiminta kehittyy ammattimaisemmaksi vuosi vuodelta ja tästä syystä mielenkiintoinen aihe tutkia. Tutkimuksen kohteeksi valittiin toimitusjohtajat, sillä juuri he ovat johtavassa asemassa organisaatiossa.</p> <p>Tutkimusprosessi toteutettiin vuonna 2016 laadullisena tutkimuksena ja aineisto kerättiin puolistrukturoiduilla haastatteluilta. Laadullinen tutkimusmenetelmä valittiin, koska tavoite oli saada ymmärrystä haastateltavien toimitusjohtajien näkemyksistä johtajuudesta, eikä yleistää tutkimustuloksia. Neljä toimitusjohtajaa neljästä eri Mestis-organisaatiosta valittiin haastateltaviksi.</p> <p>Teoreettisessa viitekehyksessä määritellään useita johtamisen ja urheilujohtamisen näkökulmia, minkä lisäksi tehdään ero management-johtamisen sekä leadership-johtamisen välillä. Analysointi perustuu aikaisempiin urheilujohtamisen tutkimuksiin, erityisesti viiteen johtamisen teemaan, minkä kehitti Arnold, Fletcher ja Molyneux. (2012).</p> <p>Tulokset osoittavat, että johtaminen Mestiksessä on jatkuva prosessi. Erityisen tärkeänä haastateltavat pitävät suhteiden rakentamista sekä myönteisen työilmapiirin luomista. Voidaan sanoa, että myös resursseilla on vaikutusta johtamisen toteutuksessa.</p>		
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1 Introduction

The thesis studied the work of the general managers in the second highest ice hockey league in Finland, Mestis, and their perceptions of leadership. Leadership in sports has attracted only a little attention, especially in Finland as a field of research, although it has increasingly been a topic in public discussions. Leadership has been studied internationally for decades, especially in the United States of America, but in Finland academic research on the subject has been rare (Mönkkönen 2011, 7). There have been surveys focusing on the management of sport organizations, and they have been increasing in the field of science from the 1980's (Laakso 2016, 25). However, specific studies on the leadership of the general managers in ice hockey are still missing. Ice hockey is the biggest sport in Finland in terms of spectator numbers and media coverage (Sponsorinsight, 2015).

Sport industry has grown enormously in the 21st century, and nowadays there are plenty of employment opportunities in the different sectors of that industry from marketing to leading a sport organization. Trenberth and Hassan (2012) state that because of this growth, managers have to be more qualified and better educated. They need to have an understanding of the various factors of management. This includes understanding functions such as governance, strategy, financial management, marketing and sponsorship, facility and event management, human resource management and public relations management (Trenberth & Hassan 2012, xxi). It can be assumed that due to these factors, leadership in sport organizations should receive more attention. In Mestis, the organizations are limited companies, and nowadays sport organizations are managed more or less like any other limited companies (Smith & Stewart 2010).

Mestis is a league of the Finnish Ice Hockey Association, and it is the second highest ice hockey league in Finland. It was founded in the year 2000. Before that it was known as The First Division (1. Divisoon). In the last eleven years of Mestis, there have been four teams, namely, Kalpa, Sport, Kookoo and Jukurit that have been promoted to the first league, SM-league. Besides the competition of the teams for the championship, Mestis is also known as a

league that develops young players in their professional careers. In the season 2016–2017 there are thirteen teams playing in Mestis. (Mestis-faktat, Mestis n.d.)

The increase of economic uncertainty in the Finnish ice hockey organizations has forced two teams in Mestis and one in the Finnish Championship League into bankruptcy in the past five years. Therefore, they have not been able to participate in the seasons, leaving many players and other employees of the organization unemployed. The general managers of the clubs are facing challenges in making their organizations succeed financially and also in gaining success in the sport at the same time. Therefore, it is interesting to acquire information about their leadership, how they are practicing it and whether it is a necessary topic in the Finnish sport business and, particularly, in ice hockey.

This study was commissioned by KeuPa Hockey Oy (KeuPa HT). KeuPa Hockey Oy, founded in 1995, is an ice hockey organization in Keuruu, Central Finland. KeuPa HT won the championship in the third highest league (Suomi-sarja) in Finland in 2014 and was promoted to, and now plays in the second highest league, Mestis. KeuPa HT started their third consecutive year in Mestis in 2016. The author of the thesis has also worked as a trainee in KeuPa HT's marketing section, and has been intensively involved in the process of applying to the Mestis in the year of the promotion. The author has also played in KeuPa HT himself and, therefore, has an interest in the topic.

1.1 Purpose and goal of the thesis

The aim of the study was to increase understanding of the leadership of the general managers in Mestis. In order to achieve this, the focus of the thesis was on the perceptions of leadership of the general managers in Mestis. The distinction of the terms *leadership* and *management* is in chapter two so that the topic of the thesis and the implications of the findings are easier to understand.

The literature of sport management and leadership often has more information about management which means managing the day to day operations. This is usually linked to the general managers. Leadership, which refers to leading people, has been studied less. Usually, when talking about leadership in

sports, it refers to coaches and not to the general managers. They also have a responsibility for individuals, so it is justified to claim that a general manager is also a leader of people.

The work of the general managers in sport has always been studied more from the management perspective than the leadership perspective. Still the objective of the thesis was to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic and to answer the research problem which was: Understanding leadership issues in the work of general managers in Mestis.

For gaining information about the topic, two research questions were formulated:

1. What is the work description of a Mestis general manager?
2. What are the general managers' perceptions of leadership in Mestis?

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The thesis begins with an introduction of the subject, background information about the chosen topic and with an explanation of the research problem. Chapter two focuses on the theoretical framework. In the theoretical framework the literature and terms of leadership and also the differences between management and leadership are studied. The theoretical framework consists mostly of scientific articles about leadership. After this, the framework part focuses on leadership in elite sports and previous studies about the topic. In chapter three after the theoretical framework, the methodology of the research is explained. In this chapter, the methods that were used in the data collection are explained and why those particular data collection and analysis methods were chosen.

The fourth chapter presents the findings of the data. In chapter five the conclusions of the findings are presented, and the topic of the leadership of the general managers is discussed in light of the results and also from the practical perspective. Finally in chapter six, the credibility of the study is discussed, and recommendation for future research are given, as well as proposals to Mestis organizations of how this study could contribute to their work.

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter focuses on defining leadership in general and in the sport business. The distinction of leadership and management is also explained in order to increase the focus of the topic of the thesis.

2.1 Leadership

There are many different definitions from different viewpoints available for leadership; a particular reason for this is the evolution of the concept itself. Northouse (2015) explains the issue and introduces many different approaches to leadership and the impact of practicing it. Overall, leadership is a process of influence and as Northouse defines: “*leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal*” (Northouse 2015, 6). Sydänmaanlakka (2003) also states that leadership is a process, not a position (Sydänmaanlakka 2003, 1).

Leadership has the key role in an organization’s success. If leadership is practised poorly, the work that is done in the other sectors of the organization is done in vain. (Kets de vries 2001, 1-3.) The business environment is constantly changing, and this has forced organizations to develop leadership even more (Kotter 1990, 103-104). In most cases, the definition of leadership is given from the researcher’s own perspective and even based on his or her own interests (Laakso 2016, 22). Still, a common conception for all leadership definitions is that it is seen as a social and interactional process, with an objective to achieve a common goal (Yukl 2006, 2).

When studying leadership in the sport business, it usually refers to coaches. It is obvious that a coach is a leader of a group of individuals and, therefore, a leader of people. One well-known example that is used in the discussion of leadership in sport is about John Wooden, a former college basketball coach in UCLA, North America in 1948–1975. During that time period, Wooden’s team achieved ten championships including seven in a row. It is said that Wooden’s success was based on his ability to recognize talent in individuals and make the most out of them in the performance on the field. (Trenberth &

Hassan 2012, 300). In all organizations, success always requires good and effective leadership.

2.1.1 Leadership as a process

Leadership as a process refers to constant learning and developing in a constantly changing environment. A leader needs to seek the factors that improve the followers' performance (Henderson 2010, 9–14). Kempsters (2006) studied leadership and one outcome of his research was that “*understanding of the leadership is shaped by the causes that leaders have not been aware of.*” Leadership is a continuous process which includes many different variables and factors, such as building relationships, developing oneself and seeking the means for motivating the followers all the time. Leadership can be viewed as a process which happens in interaction between leaders and their followers. This interaction helps in overcoming the challenges in the organization. (Henderson 2010, 9–14.)

2.1.2 Self-leadership

Not all sport organizations have the capacity to hire employees and build teams. Therefore, self-leadership can be a big part of a general manager's leadership. The concept of self-leadership first emerged in the 1980's and it can be described as the “*process of influencing oneself as opposed to the influence of leaders over followers*” (Neck & Manz, 1992, 681). The general managers need to develop themselves as leaders. They have to have a need for competence, practice and constant improvement of their capabilities. It is not only about the outcome of specific tasks for the organization on which they need to focus, but also on the performance of the individuals starting from themselves. (Neck 2006, 270–279.)

2.1.3 Leadership versus management

“It is unusual for one person to have skills to serve as both an inspiring leader and professional manager” (Kotterman J. 2006, 16).

There are differences between management and leadership (Table 1), and it is vital to understand these differences in order to continue researching the

topic. However, there are similarities as well, as both leaders and managers are involved in “*establishing direction, aligning resources and motivating people*” (Kotterman 2006, 15-16). Still, management refers more to managing day-to-day operations. This, for example, includes setting a business plan and budgets and monitoring that process (Maccoby 2000). Managers are interested more in what needs to be accomplished, and the leaders are more concerned about people. Therefore, managers might think of employees more as a resource (Bargau 2015). Where managers have employees who must do what they are told to do, leaders have followers who are inspired by the leader to do what they are told, and they do this voluntarily. In order to be a leader, one must have at least one follower and be acknowledged as a leader. (Swanson & Kent 2014, 81–82.)

Table 1: Comparison of the differences in the management and leadership processes (Kotterman 2006, 15).

Process	Management	Leadership
Vision Establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and budgets • Develops process steps and sets timelines • Displays impersonal attitude about the vision and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets the direction and develops the vision • Develops strategic plans to achieve the vision • Displays very passionate attitude about the vision and goals
Human Development and Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes and staffs • Maintains structure • Delegates responsibility • Delegates authority • Implements the vision • Establishes policy and procedures to implement vision • Displays low emotion • Limits employee choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns organization • Communicates the vision, mission, and direction • Influences creation of coalitions, teams, and partnerships that understand and accept the vision • Displays driven, high emotion • Increases choices
Vision Execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls processes • Identifies problems • Solves problems • Monitors results • Takes low-risk approach to problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivates and inspires • Energizes employees to overcome barriers to change • Satisfies basic human needs • Takes high-risk approach to problem solving
Vision Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages vision order and predictability • Provides expected results consistently to leadership and other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes useful and dramatic changes, such as new products or approaches to improving labor relations

As seen in Table 1, management means more control- and monitor-based operations which include planning, budgeting and organizing in order to set goals and reach them. Leadership contains more visioning, motivating and inspiring people to achieve the goals that are set (Laakso 2016, 22).

In sport business, both leadership and management practiced by the general managers are truly important for the organization. The question is how they are practicing them. Managers lead, whether they recognize it or not. They can lead, for example, a team or projects (Kotterman 2006). For instance, as in Mestis or any other sport league, one season is a project which includes smaller projects all the time. These can be, for example, different kinds of events during the season, or a project with a team's main partner to achieve some profit and visibility together.

2.2 Leadership in elite sport

Leadership has always been a complex issue in the sport business (Trenberth & Hassan 2012, 10). Even though leadership in sports, as mentioned before, refers to coaches more than general managers, it can be argued that general managers need leadership skills as well. However, we need to ask what makes a good leader. In their work Arnold, Fletcher and Molyneux (2012) studied national performance directors and their experience in the elite sport industry, and their suggestions, advice and recommendations for leaders in the sport industry. Five themes were formed in their research. In this thesis, it was chosen to lean on this study in order to define the main topic of the thesis: leadership in sports.

Arnold, Fletcher and Molyneux (2012) collected data from national performance directors about their experience in the elite sport field over the years. There were five high-order themes that they explained in their study. The first theme is *establishing approach*, and this means that leaders should make sense of their past experiences and use these to help them to develop a vision, set expectations and identify what needs to be delivered (Arnold et al. 2012). Vision is a key element in leadership (Rosca 2010). Leaders must share their vision so that everyone who is a part of it knows it. After sharing the vision comes the work of how the group can reach the final goal. Leaders

should reflect on their previous success and challenges so that when opportunities or difficulties come, they are able to recognize them. Leaders make mistakes, but good leaders do not let them stop them from reaching the goals. (Arnold et al. 2012).

The second theme was that leaders and managers who are operating in elite sports are advised to clearly understand both their own roles and others' roles in the organization and that they should be aware of the role boundaries, including where one's responsibilities end and another's begin (Arnold et al. 2012). In Mestis, a general manager's tasks may include more responsibilities than those of a manager in a bigger organization. This is because in Mestis organizations, only a few people are hired and therefore, on some occasions, the general manager's role is not easily defined. In her work, Pia Kreuz (2014) explored Finnish sport business manager's roles by interviewing sport business professionals. One interesting statement from one respondent was that "*a sport business manager is like CEO of a small company who actually does everything*" (Kreuz 2014, 35). A general manager is seen as a person who is able to balance between passion and the reality of the club as a company (Kreuz 2014). They should spend time developing their familiarity with the ways in which their organization typically functions (Arnold, Fletcher & Molyneux 2012). In this way it is easier to eliminate everything that is not the general manager's job to do and make the organization function even better.

The third high-order theme is developing contextual awareness, and in order to achieve this, national performance directors recommend that "*leaders and managers assess and constantly evaluate and review their current situation*" (Arnold et al. 2012). Leaders should not only lead for the future but rather consider what the future would bring and prepare for it. Besides being aware of where the club stands, it is important to be aware of the situation that Mestis is in as a league and where it is heading. Nowadays, Mestis is a league where almost every team has a cooperation club in the SM-league. Therefore, Mestis clubs are not 100 percent independent when it comes to decision making. They have cooperation with the first league teams, some more and some less. This means that decisions concerning the success in sport are attempted to be made in a way that benefits both the first league in Finland as well as the Mestis teams.

If all the time of the general managers goes to the day-to-day operations year after year, there might be a danger of doing everything by repeating old habits. The sport industry is not the same as it was 15 years ago, and neither is Mestis as a league. The sport industry changes rapidly, and it is important for general managers to keep abreast with it. For example, already 15 years ago, the customers, stakeholders and sponsors were more demanding and wanted more value for their money, which usually meant better experiences (Esgate 2002). Nowadays, technology, mobile devices and easier access to entertainment have challenged the sport business even more.

The fourth theme, enhancing personal skills, refers to the fact that *“leaders and managers should develop the skills and traits that are most suitable for the context in which they are leading”* (Arnold et al. 2012). Leaders need to have something that motivates them to grow as leaders. Leadership has the key role in organizations’ success (Laakso 2016, 22). Therefore, it is necessary to develop leadership skills and traits. One possibility to develop these skills is education, and nowadays it is easier to attain education in the sport management area. The Finnish Ice Hockey Association encourages organizations to exploit this possibility for general managers. Of course, as the theme says *“suitable for the context in which they are leading”*, can be challenging for the general managers in Mestis because the entirety of their work is challenging, and multiple skills are required in that entirety.

The fifth theme, which is strengthening and building relationships with the stakeholders, sponsors and subordinates, is an essential matter for a leader to succeed in. By developing this skill, leaders can recognize the importance of teamwork, instead of trying to achieve everything by themselves (Arnold et al. 2012). Sport sponsorship is the most widely used form of sponsoring in the world (Rodoula 2011). However, as mentioned earlier, sport competes more and more with the other entertainment industries. Therefore, strengthening relationships with stakeholders and sponsors is essential. The old fashioned way of operating, which means that the sponsor gives money and receives publicity in return, does not apply so much anymore. Sponsors expect more value for their money, and this is something that general managers in the sport business must invest time and energy in. Good leaders build good teams, which means people who work together for achieving a common goal.

Leaders are the ones who discover obstacles and challenges and the team is the one that overcomes them (Sohmen 2013).

Leadership is a growing subject in the Finnish sport business, and it has gained more and more attention in the media. In Finnish ice hockey, people involved in the business are more and more concerned about the leadership skills of the management department in the organizations. The related criticism will increase if poor leadership skills have a direct connection to the sport organizations losing their customers and not succeeding financially and in their respective sport. Tommi Kerttula, a former sport manager in Jukurit, states that coaches have too much power in the organizations and that leadership must be developed more. The first step to this is to take the majority of the power away from the coaches and allocate it in a more proper and clearer way. (Urheilusanomat 2016, 22-26)

3 Methodology

The focus of this chapter is to introduce the methods used in the research process and how it was implemented. The author explains how the interviews were conducted and why he had chosen the qualitative approach for the study.

3.1 Research method

The aim of the study was to increase understanding of the leadership in Mestis. Therefore, the qualitative approach was considered the best option for gaining more detailed information and insights about leadership of the general managers in Mestis. Qualitative methods permit a more flexible but not less rigorous approach to the research problem. Moreover, in the qualitative approach, data analysis is almost always continuous, it is more than a “*process which takes place at the end of the research project*”. (Veal and Darcy 2014, 254). This makes it possible for the researcher to gain more understanding about the subject during the research process (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 205).

Qualitative research methods are used when there are no theories to explain the research phenomenon. It seeks to gain understanding of the phenomenon by answering only to one major question: What is the case of the phenomenon? (Kananen 2014, 16). This study attempted to find out what the general managers' perceptions of leadership were in their Mestis organizations. By using the qualitative approach, it is possible to have a deeper analysis of the research problem (Kananen 2014, 1).

In this study, interviews were used as a method of the data collection process. By using this interview method, it was possible to determine what kind of leadership the general managers in Mestis practised, and to gain an understanding of the topic of the thesis.

Half-structured interviews were chosen to be the method in the actual data collection. Half-structured interviews are suitable in research which seeks to

gain better understanding of conscious ideals, well-known issues and arguments. (Metsämuuronen 2006, 115) Half-structured interviews focus on pre-selected themes without having clearly defined the shape of the questions and the order of the questions, as is the case in structured interviews. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 208)

3.2 Interview process

The interviews were implemented as half-structured interviews, either face-to-face or by telephone. Four general managers were interviewed, two face-to-face and two by telephone. The structure of the interview (appendix 1) was tested once by interviewing a person who had experience of leading a sport organization. The purpose of this was to test whether the interview questions were understandable and whether they could generate such information that was wanted. The test also gave an example of how long the interview would approximately take. Based on the test, the interview structure was finalised by adding supplementary questions.

The half-structured interview plan was based on the fact that since there was no previous research on the topic, using this method was the best way to increase understanding of the topic. The interviewees were chosen based on information about the possible candidates from a person working in the Mestis organization. The selection criteria for the candidates were that they worked as general managers in a Mestis organization, since not all the Mestis organizations had one. An exception was made with one interviewee who was not on duty as a general manager anymore at the time when the interview was recorded. In this study, the purpose was to interview the persons that were in leadership positions in their organizations, and, therefore, the general managers were chosen.

The interviewees were first contacted first by telephone, after which an official invitation was sent by email. In the email it was explained that the topic of the thesis was leadership in Mestis and that the purpose was to study what kind of leadership the general managers in Mestis practised. It was also told that the ethical principles of scientific research were respected.

The questions in the interviews were based on the research questions and theoretical framework, mostly on Arnold's, Fletcher's and Molyneux's research on the National Performance Directors and their recommendations, advice and suggestions to leaders in elite sports (Arnold et al. 2012). The themes in that particular research, which were mentioned in chapter 2.2., were: establishing approach, understanding role within in a team, developing contextual awareness, enhancing personal skills and strengthening relationships. According to Arnold, Fletcher and Molyneux (2012), these themes have the central role in the leadership of sport leaders in elite sports.

In the thesis especially the leadership in Mestis was studied and, therefore, other possible themes that might have been raised by the interviews and the interviewees' perceptions as well as by the theoretical framework were not excluded. It was known in advance on what kinds of issues the interviewees were hoped to raise, and, therefore, it was possible to mostly prepare the structure of the interview in advance. The answers, on the other hand, could not be qualified in advance and, therefore, a completely structured interview was not a suitable method in the data collection. During each interview, the interviewee was able to express himself freely and share his perceptions. The interview situations gave possibilities for the interviewer to ask possible supplementary questions in case they were needed.

The previously mentioned method was chosen for this study because it was deemed to be the most suitable method for answering the research questions. The content of the face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews did not vary or at least the interviewer could not make assumptions on which one was better for the study. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 57 minutes, and, in addition, notes were taken throughout the interview process in order to gain more data on the topic. Each interview was recorded with a digital recorder and verbatim transcribed afterwards for the analysis process.

3.3 Analysing the data

There is not one single method to analyse qualitative data, but it is important that the used method is the best one for reaching the research objectives. (Jones 2015, 274). In this study, analysing the data started already in the first

interview when the interviewer started to make notes and decisions on matters about which he needed more information from the interviewees. The previous interviews always modified the next interviews as the interviewer's understanding of the topic increased.

The interviews were recorded and verbatim transcribed. All the information about the interviewees, such as names, places and the organizations where they worked were left out from the thesis report. This information was replaced by only identifying the interviewees with the terms: GM1, GM2, GM3 and GM4. The verbatim transcribed text was collected on a total of 25 A4 pages using Arial 12 with 1.15 line spacing.

The interviews were listened to and read through many times. After this, the data reduction was done. Data reduction meant eliminating all the irrelevant information from the topic of this thesis. At this stage it was important to pay attention to not discarding any data that might be useful later on (Jones 2015, 275).

Analysing the data was based on seeking references which answered to the research questions. At first, all the references were searched that answered the first research question: What is the job description of a general manager in Mestis? References which were considered the most relevant for the job description were divided in themes which were *controlling the entirety*, importance of *relationships and responsibility for the finance*.

Next, all the main references about leadership were collected to answer the second research question: What are the perceptions of leadership by the general managers in Mestis? Perceptions were divided into four themes based on the content of the references. These four themes were: 1) *Leadership as relationship building and cooperating*, 2) *leadership is creating a motivational working culture*, 3) *leadership as an ongoing process* and 4) *visioning in leadership*. After this, interpretation of the data was attempted in order to gain understanding of the topic and make the conclusions. In this report, many direct quotations of the interviewees are used. Based on these quotations, the readers can evaluate if the conclusions are justified and coherent. Figure 1 below visualizes how the data was analysed.

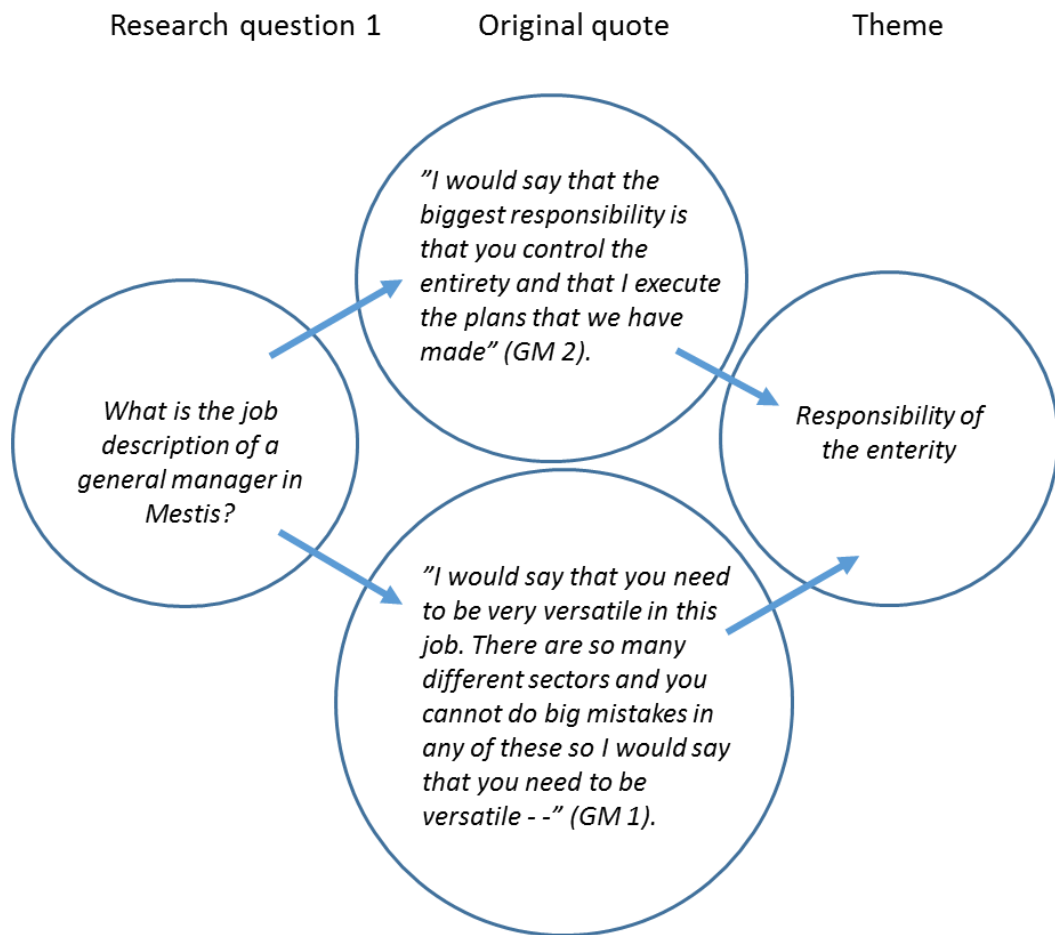


Figure 1: The example of data analysis process

4 Findings

The focus of this chapter is to introduce the findings of the data that emerged from the interviews. Chapter 4.1 answers the first research question: What is the work description of the Mestis general manager? Chapter 4.2 answers the second research question: What are the general managers' perceptions of leadership in Mestis?

The main findings are that the leadership in Mestis includes self-leadership, cooperating in- and outside of the organization, building relationships and motivating people. Also, the interviewees underlined the financial matters as a crucial factor that affects the work of a Mestis general manager as a leader.

4.1 The work description of a general manager in Mestis

In Mestis, general manager's work includes a lot of various tasks. By knowing the work description of the general managers of Mestis, it is easier to understand in what kind of circumstances and work environments they practise their leadership. Therefore, for continuing studying the topic, it is essential to know what general managers work consists of in daily operations. In the work of the general managers in Mestis, three specific sectors are emphasized. These sectors are controlling the entirety, importance of relationships and financial responsibilities.

4.1.1 Controlling the entirety

The respondent's answers included several similarities and in every interview it came clear in the early stage that there is a lot of work to do for the general managers in their organizations. The entirety that General Managers are responsible for is huge, and because general managers represent the organization where they work, it is important that they give a good impression outward and have multiple talents to keep the organization growing.

The work of the general manager includes plenty of organizing and monitoring in the daily work. The general managers in Mestis need to be able to execute the plans even with people around them that are not necessarily always agreeing with the decisions. The general manager is the one who is responsible for the outcome and therefore factors which includes in this entirety must be managed well. Below is a quotation of a GM describing the entirety of the work.

"I would say that the biggest responsibility is that you control the entirety and that I execute the plans that we have made." (GM 2)

A lot of times the general manager in Mestis is the one who is the executor of things, but also the one who carries the responsibility. The daily work consists of leading people and taking of that the set goals can be achieved by the decisions that are made. Below is a quotation how GM 1 describes the issue.

"I would say that you need to be very versatile in this job. There are so many different sectors and you cannot do big mistakes in any of these so I would say that you need to be versatile. And of course you do this with people so to summarize it, this is leading things and people. So you can make the people to work towards the set goal." (GM 1).

In their daily work, general managers are required to be able to adapt, execute the ideas and plans and therefore to be also goal oriented and ambitious. This requires that the general manager knows where he wants to take the organization to, and also to be able to convince other workers and staff. For being able to make changes in the organization, it demands to make hard decisions. As following quotation by the GM 2 describes it:

"You need to be goal oriented and to be able to push things through sometimes even by force." (GM 2)

Adapting is vital, because there are a lot of changes and the days are different. This also brings challenges in controlling the entirety. Below is a quotation about the issue.

"The days are never the same and you must be ready for everything because things change all the time". (GM 4)

4.1.2 Importance of relationships

Relationships with different parties are strongly involved with Mestis general manager's work. They are working with people and therefore the relationships need to be taken care of.

In sport organizations, the sport team is the core product of the organization, but for example when comparing the work of one player or coach and the general manager, the pressure they face is not only for the players and coaches, but also for the general managers behind the curtains. This is not often considered, especially by people whose only focus is on the team and their success. The work that general managers and their employees do behind the curtains are the reason why the team is playing in the first place, and for example allows the players to practise their profession. They cannot affect much on the results in the games but they can effect on the environment, so that for example the success in sport can be achieved. Here is how GM 1 describes the issue:

"I do lot of things. Okay I do not play or coach myself but I basically do all other things. As a whole, there are so many different parties involved in this and I have to please them all. Media, players, coaching staff, co-workers, sponsors, customers, fans, other Mestis organizations, referees, Finnish Ice Hockey Association and so on." (GM 1)

Having good relationship with the teams' players and coaches alongside other parties are important especially on the long run. Ice hockey business in Finland is relatively small and the word spreads fast, in both a negative and positive way. Getting along with people means that you need to be trustworthy and do the things as promised. Every relationship must be handled in a right way and general managers in Mestis cannot afford handling relationships in a wrong way. GM3 describes this issue as follows:

"I try not antagonize anyone. You have to know how to handle the relationships with everyone. If you do not take care of things in the way that you have promised, your reputation will take hit. If some organization does not take care of things in the right way and as promised, the word spreads and you will suffer from it for sure." (GM 3)

4.1.3 Financial responsibilities

According to the interviewees, the organizations finance is the main responsibility for general managers in Mestis. It is typical that Mestis organizations operate with low budgets. That is also the most time consuming task. Not only by getting new partners and sponsors, but also to find ways to develop the “product”, which means especially the teams home game events and making it attractive to people. Furthermore attractiveness needs to be productive, because by developing the organizations finance, it can allow more resources for the future.

“Raising the money for running this organization is the main responsibility and to make the home game events as attractive and productive as possible.”(GM 3)

When talking about the main tasks for the general managers in Mestis, GM 4 crystallizes the issue as:

“Develop the organization financially. To make better results when selling business to business and that way to get more money into the organization. So the main thing is to develop the finance but that is the way to have more resources and create better possibilities for the sport.” (GM 4)

The general managers need to be aware of what is going on in the team in sport and also what the financial situation in the organization is. This is also a reason why the responsibility is huge. Below is a quotation describing when it can be held that the Mestis general manager has succeeded in his or her work.

” Reaching the goals in sport is one thing, but of course to reach the goals financially”. (GM 3)

4.2 Perceptions of leadership

The perceptions about leadership of the general managers in Mestis are divided in four themes based on the interviews. These themes are: Leadership as relationship building and cooperating, leadership is creating motivational working culture, leadership as an ongoing process and visioning in leadership.

4.2.1 Leadership as relationship building and cooperating

Leadership of general managers in Mestis includes creating and building relationships and cooperation with different people and parties. As in any other business environment, relationships are in a central role in leadership in Mestis as well. As mentioned earlier, general managers need to have good relationships with the team and the coaches, as well as with several different parties outside of the sport team, such as media, the Finnish Ice Hockey Union, sponsors and partners. Having a strong relationships with the groups is essential for the organization's development.

Building relationships between other Mestis general managers is becoming more and more vital. By working together to develop Mestis as a league, produces development for the single Mestis organizations as well. According to the interviews, nowadays general managers cooperate even more than before. It is in everyone's best interest that all the thirteen teams' work together to develop Mestis. As an example (the quote below) it is normal to give a call to another general manager and change views on how to do things. By working together, it is more possible to create for example game events that have more to offer for the spectators.

“Now days we cooperate more and more and you can call quite freely to other general manager and change thoughts for example from marketing. We do not compete against each other that much that we cannot work together. It is necessary at the moment.” (GM 4)

In their leadership, general managers have to get along with different kinds of people and several groups that are in touch with the organizations, and that is why people-leading is in a vital role. It is important not to antagonize anyone too much. There are many different groups of people that general managers have to get along with in order to succeed.

“There are many different groups of people and you need to get along with them all and to know how to please them in the right way so that they would relate in positive way to you and the organization that you represent.” (GM 1)

Leadership requires building relationships, especially with every channel where the money comes in to the organization. Mestis general managers try

to develop the organization and every day they have to make different kinds of decisions that effects the organizations development. One important skill is negotiating skills and interaction skills with people. Making decisions every day helps general managers get experience and learn from the mistakes that have been made in the past. One big factor in versatility of leadership in Mes-tis is that being a good businessman, general managers also need to have knowledge from ice hockey as a sport.

“You need to know this business field. If you have not been working in ice hockey business then this is very hard position. You need to know people from the Finnish Ice Hockey Association, people from the home city and people from the firms. If you also do the player and coach contracts, you need to have knowledge and skill to do them.” (GM 3)

4.2.2 Leadership is creating motivational working culture

It is important to create a culture, facilities and working environment that makes everyone feel appreciated and works towards the same goal. The general managers need to be goal oriented and easily accessible at the same time. In sport organizations there are usually voluntary workers, so especially motivating them has to be done in a way they feel appreciated. They only receive small payment, if even that, so motivating them in other ways than financially is in a central role when practising leadership. Of course, motivating all the employees plays a big role in everyday working. As GM2 describes:

“When you cannot hire enough people, you have to be able to find a way to motivate them (employees) with something else than money and settle, in a way, on the same level as they are. You need to be leader who delegates’ things to them and at the same time you need be a person that is easily accessible and can talk other things than work. It is important that you notice the voluntary workers because without them this would not be possible.” (GM 2)

The challenge of finding a right way to motivate with something else than money is real and not easy to execute. This is something that the general managers struggle with. Inner motivation can be typical for employees in sport organizations, but it cannot be taken for granted. By creating an environment

where the employees feel appreciated, the work itself is what motivates them. And when the organization has the culture where everyone is appreciated, they want to be part of that organization and they do not need a general manager or some other leader to motivate them.

“Maybe I would need to motivate the employees more but somehow I see it in a way that the work, situation, and the environment is the biggest motivation. You do not work in Mestis organization for money, but you need to have some other motives like desire to improve things or for loving the organization. I would say that this way employees here also think and therefore I do not have to motivate in army-style. If you do not have inner motivation, you are in a wrong place. Maybe this is something that I need to consider also that is there other ways to motivate than success.” (GM 1)

Self-leadership is also seen as a part of the general managers' everyday working. In order to motivate others, it is important that the general manager himself is motivated, since they are the ones who set an example. When the leader is motivated and confident with the path he or she has chosen, it motivates other workers too. According to GM 4, self-leadership is the most important factor in leadership:

“The most important leadership is the self-leadership. I try to find ways on how to develop the organization. Day-to-day working includes also to know how the team develops and improving the team's conditions so that they can focus on hockey. And more self-leadership in the office and by that example improving the conditions.” (GM 4)

In self-leadership, it is important to evaluate the actions that are made and the results that have come. In sport, the passion and emotions are always involved and play a big role in the industry in overall. This goes also for the decision making. As GM 3 describes comments the factors involved in decision making:

“Emotions definitely influences when making decisions”. (GM 3)

4.2.3 Leadership as an ongoing process

It takes time to identify the position of being general manager in sport organization and how the general manager starts practising the leadership that he or she prefers. Good leadership is not something that comes with a title, but instead it is a continuous growth and development that is formed in daily working.

“In the beginning I was more tentative. Now it is easier to understand of what issues are better to decide alone and what things are more reasonable to decide in a group.” (GM 2)

GM 1 describes the process of developing as a leader even more deeply:

“I think that at first I was maybe too sore to make decisions by myself because when I started in this position, I think that at first I was more of passenger and then little by little I started to move into the driver seat and found more tools and that way gained more and more encouragement to make decisions by myself and go towards the way that I believe is the right path for the organization. It is also a must to have a desire to develop as a leader”

Being a good leader in a Mestis organization requires having a desire to develop and grow in leadership. The general managers have to make decisions every day which are important in developing in leadership.

“Knowledge increases in day-to-day working when you are in those tough situations and are forced to make decisions.” (GM 3)

As it is discussed earlier in the chapter 4.1, the work of the general managers in Mestis is versatile and the days differ. One perspective that came from the interviews is that leadership is seen as a separate part from other work.

“In a way one challenge is that when you do by yourself, it sort of takes away from that leading and when you lead, it easily takes away from your own tasks what you were supposed to do.” (GM1)

According to the respondents, leadership is seen as half a trait and half a skill. Being a natural leader is not enough. Having the position of general manager

does not make you a good leader either, but it is possible to develop different kinds of leadership skills, because in order to succeed as a leader, skills in leadership are required. Such skills as motivating your employees, negotiating skills, and a skill to lead people. To develop in leadership, it is important to gain knowledge from more experienced leaders and managers.

“A certain leadership is natural gift and it comes from your nature starting from your childhood. But you can learn different kind of leadership all the time and it is good for you. You can draw from different leaders. I would say it is a half a skill and half a trait.” (GM 4)

4.2.4 Visioning in leadership

Three out of four respondents said that their organization have plans only for one or two seasons at a time. According to the interviewees, Mestis is also somewhat in transition and this also makes it harder when planning long term vision. Creating a vision and executing the steps towards the vision is one of the main tasks for the leader, but according to these respondents, the financial situation is an obstacle that prevents long-term visioning.

“It is clear that we try to survive with low budget, because it is known the resources that are and are not possible to have in this town. So we have not made any visions or plans yet to be in the top of Mestis for example in two years.” (GM 3)

Still the desire is to set up plans and visions for a longer time-period than one or two years. As GM2 describes:

“We probably make plans for the next two seasons, because at this point it have been impossible to set up any long-term projects. The idea though is to make long-term plans in the future.” (GM 2)

5 Conclusions

The aim of the thesis was to gain more understanding of the role of leadership in Mestis general managers' work. By gaining the understanding, two main research questions were formulated: What is the work description of the Mestis general manager? And what are the general managers' perceptions of leadership in Mestis?

In the findings, the versatility and range of the work are emphasized. The most important leadership skills consist of building relationships, creating an environment where the working is enjoyable and also being able to develop as a leader.

There were some similarities found in this paper with the themes in the study of Arnold and colleagues (2012), such as enhancing personal skills, understanding roles within in a team and strengthening relationships, However, for example visioning, which was the first theme in Arnold's and his colleagues' study, was not found important by the respondents. In addition, new themes were raised in the interviews. For example, leadership was seen as a separate task in the work.

5.1 General Managers' daily work

The title of a general manager itself includes the assumption that he or she has the main responsibility and the highest authority over finances and other issues in the organization. By viewing general managers' daily work, the understanding on how they lead people and things can be gained, and also what these things involve.

The job description between general managers varies in the sense that some organizations have sport directors or sport managers besides the general manager. In these organizations the work is more divided in a way that the sport manager is more involved in the sport and the player contracts, and the general manager focuses on developing the entirety and the finances of the organization. In some Mestis organizations, the general manager is also the

sport manager, which demands more work from him or her. In this kind of situation it is understandable that the growth of the organization is slow.

The work of a general manager in Mestis demands high versatility, and the leading can be divided in two sectors which are inside the team and outside the team. The work inside the team includes the contracts with the players, coaches and other staff and providing the environment for gaining success in the sport. The work outside of the team consists of negotiating sponsor and partnership deals, building relationships, taking care of the fans and developing the overall organization. The general manager is required to handle both of these sectors, especially when there is no sport manager employed in the organization.

Most of the funding for the sport organizations comes from the sponsors and partners. This also differs from a regular company where finances are based on selling the company's own services and products. In Mestis, the general managers are responsible for building such relationships with the sponsors and partners that will generate value for their money.

5.2 Leadership in Mestis organization

When looking at the perceptions of leadership in Mestis, it is first stated according to the interviewees that leadership in Mestis requires multiple skills of leadership in a challenging business environment. The general managers need to be able to manage many different areas of work, which makes the work and leadership complicated at times.

Based on the interviews general managers are aware of the environment they work in, what leadership skills are needed and what sectors need improvement. Yet because most of the time goes on running day-to-day operations, development is slow. In Mestis organizations, leadership is focused mostly on creating an environment where the daily working is easy and enjoyable for the workers. In Mestis organizations there are voluntary workers involved, and creating a good environment for them is important for their motivation.

It turned out in the interviews that building relationships and creating a motivational and appreciative culture with voluntary workers, is in a central role in

leadership of the general managers. According to Arnold et al. (2012), strengthening relationships with different parties is essential and this was also found important for the general managers in Mestis. Still the focus of strengthening relationships cannot be only with the people who are funding the organization, but to pay attention to other staff as well. When making the interviews, one interviewee became aware that motivating the voluntary workers needed more consideration in his work.

Voluntary workers are at the same time in obligatory need, a great help and a challenge for the general managers. Without voluntary workers it would be impossible to run a Mestis organization, but because of the fact that they are voluntarily working, it is not a solid ground to build on.

The amount of work done by the voluntary workers in the sport organizations is relatively significant than in other businesses, even though the sport organizations are for-profit companies. This issue requires the leader to settle in the same level with subordinates, appreciate the workers and create a culture where the employees feel significant appreciation, respect and fellowship.

Mestis organizations run with small resources, which affects significantly on things. Small resources prevent organizations to hire more employees and because of this, general managers have more work to do and fewer resources and time to develop the leadership and organization. Yet again, a side effect of this is that at the moment Mestis organizations actions consist mostly of focusing on day-to-day operations, rather than planning, and therefore having the vision for the organization is lacking.

According to Arnold et al. (2012) vision is the starting point of leadership. Therefore it is important to have a vision and goal to aim for, even with low resources. Having a vision, the organization would have a clear direction and this would bring the organization more perseverance. Therefore it would be important to have even some kind of a long-term vision. Ways of creating a long term vision with low resources could be found from the past. It is important not to repeat the same ways over and over again, but find out correction points and start to change them.

Other ways to create a long-term vision with low financial resources is finding the right people. Creating new relationships and building old ones is the cornerstone of any business. When the vision is clear for the general manager, it has to be sold for partners and sponsors in order to get them involved and try to make partnerships that last more than one year at a time.

As it has become clear, financial matters are the main responsibility for the general managers. This may affect the prioritizing of tasks. It is not the first priority to create a long-term vision but secure the workplace for upcoming years by trying to make good financial result for the organizations, and this way show the competence as a general manager. In addition, if the general manager spends most of the time making partnership and sponsor deals, again it means less time for leadership and planning the organizations future.

Low resources and financial responsibility of the general managers are not the only objects of not having a clear vision for the organizations in Mestis. Moreover, if Mestis is in a transition and the first league (Liiga) is closed, it is no use to set a goal of promoting to first league for example. It seems that Mestis itself as a league has not had a clear vision for the past few years, and this has affected the development of the single Mestis organizations in negative way. It is possible that if the status of the Mestis as a league is incoherent, it is possible that Mestis organizations cannot see the purpose for their work. Furthermore, this can lead to a low performance and even bankruptcy, which there are already examples of. That is why it is understandable to not have a clear vision at the moment, and just focus on daily work and running the organization.

Nowadays general managers cooperate with each other more than before, which adds more possibilities for the development of the Mestis as a league and organizations. Therefore it is good that general managers' work together and the cooperating is seen as a good thing, which can be productive. If Mestis develops itself as a brand, it would be easier to develop the organizations and create goals and visions to go towards. If some organization has a working mechanism, for example in marketing, it can be shared for other general managers too.

Growing in leadership in Mestis as a general manager is an ongoing process and it is shaped over the years by the increasing experience. According to Arnolds (2012), understanding the role as a leader is important. The work of a general manager in Mestis requires plenty of both leadership and managing and because of this, balancing as leader and manager and adapting the role takes time.

There is no one specific way of practising leadership in Mestis, but instead the leadership is practised different ways by different persons. The culture and values varies between the Mestis organizations, so the leadership in the specific environment is always different than somewhere else. In the research of Arnolds (2012), enhancing personal skills was found important and it is good that general managers in Mestis have the desire to develop in leadership and enhance their personal skills, which are required in their working environment.

Still there are certain skills and traits that every leader should have. It is common for good leaders to have good interaction skills despite the different cultures and values. Recognizing the interaction skills and developing them can make the work of the leader more efficient and far-reaching.

Leadership is included in the general managers' work in Mestis but the importance of it is not necessarily considered enough. Leadership should be thought more than just a part of the general managers' work. Not only thinking of how to develop the organization, but also to think how to influence the employees and how to develop them in their work. As a leader, influencing in a positive way to the subordinates and people around you, can make positive impact and good results in the long-run. That should be a core of everyday working.

6 Discussion

The final chapter of the thesis focuses on the contributions, future suggestions and evaluating the validity of the research. When interpreting the results it is important to acknowledge the sampling size, but also the fact that the study focused on gaining understanding based on interviewees' perceptions.

6.1 Contributions

This thesis was commissioned by KeuPa HT, an ice hockey organization from Keuruu, Finland. The topic of the thesis was the leadership in Mestis and for gaining understanding of how it is practised. In sport business research, leadership is not considered as much as managing but this thesis can give some views on how the general managers can develop the organization. The first thing is to focus more in the leadership and to recognize the issue that they are, in fact, leaders of people too. This leads for example to the consideration of the importance of the voluntary workers and motivating them, and also the importance of interaction. It is also good to reconsider the goals and vision of the organization, is the goal mutual and does the day-to-day working bring towards that goal.

For example, KeuPa HT has a general manager, marketing manager and the head coach who are, more or less, the only full time employees of the organization. For a small Mestis organization, their situation is better than in many other Mestis organizations. This study could help KeuPa HT to develop the organization by acknowledging the importance of leadership and maybe find tools of how to practise it even better with the resources that are available. A starting point could be to understand the roles and to consider which tasks each role includes, and in this way develop team working. When operating with low resources it is important to avoid unnecessary work. Each worker has his or her own responsibility. On the other hand working together is important and some things are better to do together.

6.2 Future research suggestions

Based on this study, more academic research about leadership in sport organizations would benefit the Finnish sport when gaining more understanding of how it is practised. In Finland, sport management education has increased in the past few years and it would be interesting to study its effects on the leadership, and also to study whether the education has benefitted the sport leaders' and sport managers' leadership skills.

Also studying the leadership from different views, such as the perspective of the employees and their perception about leadership of the sport managers. For example, studying voluntary workers and how they see things are done in the organization. According to the interviews, voluntary workers are a major factor in running the sport organization and there needs to be more consideration of how to motivate them.

Another issue was brought up in the interviews, which was the fact that emotions are involved when making decisions as a general manager. It would be an interesting topic to study how much the decisions are influenced by emotions.

6.3 Evaluation

When viewing the credibility of the research, reliability and validity are usually the terms that are used. Validity means whether the topic that is researched is right. In qualitative research, anticipation is difficult and therefore the credibility needs to be evaluated many times during the research process when the choices about the used methods are done (Kananen 2008, 123).

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is a term that is used more and more. Trustworthiness consists of four components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. (Veal and Darcy 2014, 50.)

Credibility refers on which information is gathered. Qualitative methods can have higher credibility than quantitative, because more time and focus is put into collecting even one piece of information. (Veal and Darcy 2014, 267.)

Transferability refers to whether the findings can be applicable beyond the subjects of the research for another contexts in general (Veal and Darcy 2014, 268). This thesis is not looking for transferability or generalization but instead increasing understanding of specific and limited topic.

Dependability refers to if the research can be repeated. This requires that the findings of the interviews are consistent and the research process is described, analysed and presented as accurate as possible. (Veal and Darcy 2014, 50.)

Confirmability or *objectivity* refer that the findings are based on the data (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 211). The objectivity of the author has been a primary goal for the thesis. Still the absolute objectivity cannot be achieved because of the fact that the interviews are an interaction situation. In qualitative research, it is important to acknowledge the subjectivity of the researcher, meaning that the researcher is the main tool of the research. As of this perspective, qualitative research are always more critically evaluated than quantitative research which are based on more of reliability of measuring the data. (Eskola & Suoranta, 2008. 210-212.)

There has always been a plenty of criticism towards qualitative research in general. This is because in qualitative research it is harder to separate data analysis and evaluation of the credibility of the research than in quantitative research (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 208). Therefore it is important to prove the relevance of this qualitative study and in order to do so, findings should be presented in a way that they convince the reader (Flick 2014, 516).

The aim of the thesis was to gain understanding of general managers leadership in Mestis based on their perceptions. The interviews represent only four general managers and their perception of leadership, therefore it is important to interpret the results as a perceptions that gives understanding of the research topic.

The interviewed general managers did not have or had only little education on leadership and therefore they had not thought about their work from the leadership point of view. Therefore they were not used to talking about leadership or acknowledging that in their work. Therefore the half-structured interview

method was the most suitable to this study. The half-structured interview allowed the interviewer to add extra questions to gain more information and this way to have findings that are important. Since there are no previous studies about the subject, a half-structured interview was the best one for this study. For example by using structured interview, not all of the important topics necessary would have been brought up by the respondents.

It is a complex task to separate the management and leadership in Finnish language and because the interviews were implemented in Finnish and then translated into English, it is possible that interviewees cannot separate how to exemplify specifically leadership. Still the trustworthiness of the research can be examined, for example by viewing if the interviewees' answers are in correlation with the conclusions. For increasing the trustworthiness and to support the conclusions, plenty of direct quotes of the interviewees have been added.

The author of the thesis has played in Mestis for six seasons in four different teams and also done the practical training in the Mestis organization. The interest of the sports, especially ice hockey and leadership was the main source of motivation when choosing the topic and starting the study process. The practical training lasted five months and included tasks of marketing, developing home game events and getting sponsorship and partnership deals. These factors might have shaped the perspectives and interpretations towards the topic even though the author strived for objectivity.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Structure of the interview

Background questions:

Working experience?

How long have you been general manager?

How did you become general manager?

What is your job description?

What kind of organization do you work for?

How many subordinates do you have?

Do you work in a group or by yourself?

By your perception, when can be held that Mestis GM is succeeded as a leader?

What are the main tasks as a Mestis GM?

What are your main responsibilities?

Who makes the goals for your organization and are there any goals?

Do you have a clear vision?

What are the main challenges?

What kind of leadership do you practise?

How does it show?

How do you motivate yourself?

How do you motivate others?

Do your organization have voluntary workers and how to motivate them?

Which factors influences the most in your decision making?

Describe the time you started your job and the present situation, is some things changed?

What do you think is good leadership?

Have you made big mistakes during your time as a GM, and if so how do you react in such cases?

What kind of leadership skills Mestis GM needs?

How do you develop these skills?

Is it necessary to develop these skills?

What are the most important attributes for mestis gm as leader?

Do you think that leadership is personality thing or could it be learned, justify?

Do you held education important?