MASTER THESIS

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHICH FACTORS INFLUENCE THE SUCCESS OF A MANAGEMENT CONSULTING PROJECT

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Preface

I can remember it when my father showed me the University of Twente back in the days. Back then I could have never imagined that I would finish my master. Right now I am about to end my career as a student with the completion of my Master thesis. I had the opportunity to write my thesis about an interesting topic and explore the great world of management consultancy.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor dr. Jeroen Kraaijenbrink for all his time and feedback during the process. Secondly, I would like to thank dr. Kasia Zalewska-Kurek for her time and feedback. Next, my friends and family who supported me constantly. Specifically, I would like to thank Suzanne Geerdink and Max Thijssen for their help. Without their helpful discussions and feedback this result would not have been possible. Lastly, I also want to thank all of the respondents, for their time, energy and valuable information they shared with me. It was not only informative, but also a lot of fun talking about their profession and experience they obtained during their careers.

H.W. Oonk
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Abstract

In the current literature there is some research done about success factor of a management consultant project, however all of these researches focus on individual factors which could potentially explain the success of a management consultant project. Earlier research did not yet construct a framework of factors which illustrates the different relations between the factors. The primary objective of this research is to develop a framework to provide the management consultancy industry, clients of management consultants and the academic world a detailed overview of which factors influence the success of a management consultant projects. The decision was made to focus on clients active in the small and medium-sized enterprises in the Netherlands, since 99.8% of the Dutch companies are categorized under this sector and a large amount of companies could potentially use this framework. To accomplish this objective and to develop a framework the following research question is formulated:

What is a necessary and sufficient set of factors to explain the success of a management consultancy project?

To get a better understanding of what is already known in the scientific literature about this subject a structured literature research was conducted. To deal with the disadvantages a scoping research was done to find out more about the topic of management consultancy. This input was used to develop a search string which was used to find articles in three scientific databases. To test the efficiency of this search string, a test was done with 8 articles found during the scoping research and were identified as important based on the value of the findings. If the search string did not find one of these articles the search string had to be adjusted. It became clear during multiple tests that 3 important articles could not be found in the three selected databases. Therefore a fourth databases was added, in which the 3 missing articles were found.

After using the search string in the four databases a total of 5096 articles were found. First of all, the articles were selected based on the title, keywords and the abstract of the articles to decide if the articles were useful for this research and, as a result, had to be investigated and selected in the future for the research. After this selection a total of 192 articles were left. Based on described inclusion and exclusion criteria it was decided which articles would be used for the developed theoretical framework. After this selection a theoretical framework was developed which consisted of six factors: management consultant capabilities, management consultant company characteristics, client company characteristics, management consultancy project process, external factors and the factor which determined if a project was successful.

To validate the theoretical framework a triangulation approach was used and two research methods were chosen. Empirical data was collected during 12 interviews and a focus group interview with originally 6, but after a last minute cancelation with 5 respondents, was conducted. The interview group and focus group consisted of an equal amount of management consultants and clients which previously used the service of a management consultant. All of the interviews and focus group were performed in Dutch, to ensure the respondents would be better able to describe their knowledge, experience and opinions. All of the interviews and focus group were recorded and transcribed. Thereafter the gathered data was coded with the programme Atlas.ti. This enabled the researcher to find out how many times factors or criteria were mentioned. After analyzing the data, it could be decided if; similar, different or confronting results were found within the literature review.

During the interviews and focus group it became evident that the factor, ‘client company characteristics’, had to be divided in two factors. Reason being, the client company characteristics could be sufficient enough to execute the process successfully, but if the client does not have the proper characteristics the project would most likely fail according to the respondents. Therefore, these two are separated from each other.

To answer the research question, it can be argued, based on the results of this research that the success of a management consultancy project is a complex multidimensional construct. Success is based on multiple factors and the interactions between those. In the end, a total of six factors influence the success of a management consultant project: external factors, management consultant capabilities, management consultant company characteristics, client company characteristics, client characteristics. Whereby the management consultant company characteristics influence the management consultant capabilities and the environmental factor influence all of the factors. The factors: management consultant capabilities, client company characteristics and client characteristics come together in the management consultant project process. In this process, communication is essential, without communication the different factors cannot combine and react on

each other. However, the three factors management consultant capabilities, client company characteristics and client characteristics are needed for a successful management consultant project. In the end, success of a management consultant project, based on the management consultant project process, and therefore the management consultant project process, is linked to the last factor which measures the success of a management consultant project.

Contents

Abbreviation	Explanation
CCO	Chief Commercial Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operational Officer
EBP	Evidence Based Practice
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KM	Knowledge Management
MC	Management Consultant
MCC	Management Consultancy Company
MCP	Management Consultant Project
SLR	Structured Literature Research
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SPICE	Setting, Perspective, Intervention, Comparison and Evaluation

Table 0.1 "Table with abbreviations used in the master thesis"

1. Introduction

During the last decades the management consultancy business was booming. It could be argued that the need for consultants can be explained by the constant changing environment and new technologies which influence different sectors (Patel, 2015). Each company has to deal with its environment and technologies, yet most of these companies experience difficulties adapting to these changes. Therefore consultants are requested to advise companies with up-to-date management practices, experience in implementing change and market information with which the companies do not have any experience with (Sturdy, 1997; Patel, 2015). Besides these expertise and experiences management consultants (MCs) have been known for their skills that help managers to analyze and solve practical problems faced by organizations to improve the performance (Kubr, 2002). Improving the performance can be done by applying different types of consulting such as: strategy consulting, management consulting, ICT consulting, financial advisory, human resource management (HRM) consulting and lastly financial consulting (Kubr, 2002).

Throughout the years a lot of researchers have searched for the core reasons that determine which factors influence the success of a management consulting project (MCP) and which factors determine why companies choose for a certain consultant. Some researchers believe that the success of a MCP is heavily influenced by the skill of the consultant, the recommendations, understanding or performance (Gable, 1996). Other researchers say it is because of the client's understanding (Schein, 1997; Glückler, 2003) or like Soriano (2001) state that the consultancy project will be considered useful if the knowledge acquired ultimately proceeds the expected results (Poulfelt, 1994).

After searching in the scientific literature it can be argued that the current literature focusses mostly on individual factors which could potentially explain the success of a MCP and not a framework of factors. McLachlin (1999) is one of the first researchers who combined the different factors and stated that multiple factors determine the success of a MCP. However, McLachlin (1999) did not link the factors individually to each other nor examined the effects each factor had on each other.

In sum, a lot of research has been done fragmentary about factors which influence the success of MCP. However, none of the researchers tried to explain the success of a MCP by linking multiple factors together to create a framework. Secondly, up till now, nobody has developed a framework displaying multiple factors which, in the end, could explain the success of a MCP. Therefore, this research will further investigate if a framework can be developed to display the relation of multiple factors to each other and which factors determine the success of a MCP.

This research is structured as follows: first the context and the relevance of the research will be explained in chapter 1. Next, chapter 2 the theoretical framework of the research is discussed. Thereafter chapter 3, gives insight in the methodology used to conduct the research. The results of the research are described in the fourth chapter. Lastly, in chapter 5 the conclusion and discussion are explained.

1.1 Research goal

The primary objective of this research is to provide the management consultancy industry, clients, and the academic world a detailed overview of which factors influence the success of a MCP. Both acknowledged by the literature, clients and MCs. The clients and management consultant (MC) could use this framework to get a better understanding of which factors influence the success of a MCP. Also the academic world could use this framework, since it is not available yet, to get a better understanding of how the MCP actually take place and which factors influence the success of it. Based on the outcome of this research, new future research topics can be explored. To achieve the research goal, the following research question is formulated:

RQ: What is a necessary and sufficient set of factors to explain the success of a management consultancy project?

Definitions	Description
Necessary	Since there is a lot of research done about the effective and successful factors of consulting it is expected that there are a lot of factors which influence the success of a certain project. To be sure the framework is manageable for MC and clients the word necessary has been added. Only the most important factors can be included.
Sufficient	The set of factors must be able to explain the main part of the success of a MCP.
Success	Success is defined in this research as a high client satisfaction, project completed according to the planning and within the budget, grow (Kumar, 2000).

Table 1.1. Definitions of the research question

The following sub-questions are formulated in order to properly answer the main research question:

1. What factors influence the success of a management consulting project according to the current literature?
2. What factors influence the success of a management consulting project according to clients and management consultants?

The first question will focus on the scientific literature which is created during the last couple of decades concerning management consulting projects. From this literature, a framework will be developed which can explain the success of a MCP based on scientific literature.

The second sub-question is developed to validate the created framework, based on the scientific literature from sub question one. To clarify, the test is to determine whether the current scientific literature took all the factors that influence the success of a MCP into account.

1.1.1 Focus of the research

This research will focus on the Dutch market examining the factors which influence the success of a MCP. The Dutch economy can be found in the top twenty of largest economies and is known for its knowledge-based economy and therefore skilled and highly educated citizens (Management, 2015; Agency, 2016).

In the Netherlands small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are responsible for 70% of the total employment, therefore SMEs are also known as the engine of the economy (CBS, 2015). The European commission defines a SME as: "*(SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million* (Union, 2003). Thus, a SMEs has between the 1 and 250 employees.

The Dutch chamber of commerce has more than 1.5 million companies registered (CBS, 2015), 99.8% is defined as a SME in the Netherlands. Since the SME company-grouping is by far the largest this research will further focus on clients which can be categorized as a SME. By doing this, the largest amount of companies could use the developed framework when working with a management consultant. Robson and Bennet (2000) show that MC could stimulate the growth of SMEs, especially in the field of human and resource management and business strategy.

1.2. Theoretical relevance

As stated in the introduction of this paper, a lot of research has been done concerning factors which influence the success of a MCP. It is surprising that a framework, which enables MC and clients to get insights in most of the necessary factors that influence the success of a MCP, has not been developed yet. Simon (1997) state that this could be explained by the fact that MCs work in a knowledge intensive market and MCs do not want to share their 'knowledge' and work methods with potential competitors. If all MCs shared the required knowledge, competences and working methods, competitors can easily get a better understanding about their competitors. This is one of the reasons why the current literature lacks enough empirical evidence to provide a framework of factors (Simon, 1997). The academic world executed research concerning factors which influence the success, but they did not relate all of these factors to each other to explain the success of a MCP. This paper will fill in this gab in the current scientific literature.

1.3. Practical relevance

The practical relevance of this research is twofold. First of all, the MC sector could use the framework to get a better understanding of which factors influence the success of a MCP. This also corresponds with Jang (1998) as he suggests that a broader understanding of the factors which influence management consulting both the consultant and the client will benefit. MC companies could get a better understanding, or update their current knowledge, about which factors influence the success of a certain project at their clients. According to Simon & Kumar (2001) the basic rules are available to the larger consulting firms from their own research and work. However, it is not yet available for the smaller firms and the public. Therefore, this framework could help smaller MC firms to acquire the basic rules for a successful MCP.

Secondly, the clients of MC could use this framework to get a better understanding what is influences the success of a MCP. Also during the project, the clients may examine which factors are important in the process. It is known that clients experience high levels of uncertainty if they are employing consulting services, due to the required knowledge that is needed to understand the recommendation of a consultant (Glückler, 2003; Soriano, 2001). The uncertainties that inhibit the employment of consulting services arise due to lack of control mechanisms, as Glückler (2003) notes: *"The lack of quality control and institutional setting allows for opportunistic behaviour, increase the likelihood of dealing with inadequate service suppliers, and represents a performance risk for the client"* (Glückler, 2003, p. 23). As a result, this framework could also help clients to get a better understanding of which factors influence the success of a MCP. Secondly, the framework could be used as a quality control measure for clients to monitor the process.

2. Theoretical framework

To enhance the value of the framework, a theoretical framework will be developed based on scientific articles concerning this topic. This framework will be evaluated later on in the research. This chapter will start by explaining the method used to compose the theoretical framework. Thereafter the process of the search is described followed by the search process. Lastly, based on the results of the search, the theoretical framework is developed and explained in the last paragraph.

2.2. Setting up the theoretical framework

In order to, eventually, create a framework based on scientific literature a search has to be done. In this section different methods are discussed to answer sub question 1:"What factors influence the success of management consulting according to the current literature?". In the last 20 years a lot of research has been done on various topics which resulted in an information overload from scientific papers. In this pile of research, it is nearly impossible to be aware of all of the important and relevant papers. A systematic literature review (SLR) allows the researcher to filter the information mountain in a manageable form (Petticrew, 2006). Therefore, a SLR could help to uncover existing knowledge about success factors to MCPs in the scientific literature. As stated above, the outcome of this research has to be relevant for MCs and their clients to be useful and as a result support their practices. By performing a systematic review both evidence-based information is gathered to support a practice, but is also enables the researcher to find gaps in the current knowledge, as Petticrew (2006) notes: *"provide a key source of evidence-based information to support and develop practice as well as to support professional development, by helping to identify new and emerging developments and gaps in knowledge"* (Petticrew, 2006, p. 12). Therefore especially a systematic literature review is useful in this research since it fits the research goal.

During the last decade's methods like Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) are developed and specialized to help researchers in structuring their question to retrieve the most relevant information (Booth, 2006). This method, originally used in healthcare, helps professionals to find the best evidence possible and most appropriate information available for decision making (McKibbon, 1998; Tranfield, 2003). In a SLR it is known that structure in the research question is important, since this has an effect on the research for relevant literature (Petticrew, 2006; Webster, 2002). Therefore, the basis of this research will use EBP to structure the research.

Kloda (2013) compared multiple EBP methods in his research to find which method is the most useful. In his research the author recommended to use EBP as a basis and adjust this basis to the needs in a different situation. This also correspondents with the view of Booth (2004), who changed the original method to the new needs of the research and developed a method suited for a social science oriented EBP instead of the originally experiment focus. Booth named the method SPICE (setting, perspective, intervention, comparison and evaluation). Since this research focuses primarily on the social science, rather than experiments, the SPICE method is more useful in in this research. Therefore, the SPICE method will be used in this research.

However, there is also some criticism on the use of a SLR in combination of a management review. Tranfield (2003) state: *"Management reviews are often regarded as a process of exploration, discovery and development. Therefore it is generally considered unacceptable to plan the literature review activities closely. A flexible approach much make explicit what the research intents to do, however the changes during the process have to be state explicitly what changes have been made"* (Tranfield, 2003, p. 215). Due to the fact that it is structured is lacks flexibility, especially when not much is known about a subject. Still, as Tranfield (2003) also argues, if the changes are stated explicitly it can be a useful method. Therefore, it is important to take this limitation into account, i.e. limit the impact. Adding more flexibility to the research can be done by executing a scoping research in advance of the research to find more relevant information about the research topic. This information can be used in the process of the SLR to ensure the most important aspects are covered. Note, however, the effectiveness of the SLR is not tested by this method. Testing and increasing the effectiveness can be done by making use of a search strategy for the SLR, since it lowers the likelihood of gaps in a SLR, by thinking ahead and testing its effectiveness (Petticrew, 2006). These potential gaps are decreased by using a search string, a review protocol, including and excluding criteria and lastly testing if the search strategy is successful. In addition, by making use of a search strategy the reliability and validation will be increased. This also results in more transparency, as it is easier to be replicated (Tranfield, 2003). In other words, it is recommended to use a search string, since it can increase the effectiveness of the SLR, reliability and lastly validity of the research.

To conclude, a SLR enables the researcher to search in a systematic way during the literature research. As stated earlier a SLR is not always seen in a management review, however due to the structure it helps to improve the reliability and validity of the research by adding structure. Also, it enables the researcher to find all relevant articles. By performing a scoping research in advance and using a search strategy most of the SLR's limitations can be resolved. Yet, it is still important to follow a structured process while executing a SLR, therefore the following paragraph elaborates on the process of the SLR.

2.3. Process of the structured literature research

As mentioned earlier flexibility is an important aspect in a management review. Therefore, a scoping study will be executed. Such a scoping research is done during the development of the research proposal. By doing so, the size of the current literature, concerning factors, which influence the success of a MCP, trending definitions, and the subject concerning this topics are explored (Tranfield, 2003). Also keywords, terminologies or definitions that are commonly used in articles concerning success factors of MCP became visible.

Phase I "the search" | based on the output of the scoping research a search strategy was developed. Firstly, the search string was created. A search string is a string of words which consists of multiple terminologies, definitions and keywords that can be used in digital databases to find articles with a combination of the words mentioned in the search string. To increase the effectiveness of the search the SPICE method was used to translate the research question in a search string. By doing so, the researcher ensures that all of the elements of the research question are used in the development of the search string. Besides the structure of the SPICE methods boarder-, smaller terms and synonyms are added. This choice was made because not all researchers use the same definitions and the narrower terms could find articles which include other relevant factors (Lefebvre, 2011).

When executing a SLR it is likely that a lot of papers will be found after using the search string in a database. While, these articles have a relation with the search string, there is a possibility that these articles are not relevant for the research. Due to the fact that only a couple of definitions have a relation with each other, for example, the articles states something about a different sector than the management consultancy sector. Also, not all articles are of a high-quality and it is therefore important for the researcher to decide which articles are going to be included or excluded. Only articles will be used from well-known journals in most cases the articles in those journals had to pass a review panel to determine if the articles were sufficient enough to be published in the journal (Webster, 2002; Fink, 2014). The extra review moment ensures that that the articles are reliable to use and the outcome of the articles is valid. Also, obtaining reliable information could be stimulated using well known databases (Webster, 2002). Some researchers state that two or more databases are a minimum for a comprehensive search, others say that more are required (Petticrew, 2006). In this research three databases are used: Web of Science, Scopus and Science direct. These databases are known in the management literature. Three databases are used because it may happen that one article cannot be found in one database, but can be found in another (Webster, 2002). Next, only English articles are used. This also makes it easier for other researchers to replicate this study based on the search strategy, this stimulates the external reliability. If an article cannot be opened due to limited access the associate professor will be asked or the writer will be contacted by the student.

Afterwards, the search string was tested multiple times and discussed with other researchers whom used this method more often to ensure the search string worked properly (Fink, 2014). During one of the first test moments it became clear that the focus of this research on the SME sector was too narrow since it only resulted in a limited amount of articles in the multiple databases. To resolve this problem the search string was adjusted that not all of the articles had to mention the SME sector.

After the first adjustment the search string was tested for a second time. This time the effectiveness was tested if some articles, which were found during the scoping research and had a lot of valuable information, were found using the search string. Eight articles were selected based on the valuable of the information within the articles concerning this topic. During multiple tests it became evident that only 5 out of 8 articles were found. Therefore a fourth database, EmeraldInsight, was added. The three remaining articles were found in this database. In table 2.1. "Test of the search string with the 8 selected articles" the selected articles are displayed and the results of the search string test is displayed. The SPICE framework can be found in Appendix I "SPICE framework". The search string can be found in Appendix II "Search string".

	Databases used				**Selected articles**	
	A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*Source*	*Article title*
1	yes	yes	yes	no	(Dawes, 1992)	Criteria used to select management consultants
2	yes	yes	yes	no	(Poulfelt, 1994)	Management consultants, client and consultant perspective
3	yes	yes	no	no	(Jang, 1998)	Factors influencing the success of management consulting projects
4	no	no	no	yes	(Mclachlin, 1999)	Factors for consulting engagement success
5	no	no	no	yes	(Kumar, 2000)	Strategic capabilities which lead to management consulting success in Australia
6	no	no	no	yes	(Simon, 2001)	Client's views on strategic capabilities which lea to management consulting success
7	no	yes	no	yes	(Appelbaum, 2005)	The critical success factors in the client-consulting relationship
8	no	Yes	yes	no	(Bronnenmayer, 2016)	Success factors of management consulting

Notes. A = Sciencedirect, B = Scopus, C = Web of Science, D = EmeraldInsight

Table 2.1. "Test of the search string with the 8 selected articles"

Phase II "the selection" | after using the search string in the four databases a total of 5096 articles were found. First of all, based on the title, keywords and abstract the articles were chosen which were further investigated during the research. After this selection a total of 192 articles were believed to be relevant. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria it was decided which articles were going to get used. These inclusion and exclusion criteria can be found in Appendix III. A potential bias in this research is that only the researcher reviews the articles. It could therefore happen that some articles are falsely excluded. Therefore the selection of the articles will be done twice to mitigate the impact regarding this limitation. If a difference is noticed the articles will be reviewed again and a final decision will be made on whether or not the article is going to be used.

Phase III "reading" | during the reading phase it is essential to describe, in detail, what articles will, or wont, be used (Petticrew, 2006). For example, a promising title, set of keywords and abstract could have included papers that, after reading, were not as valuable as indicated. However, in the end, after reading the article, it could still happen that it turned out these articles are not relevant. The excluded articles will be mentioned in the results. Also if the inclusion and exclusion criteria change during the research, due to obtained knowledge during the reading process, a mentioning will be made in the results of the research (Petticrew, 2006). After having a closer look to all of the articles 75 articles remained as relevant. The difference between the 192 and 75 is primarily explained by duplications and articles which were not stating anything relevant for the management consultancy sector, but for other industries. The rest was excluded based on the exclusion criteria.

Phase IV "results" | to create a clear overview about the findings of the relevant articles, the findings were presented in a table. A small summary of the findings of each relevant article is mentioned in this table. The findings were divided in different topics resulting in an overview. This overview was used later during the development of the conceptual framework based on the output of the SLR. This was important since there were multiple articles used and each of these articles could potentially have new factors which influence the success of a MCP resulted from a different research method. In the end, these could complete each other. Also, the same findings of different studies can be compared and combined (Webster, 2002).

2.2. Reliability and validity

To ensure the SLR has enough reliability and validity both the internal and external validity and reliability are taken into account. In table 2.2. The actions to ensure the validity and reliability are described.

	Actions taken
Internal reliability	• Selection of relevant articles will be done twice • Relevant findings will be presented in a matrix
External reliability	• Search string • Search strategy • Inclusion & exclusion criteria • Changes in one of the above standing topics are mentioned later in the results sections
Internal validity	• Using evidence based practice (EBP)
External validity	• Trying to use as must as articles with results that can be generalized

Table 2.2. "Internal and external reliability and validity"

2.3. Findings from the articles

In this paragraph all of the findings from the articles of the SLR are described.

2.3.1. Management consultant capabilities

Problem solving | it can be argued that the main reason to hire or contact a MC is to solve or identify problems by providing knowledge that a firm does not have (Simon, 2001). Therefore the capability of solving problems is a must (Maclagan, 1989; Armenakis; 1990; Poulfelt, 1994; Kumar, 2000; Nikolova, 2009; Czarniawska, 2013).

To identify a problem, diagnostic skills are required to find the actual problem (Poulfelt, 1994). One way of diagnosing the problem is to involve the employees of the company to identify the problem. Since the employees of a company could inform the MC about the situation and problems they experience (Czarniawksa, 2013). Though, it could happen that these employees wrongly inform the MC about the problems or situations, due to uncertainty, and therefore bias the analysis (Maclagan, 1990; Armenakis, 1990; Basil, 1997; Czarniawska, 2013). Therefore, it is important that the MC execute bias reduction actions, for example by cross checking. Other methods which could help to find the problem are methodologies, standardized procedures or models which structure the search (Maclagan, 1989; Poulfelt, 1994; Jang, 1998). Besides, in order to decrease bias, a MC has to be able to balance between the ideal and practical solution (Armenakis, 1990).

Having industry knowledge and business insight could also help to identify problems, according to Poulfelt (1994). Many MCs fail to describe the exact problem of the client, since the MCs do not understand the industry. Besides, talking in the same language as the client helps to communicate the possible findings and benefits of a project. Additionally, describing and writing down benefits in the client's language, industry knowledge and business insight is needed to provide relevant recommendations (Poulfelt, 1994).

When solving the problem for a client, the main objective or project deliverables of the assignment have to be taken into account during the entire process (Gable, 1991; Jang; 1998; Kumar, 2000; Appelbaum, 2005). If the problem or objective cannot be resolved by the consultant this has to be mentioned to the client and a decision has to be made what to do next. This also corresponds with Mclachlin (1999) that a MC must always put the client first.

Communication | MCs have to communicate a lot during their work, since they spend most of their time talking, presenting a conveying solutions and convincing others (Taminiau, 2009). From the research of Kumar (2000) it was found that 93% of the respondents thought client-consultant communication is of utmost importance during the process. Klarner (2013) state that: "*ongoing communication between the own employees and consultants is essential for the success of hired consulting teams, since it helps integrate such teams into the corporation and facilitates their adaptation to the organizational context*" (Klarner, 2013, p. 274). Consultants need to communicate during the entire process with their client (Adler, 2015). It all begins at the start of the project and all of the action in between to implement and finally monitor the results. For example, during the beginning of the project a lot of communication is needed to discover the boundaries, contract and to identify the problem (Klarner, 2013). Later on, the recommendations and actions have to be implemented at the client's company, which also requires a lot of communication.

Kumar (2000) identified the capabilities networking and building a relationship. Therefore a consultant can also be seen as an account manager. Having a good relation with the client could lead to business benefits, individual and organizational learning, enjoyment of the interaction and even friendship is possible (Arnold, 2006). Therefore, it is important that a MC is able to have some relationship skills and understand what is needed during this process, since the communication between the client and consultant can be influenced by a lot of different factors. A few examples are: trust (Poulfelt, 1994; Nikolova, 2015), commitment (Raimond, 1990; Gable, 1991), client engagement (Maclagan, 1989), motivation (Cambra-Fierro, 2014), responsiveness (Stewards, 1998; Momparler, 2015), ongoing communication (Klarner, 2013), monitoring information (Klarner, 2013), adapting to the clients culture (Basil, 1997), the client-consultant relationship (Jang, 1998, Kumar, 2000), common vision and shared value (Solomonson, 2012; Nikolova, 2015; Bronnenmayer, 2016), personal characteristics (Fischer, 2014; Momparler, 2015) Improving a client-consultant relationship can be done by proactively working together (Solomon, 2012).

In the research of Poulfelt (1994) it is argued that, if the client does trust the MC, clients are more likely to share relevant information (Poulfelt, 1994). As a result, problems can be identified with more ease. Increasing trust and commitment, and consequently information sharing, can be stimulated by multiple options and factors. Examples given in the literature are, involving the employees in the process of identifying the problem adapting to the culture of the firm (Raimond, 1990; Basil, 1997; Nikolova, 2015). This statement correspondents with the research of Kakabadse (2006). The author states that when a MC is on the same level as managers, and sees the relationship in terms of a partnership, trust and information sharing increases (Kakabadse, 2006; Solomonson, 2012). A MC can also increase the commitment by the openness of the communication (Zidane, 2016), or by responsive communication (Stewards, 1998; Momparler, 2015). Having a personal fit with the client and the shared values could also increase the amount of trust the client has in the consultant (Solomonson, 2012; Nikolova, 2015).

Structured information could also have a positive effect on the communication between the client and MC. For example, the top management can give feedback easily if the information is structured. Hence, in this way also employees understand the required changes better (Klarner, 2013).

Nearly one third of the articles (30 articles) found from the SLR referred to the importance of communication in MCP Therefore, it can be argued that communication is one of the most important and also most challenging aspects of the success of a MCP.

Role | the true role of a MC is also discussed multiple times in the literature (Mclagan, 1989; Raimond, 1990; Basil, 1997; Jang, 1998; Nikolova, 2009; Lalonde, 2015). In the process the consultant has been given different roles like: a safeguard (Mclagan, 1989), an expert, manager, researcher, counsellor, politician (Jang, 1998), a facilitator to an expert or doctor (Lalonde, 2015), chairman (Raimond, 1990), team player (Basil, 1997) and leader (Crawford, 2010). The above mentioned researches illustrate that these roles were identified in different stages of the MC process. For example, Delany (1995) refers to two types of projects of a MC. The first one is product-based, e.g. an implementation document is given to the client. Secondly, the process based project a MC assists the entire process of the implementation. The interaction and roles of the client and consultant differs based on the type of assignment and the followed procedural characteristic, as Nikolva (2009) notes: "*The nature of client—consultant interaction and the roles of the involved parties vary, depending on the type of the problem at hand. In the case of routine problems, client—consultant interactions mostly followed procedural characteristics, as described by the expert model*" (Nikolova, 2009, p. 296). This also correspondents with the statement of Lalonde (2015) that it is possible that a MC changes different roles in a hybrid way to suit the needs of each different situation. One could argue that the role of a MC depends on the situation and phase of a project and that a MC can have multiple roles in a project.

Knowledge | the consultancy business can also be divided in the knowledge industry. In general consultants are highly educated people who sell their technical skills, expertise and experience to clients of companies who lack these (Basil, 1997; Jang, 1998; Kumar, 2000; Adler, 2015; Bronnenmayer, 2016). Next, it is also expected that a consultant is aware of the business of the client and all of the necessary information about the trends in both the consultant's and clients market (Basil, 1997; Kumar, 2000).

Consulting work is, in general, not a 'following phase-model' (Simon, 2005). Since every situation is different there is not one standard solution for a particular problem. However, consultants use phase models to remind themselves about different aspects which could be forgotten in the process.

Personal characteristics | since each person is unique, every MC has specific personal characteristics. Throughout the years, multiple researches have been researching the personal characteristics of MCs. Different personal characteristics, and interpersonal skills, also influence the success rate of a MCP (La, 2009)

Kumar (2000) conducted a research about which strategic capabilities, based on 'skills and value', have a major influence during a success of a MCP. Kumar identified integrity and honesty, discipline of the consultant, reputation and the ability to listen as major capabilities for consultants. Lalonde (2015) confirms that the ability to listen is important and adds empathy as a personal characteristic. Characteristics such as: reflexivity, intuition and improvisation also have an influence on the success of a project (Leybourne, 2006; Elbanna, 2015)

Next, it is argued that using success stories and metaphors could help the client to create an expert image of them during the MCP, as Nikolova (2009) notes: *"In line with the critical model on consulting, we argue that client—consultant relationships are symbolic interaction systems characterized by rhetorical language games in the form of sets of success stories, metaphors, etc. These symbolic interactions help consultants create an expert image in the eyes of their clients and shape the meanings clients create from those interactions with consultants especially under conditions of interpretative ambiguity"* (Nikolva, 2009, p.24). However, it is important to note that the consultant is successful and an expert, promising certain changes which cannot be realized could potentially damage the relation with the client. Consultants have to be fair and realistic to their clients (MacLagan, 1989; Basil, 1997).

The personal fit between the client and consultant is also multiple times mentioned in the literature found. Based on the personal characteristics of the MC the client determines the presence of a personal fit or shared values. Having a personal fit and the same shared values could increase the trust in each other (Nikolova, 2015). Therefore, the MC companies also have to take into account that it could happen that a client does not have a personal fit or misses the shared values in the client-consultant relation. This could influence the trust in the relation and in the end the success of a MCP (Nikolova, 2015).

Emotional intelligence is also related to ratings of project success (Mazur, 2014; Fischer, 2014; Nikolova, 2015). It was found that the effects of emotional intelligence on project success ratings was mediated by both internal and external stakeholder relationships (Mazur, 2014). This correspondents with the findings of multiple researchers that the personal characteristics have a relation to the communication capability of the consultant (Fischer, 2014; Mazur, 2014).

Project management | project management is mentioned multiple times by researchers in the field of capabilities of MCs (Jang, 1998; Kumar, 2000; Crawford, 2010; Bronnenmayer, 2016). Clearly defined goals can also help to improve the project outcome, as Jang (1998) state: *"Clearly defined goals of management consulting projects can be used to help structure a task to facilitate cross functional cooperation for project teams and to keep everyone oriented towards a common project outcome"* (Jang, 1998, p. 68). Structure and clearly defined goals can support project teams to keep everyone oriented towards a common project outcome. Also working with clear roles and responsibilities during strategy implementation could help the success of a MCP (Hyvari, 2016).

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the literature regarding the capabilities of the MC, it can be argued that the capabilities can be divided in six different main capabilities: competences, problem solving, personal characteristics, knowledge, communication and lastly project management. Each of these capabilities are formed by different criteria. In the table 2.3. "Management consultant capabilities and criteria" on the next page the capabilities are presented and their criteria based on the output of the SLR.

Communication		Competences		Personal characteristics	
Criteria	*Source*	*Criteria*	*Source*	*Criteria*	*Source*
Communication skills	(Taminiau, 2009; Klarner, 2013)	Safeguard	(MacLagan, 1989)	Integrity and honesty	(Kumar, 2000)
Relationship management	(Kumar, 2000, Solomon, 2012, Klarner, 2013, Adler, 2015)	Expert	(Jang, 1998, Lalonde, 2015	Discipline of the consultant	(Kumar, 2000)
Networking	(Kumar, 2000)	Manager	(Jang, 1998)	Reputation	(Kumar, 2000)
		Researcher	(Jang, 1998)	Ability to listen	(Kumar, 2000; Lalonde, 2015)
Same level	(Kakabadse, 2006; Solomonson, 2012)	Counsellor	(Jang, 1998)	Empathy	(Lalonde, 2015)
Openness of communication	(Zidane, 2016)	Politician	(Jang, 1998)	Reflexivity	(Elbana, 2015; Leybourne, 2016)
Responsive communication	(Stewards, 1998; Momparler, 2015)	Doctor	(Lalonde, 2015)	Intuition	(Elbana, 2015; Leybourne, 2016)
Personal fit	(Solomonson, 2012; Nikolova, 2015)	Team player	(Basil, 1997)	Improvisation	(Elbana, 2015; Leybourne, 2016)
Documentation	(Klarner, 2013)	Leader	(Crawford, 2010)	Fair	(MacLagan, 1989; Basil, 1997)
Structured information	(Klarner, 2013)	Chairman	(Raimond, 1990)	Emotional intelligence	(Mazur, 2014; Fischer, 2014; Nikolova, 2015)

Project management		Knowledge		Problem solving	
Criteria	*Source*	*Criteria*	*Source*	*Criteria*	*Source*
Manage the scope of the project	(Jang, 1998; Kumar, 2000; Crawford, 2010; Bronnenmayer, 2016)	Industry knowledge	(Poulfelt, 1994; Basil, 1997; Kumar, 2000)	Diagnostic skills	(Poulfelt, 1994)
Clearly defined goals	(Hyvari, 2016)	Expertise	(Basil, 1997; Jang, 1998; Kumar, 2000; Lalonde, 2015; Bronnenmayer, 2016)	Bias reduction skills	(Maclagan, 1990; Armenakis, 1990; Basil, 1997; Czarniawska, 2013)
Clear roles	(Hyvari, 2016)	Experience	(Basil, 1997; Jang, 1998; Kumar, 2000; Lalonde, 2015; Bronnenmayer, 2016)	Talk in the same language	(Poulfelt, 1994)
		Methodology	(Simon, 2005),	Practical relevance	(Armenakis, 1990)
		Vulnerable about knowledge	(Gable, 1991; Jang; 1998; Kumar, 2000; Appelbaum, 2005)	Put organization first	(McLachlin, 1999)

Table 2.3. "Management consultant capabilities and criteria"

2.3.2. Management consultancy company characteristics

The next factor found are the management consultancy company (MCC) characteristics. This factor can influence the capabilities of the MC.

Human resource management | one of these internal factors is the Human Resource Management (HRM) of a consultancy firm. For example, recruitment policies, hiring practices and training from the HRM department could influence the skills of a MC (La, 2009). Also, giving the consultants enough career opportunities and rotation within their work could improve the satisfaction of the employees and retention rate of a company, consequently the knowledge and experience of a certain consultant will remain within the firm (Delbufalo, 2013; Martinez-costa, 2015). Furthermore, training could also help consultancy to improve their capabilities and skills. For example, relationship management training could improve the capability to manage a client-consultant relationship (Fischer, 2014) and trainings to teach consultants how to build adaptable teams (Klarner, 2013).

Job satisfaction | it was also found that there is a relation between job satisfaction and customer satisfaction and perceived client value (Gil, 2008; Selim, 2013; Cambra-Fierro, 2014 Momparler, 2015). Also, as stated above, stimulating employees by assigning challenging assignments can help to increase the job satisfaction.

Knowledge management | during the last couple of years, knowledge management (KM) has become a hot topic within the management consultancy industry. Some researchers like Mas-machuca (2012) state that knowledge management is the most critical process of a management consultant firm: "*KM is the most critical* *process in consulting because knowledge is the industry's core business. It is therefore essential to determine the foundations and causes of successful KM projects in this sector"* (Mas-machuca, 2012, p. 1309). However, some companies still have difficulties implementing knowledge management and using it properly. For example, Naetti (2007) found that MC organisations work with many communities within the organization. Between these communities knowledge sharing is difficult to achieve since there is a lack of appreciation, and a lot of competition between these communities within a MC organization. Reason being, the performance of each community of practice is measured separately. Another explanation was the reward system most consultancy work proposed by Taminiau (2009). The MC is not rewarded with sharing a lot of knowledge across the organization, but instead with the amount of billable hours. The promises of knowledge management can only be realized if people are open for change (Ambos, 2009). Also the support of the management of consultancy firms is necessary to change that consultancy are going to share more information (Taminiau, 2009; Mas-machuca, 2012).

However, it was seen that smaller companies experience less difficulties with information sharing since everyone knows of each other what they are doing (Boone, 2008).

Conclusion

Based on the results above three main criteria can be identified which could potentially influence the success of a MCP, as illustrated in Table 2.4. "MCC characteristics. These are HRM, knowledge management and job satisfaction within the MCC

MC company characteristics	
Criteria	*Source*
Human resource management	(Patterson, 2009; Delbufalo, 2013; Klarner, 2013; Fischer, 2014, Martinez-costa, 2015)
Knowledge management	(Mas-machuca, 2012)
Job satisfaction	(Gil, 2008; Selim, 2013; Cambra-Fierro, 2014)

Table 2.4. "MCC characteristics"

2.3.3. Client company characteristics

Also other external factors like the characteristics of a clients' company can increase the success of a MCP. Not only is the MC responsible for a successful outcome of the project also the client. Since, the client is in fact the owner of the problem. According to the findings the success of a MCP can be stimulated by: providing top management support (Jang, 1998; Appelbaum, 2005; Bronnenmayer, 2016) responsiveness (Thompson, 1991; Heater, 1998) stimulate collaboration (Bronnenmayer, 2016), common vision (Bronnenmayer, 2016), selecting the right team members (Thompson, 1991; Klarner, 2013) team commitment (Jang, 1998). Also the owner of the project must give the consultant a clear objective or direction (Thompson, 2001; Appelbaum, 2005). If this objective changes during the project, then this has to be communicated.

Preferred supplier program | information about preferred supplier programs (PSPs) and different purchasing policies clients use during the selection and purchasing process was also found. Sieweke (2012) found out that this PSPs could create a threat, due to the fact that clients could oblige MCC to decrease the cost of each MC project, by doing this the MCC is making less and less profit.

Secondly, clients were also found to be working with different policies concerning hiring a consultant. Most common were policies about managing the client-consultant relationship, contractual tips, and tricks for speeding up the purchasing process (Pemer, 2014).

Client sponsor | lastly, the presence of a clients' sponsor can increase the success rate of a project (Thompson, 1991; Jang, 1998). A sponsor is someone within the client organisation who has the leadership capability, necessary power, respect, effective interpersonal skills, and is someone who strongly believes in the change to stimulate the MC project. If the MC is leaving after the project it is possible that the employees fall back into their old behaviour, if there is no presence of someone actively stimulating the change. Thus, a sponsor is of great importance (Jang, 1998).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the client characteristics are presented in table 2.5.

Client company characteristics			
Criteria	*Source*	*Criteria*	*Source*
Ownership of the client	(Jang, 1998)	Selecting right team	(Thompson, 1991; Klarner, 2013)
Top management support	(Jang, 1998; Appelbaum, 2005; Bronnenmayer, 2016)	Clear objective	(Thompson, 2001; Appelbaum, 2005)
Responsiveness	(Thompson, 1991; Heater, 1998)	Client sponsor	(Thompson, 1991; Jang, 1998)
Stimulate collaboration	(Bronnenmayer, 2016)	Common vision	(Bronnenmayer, 2016)
Business culture	(Jang, 1998)	Team commitment	(Jang, 1998)
Client participation	(Jang, 1998)	Acceptance	(Jang, 1998
Supplier programme	(Simon, 2005; Sieweke, 2012)		

Table 2.5. "Client company characteristics criteria"

2.3.4. External factors

According to the literature, external factors also have to be taken into consideration during a project. Multiple researchers describe that both national and business culture influence a project (Shore, 2005; Mohe, 2008; Crawford, 2010; Schumann, 2010). In the research of Shore (2005) six cultural dimensions are suggested: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, future orientation, performance orientation and human treatment. To deal with these dimensions and determine the influence of different dimensions a MC must be aware of these aspects. Mohe (2008) developed a measurement scale and divided, among other things, the culture aspect, but also more aspects within three external categories: inter, meso and macro factors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, multiple researchers find that the national and business culture influence project outcomes. Therefore, it can be said that these factors also influence the success of a MCP. Table 2.6. "External factors" summarizes the findings.

External factors	
Criteria	*Source*
Macro	(Shore, 2005; Mohe, 2008; Schumann, 2010)
Micro	(Mohe, 2008)
Meso	(Mohe, 2008)

Table 2.6. "External factors"

2.3.5. Management consultant project process

In this section the MCP process is described and further explained based on the findings from the articles of the SLR. It is important to note that there are multiple forms of MC. Schein (1990) makes a distinction between three types of consulting: providing expert information, playing doctor and process consultation, each of which has its own processes. However, Mclachlin (1999) argues that a MC should avoid making too sharp of a distinction between these types of management consultancy. Since, these types of consulting can also be used together and a MC who is oriented towards one particular type should consider adding aspects of the other types of consultancy. Therefore, it is chosen in this research that all of the types of consulting are included in this process, since all of these types of MCs could potentially use this information for their services.

Pre-entry phase

Selection | Adamson (2000) developed a framework which show the pre-entry phase of a MCP. Adamson (2000) argues that both the client and consultant have a responsibility during this phase. Lalonde (2015) agrees, but adds on by describing this as an exploratory stage to retrieve information symmetrical, since both groups have their own actions to take. For example, the client has to check if the MC has the appropriate knowledge, expertise and understanding of the problem. Whereby the MC has to check if the client is credible and has top management support (Adamson, 2000). The next step, according to Adamson (2000), is to describe the criteria for project success and the perception about the company needs. These criteria have first to be discussed and agreed upon, afterwards a contract can be made and signed (Adamson, 2000). It is argued, by Delany (1995), that the pre-entry phase is the most important stage since during this stage the problem and objective is identified and formulated which has to be solved, also the connection is made between the MC and the client.

Next, according to multiple researchers the purpose of the assignment has to be taken into account. A MC can be assigned to an assignment for multiple purposes. It is essential that both the MC and client agree on the objective and the purpose of the assignment. There have been different studies about the selection criteria of which MC are selected and why (Day, 1992; Dawes, 1992; Ng, 1999; Simon, 2001) or what the motives are to contact a MC (Poulfelt, 1994; Appelbaum, 2005).

Nikolova (2015) also argues that the personal fit between the MC and client is essential for a good relationship. Based on the personal characteristics of the consultant the client determines if there is a personal fit and if the parties have shared values. Having a personal fit and shared values could increase the trust in each other. Therefore, it has to be taken into account that it could happen that a client does not have a personal fit or misses the shared values in the client-consultant relation. This could influence the trust in the relation and in the end the success of a MCP (Nikolova, 2015).

The most important selection criteria for hiring a MC according to Simon (2001) is insufficient expertise in house and objective advice. Other important factors are; gaining additional help and quick resolution of issues. These findings correspond with the reasons why to reject a MC according to Dawes (1992). It can help a MC to understand the needs of MCs, this could stimulate the success of a MCP. Additionally, Dawes (1992) argues that, for selecting a MC, the reputation of a MC in a specific area, general reputation and knowing each other are the most important criteria's for selection. Whereby the reputation of a consultant in a specific functional area is most important. This corresponds with the findings of Homburg (2009).

Intense commitment | Poulfelt (1994) argues that more focus is needed from both the consultant and client on this phase, since during this phase information is retrieved, which is essential for the rest of the project (Lalonde, 2015). Some clients do not realize this and think the consultant is responsible enough to solve the problem. However, it is the client's responsibility to provide enough information about the situation. Therefore, client commitment is a must and is necessary for a successful MCP (Poulfeflt, 1994).

Decrease uncertainty | Homburg (2009) argues that a service is not a tangible professional service and is characterized by a high degree of transactional uncertainty and double moral hazard risk. Delany (1995) argues that a couple of actions can be taken to decrease the uncertainty at the client. For example, by providing a clear description of the consultants understanding of the problem, specific task that will be performed (style of working), describe the tangibles and intangibles of the assignment, and a clear description of mutual responsibility of both parties. Also, providing the client with a clear proposal outlining the stages of the project, methodologies and cost estimation, can help to decrease uncertainty. This also could potentially solve some misunderstandings later during the project (Basil, 1997).

Perceived value | as stated earlier during the selection it has to be clear what the exact role of the MC should become and what the objective of the MCP is. Based on this expectation the client will determine the perceived value later during the project. Other researchers argue that the reputation of a MC in a specific area plays an important role in the expectation management and consequently it is essential that the MC constantly evaluates the expectations (Dawes, 1992; Homburg, 2009).

Execution and post phase

The most common topic, discussed during the execution and post phase, is the evaluation part of a MCP (Delany, 1995; Huang, 2010; Lalonde, 2015). According to Huang (2010) three evaluations can be planned during the MCP. The first one is the mid-term evaluation, when the task is completed. Secondly, the final evaluation and lastly, the feedback evaluation after the implementation. Delany (1995) addresses that the short term evaluation of the assignment is relatively simple to measure, since this can be tackled by clarity of the initial goals. However, evaluating the longer term is more difficult, especially for the field of strategy consulting, since the outcome is influenced by multiple factors. For example, the environment, competitor moves, and new technologies (Delany, 1995). Lastly, La (2009) underlines the importance of knowing the expectations of both the client and consultant. To become successful the expectations have to be completed, therefore evaluation of the expectation can also be important.

For implementing the recommendations of the MCP the employees of the firm have to understand why and what they need to do to solve the problem (Jang, 1998). Otherwise they are not committed and do not want to change their behaviour. Jang (1998) argues that involving the employees could help during the implementation to become more successful.

Lastly, Sieg (2012) argues that starting up a dialogue after the completion of the project can create new business opportunities (Sieg, 2012). Since new business opportunities can be discussed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings (see table 2.7) of the literature review suggest three parts; pre-entry phase, during- and post-phase. Important to note, more literature was found with respect to the pre-entry phase and its significance.

Pre-entry phase		**During phase**		**Post phase**	
Criteria	*Source*	*Criteria*	*Source*	*Criteria*	*Source*
Appropriate knowledge, expertise and understanding	(Adamson, 2000; Lalonde, 2015)	Evaluation	(Delany, 1995; La, 2009; Huang, 2010; Lalonde, 2015)	Post evaluation	(Delany, 1995; Huang, 2010; Sieg, 2012; Lalonde, 2015).
Shared values & common vision	(Solomonson, 2012; Nikolova, 2015)	Involving employees	(Jang, 1998)	Long term evaluation	(Huang, 2010; Sieg, 2012)
Top management support, credibility	(Adamson, 2000; Lalonde, 2015)	Same level approach	(Kakabadse, 2006; Solomonson, 2012)	Starting up the dialogue again	(Sieg, 2012)
Responsibility of CC	(Poulfelt, 1994)	Acceptance	(Jang, 1998)		
Providing enough information	(Poulfelt, 1994)				
Decrease uncertainty	(Delany, 1995; Homburg, 2009).				
Contract	(Adamson, 2000)				

Table 2.7. "Criteria per phases of the MCP process"

2.3.6. Performance of success

Gable (1996) is one of the first researchers who stated what the success of a MCP is determined through: *"Success is a complex multidimensional construct. While a single overall measure appears tenable, interesting and revealing results may be realized from analysis of the individual dimensions. Research addressing only subset of the dimensions may be misleading"* (Gable, 1996, p. 1194). This corresponds with the findings of the research of Bronnenmayer (2016). Where Gable (1996) introduced the definition of the success of a MCP, Jang (1998) was the first to describe which factors could be measured to determine the success of a MCP. Jang (1998) argues that the success of a project can be measured by delivery on time, completion to budget, and satisfaction of client's overall expectation.

A couple of years later Kumar (2000) and Simon (2001) executed a research about which indicators determine the success of a MCP. Kumar (2000) focused on consultants and Simon (2001) focussed on clients. The difference between the results of the research of Kumar (2002) and Simon (2001) was stunning as Simon (2001) concludes in his research: *"There is a quite noticeable discrepancy between how consultants measure and perceive success and how clients do the same"* (Simon, 2001, p. 371). On the one hand, Kumar (2000) questioned consultants and identified the following factors (ranked on importance): customer satisfaction, profitability, repeat business, personal/job satisfaction, referrals, revenue, growth, meeting the budget, longevity of consulting practice, and number of clients/size of client base. On the other hand, Simon (2001) questioned the clients and identified the following factors (ranked on importance): achieving objective agreed upon, customer/client satisfaction, recommendations actually implemented, timeliness of service delivery, achieving measureable financial results, deliver within forecast budget, regular updates during engagement, provision of post-engagement support. From these findings, it can be concluded that consultants focus more on the end result of the project and factors such as: trying to improve the job satisfaction, revenue and stimulate growth.

Bronnenmayer (2016) used the results of both Kumar (2000) and Simon (2001) and translated these success factors in three dimensions from which the success of a MCP can be measured: compliance with budget and schedule, degree of target achieved and degree of acceptance. He tried to test the impact of these factors on the overall client satisfaction. Client satisfaction can also be seen as one of the factors measuring the success of a MCP. As Poulfelt (1994) states in his research that the satisfactory is a combination of all factors and needs a joint effort from both the consultant and client: *"Satisfactory completion of an assignment,* *in most cases, needs a joint effort from the consultant and the client. This requires both parties to be aware of their expectations, roles and potential contribution, not only in the initial stage, but during each step in the assignment. How to screen consultants or clients, establish, and develop a professional relationship, therefore, key issues"* (Poulfelt, 1994, p. 351).

Conclusion

Based on articles of the SLR it can be argued that success is a multidimensional construct. Success is determined based on multiple factors and cannot be explained by just one factor. Bronnenmayer (2016) summarized these multiple criteria in compliance with budget and schedule, degree of acceptance and the degree of the target achieved. All of these criteria influence the client satisfaction. In addition, it can be argued that the client and MC can have different thoughts about the success of a MCP, which has to be taken into account during the process.

Performance of success	
Criteria	*Source*
Compliance with budget and schedule	Bronnenmayer (2016)
Degree of acceptance	Bronnenmayer (2016)
Degree of target achieved	Bronnenmayer (2016)
Client satisfaction	Poulfelt, 1994; , Bronnenmayer, 2016)

Table 2.8. "Performance of success criteria"

2.4. The conceptual framework

The theoretical framework is developed based on the findings of the articles from the SLR. However, not all of the criteria are displayed. Some criteria are too similar to each other and can be summarized within one criteria under one factor.

In the articles it was argued that the MCC characteristics influence the MC capabilities. The MC capabilities and the characteristics of the client company are combined in the MCP process. Therefore there is a link between these two and the MCP process. Based on the process and the client company characteristics and MC it is determined if the MCP is a success. This results in a relation between the MCP process and the last factor, performance of success. The resulting conceptual framework from the SLR is displayed in figure 2.1. on the next page.

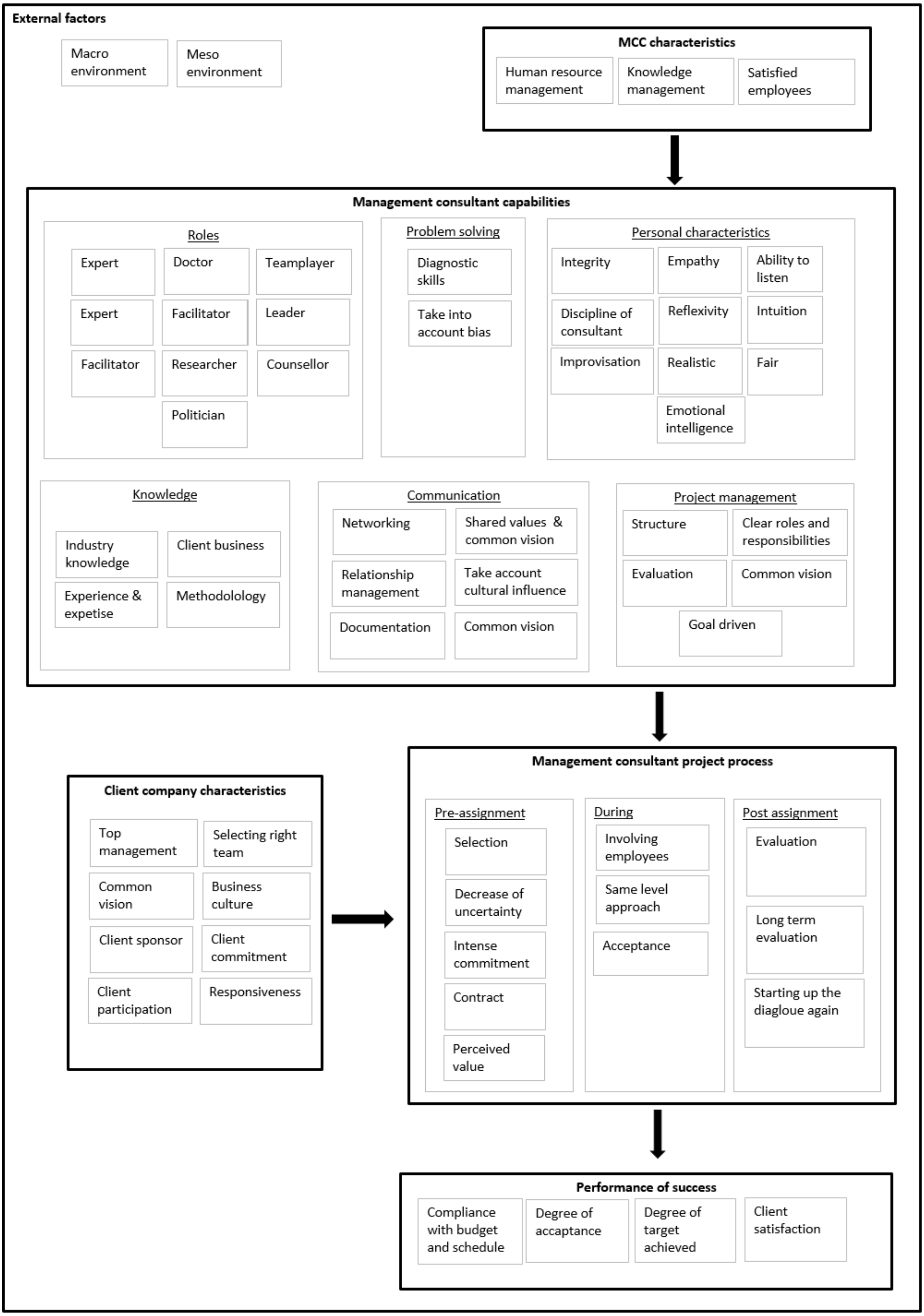

Figure 2.1. "Conceptual framework based on the SLR"

3. Methodology

In this chapter the methodology of the research is discussed. Based on the objective of the research the most suited research method is chosen. Next, the data collection method and the data analysis is described which are used in the research. Followed by a discussion about the reliability and validity. Lastly, the research framework is presented which will be used in this research.

3.1. Qualitative research

To answer the main research question both the sub-questions have to be answered. Since the first sub-questions is discussed in chapter two, this chapter will focus on sub-question two.

First, there are two methods available to gather data during a research. A qualitative method and a quantitative method. Qualitative research focus more on emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Qualitative research can give a deeper understanding of a certain problem and build theory from it, also known as inductive or generation of a theory (Bryman 2007). In quantitative research a theory is tested and focus is on the measurement or quantification, also known as deductive research. The following types of research are quantitative research: Experimental studies, quasi-experimental studies, pretest-posttest designs, surveys (Newman, 1998).

Since the goal of this research is to deliver a framework, it can be argued that a conceptual framework is created an inductive approach is used. This is exactly what has to be done in this research since there is currently little known about a certain framework of factors which influence the success of a MCP. Therefore a qualitative approach is used in this research. In the next section the qualitative methods; focus groups, interviews and a case study are described which can be used to strengthen the validity of the framework.

According to Kanter (1997) by using a combination of methods, also known as triangulation, more valid and reliable results are created, since it tests if multiple methods result in similar conclusions. Therefore, it is also wise to use multiple research methods in one study to increase the reliability and validity of the information gathered from the research. Therefore it is recommended to use at least two research methods.

3.2. Selection of qualitative research methods

There are multiple qualitative methods known for collecting data. In this section a couple of research methods are discussed that will be relevant for the proceedings of this thesis. To start with a focus group, the focus group method is a quick and efficient way of tapping a wide range of views and opinions from a group of people rather than just a one to one interview (Sim, 1998). While interviewing a group of people, the opportunity is created to discuss and interact with each other, which might elicit the richness of the data and the dynamics of the opinions (Cohen 2006; Sim, 1998; Hennink et al., 2011; Twinn, 1998; Chioncel et al., 2003). However, a group of people could have advantages, a disadvantages is that some participants can feel not comfortable, since a focus group involves more than one participant you have to take into account the group consensus and dissent (Sim, 1998). For example, some participants could be more assertive than others with the result that the shy participants does not say anything, as Noelle-Neumann (1974) also call this ‘the spiral of silence’, this can be recognized when the facilitator does not balance dominant and shy participants. This could both result in biased information from the focus group method (Rabiee, 2004; Morgan, 1995).

During interviews the interviewee does not always see or experience the same problems or advantages as another interviewee experience when they are interviewed individually. However, during focus groups the entire group is confronted with the problems or advantages of one of the participants. Therefore during the focus group the entire group can conclude if the framework will work or it would not. A major advantage of interviewing a person a deeper understanding about a topic can be gained (Bryman, 2007). Next, the researcher can collected the respondent opinion, perception, attitudes and background information (Bryman, 2007).

Lastly, a case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case (Bryman, 2007). This type of research is also seen as a means of refining or refuting existing theories, rather than building entirely new explanatory frameworks (Jack, 2007). A case can be multiple things or persons like a single organization, a location, a person or an event and it has the ability to investigate topics in-depth and offers insight when multi factors need examined (Rose, 2015). It also enables the researcher to process information over time. However, the subjectivity and generalizability can be questioned of the method (Thomas, 2016)

In table 3.1. “Comparison advantaged and disadvantages multiple research methods”, the advantages and disadvantages are compared of the mentioned research methods.

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Focus group	• The physically engaging and interaction of the participant scan be observed (Morgan & Spanish, 1984). • Fast way to gather a wide range of views and opinions from a group of people (Sim, 1998).	• Getting a large group of the right people at the right time and location together (Hennink et al., 2011; Chioncel et al., 2003).
Interview	• Can create a deeper understanding intro a topic (Brymann, 2007) • Can be used to gather opinions, perceptions, attitudes and background information (Gerring, 2012)	• Time consuming (Bryman, 2007)
Case study	• Has the ability to investigate topics in-depth and offers insight when multi factors needs to be examined (Rose, 2015) • Case studies can be used for theory building at all possible levels, containing theory generation, extension and contestation (Yin, 1994) • It enables researcher to study processes over time, captures the complexity of the relationship, and make it possible to understand causality (Yin, 1994)	• It is hard since the subjectivity and generalizability of the method (Thomas, 2016). • The internal validity is hard to establish, since experiments or statistical control is difficult to implement (Thomas, 2016).

Table 3.1. “Comparison advantages and disadvantages multiple research methods”

The main goal of sub-question two is to find out which factors influence the success of MCP according to the clients and MC. Therefore, it is important that both groups participate in the research after the accomplishment of the framework from the SLR. Interviews can be executed to find out if the MC and clients actually resemble what is found in the literature, providing a check for the framework developed later. By doing this more in-depth information can be gathered specific for a sub-group to confirm, discuss or question the findings of the framework developed from the SLR. In addition, background information can be gathered. When choosing case studies multiple factors can be examined. However, this takes a large amount of time and only investigates one case. Furthermore, it is harder to collect data for multiple sub-groups. Lastly, focus groups can be executed to gather in-depth knowledge and feedback about the developed framework. However, organizing multiple focus groups can be difficult. Therefore the first method that is going to be used to collect in-depth data are multiple interviews, since these can be easier organized compared to focus groups and different sub-groups can be easily monitored which is a problem in case studies.

Secondly, to validate the findings of the individual interview, a focus group can be planned to invite all of the sub-group members to discuss the findings of the SLR and interviews. A case study can also be useful, however, most of the time a case study studies a process over time to monitor the complexity of relations. Since the time is limited for this research and since the findings from the different sub-groups have to be tested to increase the reliability of the acquired information from the interviews, it is not possible to use just one case. Also one of the main goals of this research is that the framework is useful for both the MC and clients. By using a focus group both the MC and clients can be invited to check if the acquired information from the SLR and interviews are actually correct. By doing this, not only the researcher confirms that the framework has merits (value), but the entire focus group can discuss it. By combining interviews with a focus group multiple research methods are used and can we can speak of triangulation. As a result, the validity of the acquired information used in this research in increased.

3.3. Data collection

In this section the data collection is further specified of the previously chosen methods. In the first section the SLR is described followed by the interviews and lastly the focus groups are described.

3.3.1. Data collection in the semi-structured interviews

Describing the process in advance and using an interview could increase the reliability of the results (Byrman, 2007). Therefore in this research the interview working method of Manuel (2008) is used. The following steps are mentioned in this method: (1) identify participants, (2) decide the type of interview, (3) decide on the facilities in which to conduct the interviews, (4) check and test your equipment, (5) design an interview schedule, (6) obtain formal signed consent, (7) pace the interview and (8) follow proper protocol. In the following section all of these steps are taking into account.

The decision is made to meet all of the interviewed people in person, since the facial expressions and emotions of the interviewee can easier be captured (Bryman, 2007; Wilson, 2012). Based on these emotions the interviewee can ask more questions if necessary. If there is no other opportunity to meet in person the researcher can consider using the telephone, other IT programs or search for another interviewee. However, the sample group is large enough, so finding someone else to meet face to face should not be a problem.

In this research the semi-structured interview is most likely the best suited method. Since the aspects from the developed framework, based on the articles, from the SLR can be divided in a couple of questions during the interview. The advantage is that the interviewer has a guideline, but is also flexible to ask different questions to points that seem worthy for following up (Bryman, 2007).

The interview consists of two parts. The first part are semi-structured questions based on the factors from the conceptual framework. The second part consists of the conceptual framework and a couple of questions concerning this framework. The interview questions can be found in Appendix IV.

As a preparation for each interview all of the respondents received an interview protocol in advance of the interview. In this interview protocol all of the basic information concerning the research was described. Also a part 1 of the interview questions was included. It was decided that the respondents did not receive the developed framework in advance of the interview. This was done because it forced the respondent to only use their own thoughts and experiences concerning the questions. However, a disadvantage is that the respondent could not prepare feedback on the framework. But, since in part 1 the entire framework is discussed with semi-structured questions the respondent already gave feedback on the importance of the factors from their experience, opinions and examples and still in the second part they could have a look at the framework and provide valuable feedback. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix V.

Simon (1997) states in his research that MCs work in a knowledge intensive market and therefore do not want to share their 'knowledge' and thereby work methods. This is one of the reasons why the current literature lacks enough empirical evidence to provide a framework of factors. To counter this problem the decision was made that all of the respondents were only named in the interview with their function and at which company they worked. Secondly, all of the names and companies mentioned during the interviews are not used in this research. This enabled all of the respondents to speak freely and not to worry about sharing confidential information (Bryman, 2007).

To ensure that no relevant information is lost during the interview it is recommended to record the interview (Bryman, 2007). By doing this the interviewer focusses completely on the interview and does not have to write down any comments during the conversation. However, it has to be taken into account that the interviewees had to agree with the fact that the interview would get recorded (Bryman, 2007). It is chosen to record all of the interviews. This enables the researcher to focus completely on the interview.

Lastly, it has to be noted that not every interviewee speaks fluently English. Therefore a language barrier could occur and not all of the relevant information could be collected during the interviews (Bryman, 2007). A solution could be that the interview will be done in the native language of the interviewee. However, it is harder for other researchers to find out what is exactly said during the interview. As a result, the decision was made that the interview will take place in the native language of the interviewee, therefore no language barrier will occur and valuable information is lost. Since the interviews will take place in the Netherlands the language used during the interviews will be Dutch.

3.3.2. Data collection in the focus group interview

There are a couple of things to take into account during the focus group interviews as stated earlier. First of all, it is important that the participants feel comfortable with each other to stimulate the group discussion, since the people by which the participants are surrounded, within the focus group, have an effect on the results of the discussion (Rabiee, 2004; Morgan, 1995; Sim, 1998). Therefore, before the focus group interview some extra time was planned to get to know each other better. To deal with the assertive people a facilitator can be used to ensure that also the shy people are included in the discussion. Therefore the facilitator, in this case the researcher, has to encourage participants to say something and share their own opinion which could result in new discussions. However, helping the participants is ok, but participating or influencing the participants is wrong and could end in biased information.

Lastly, the researcher has to deal with similar difficulties as during the interview. Same as the interviews the focus group is recorded and is done in Dutch. In advance each participant of the focus group receives a focus group protocol. Since, triangulation is used during this research the same questions are used as during the interviews. Secondly, no names of people and organizations are used when in the research to enable the respondents to speak freely and not worry about sharing confidential information (Bryman, 2007). The interview protocol can be found in Appendix VI, the questions can be found in Appendix IV.

3.4. Sample

Interview | since this research focusses on SMEs the maximum amount of employees for a client organization is limited at 250 employees. The clients are divided in three groups, this is done to check if there is any difference between the outcomes of the interviews. The following groups are defined for the client: companies with 1-10 employees, 11-50 employees and 51-250 employees. For the MCs there are also three groups defined, but without a maximum of employees: 1-10 employees, 11-250 employees and 250+ employees. In the table 3.2. "Selection of the participants for the interviews" the different interviews which will be executed are displayed.

	Interview group	Company size	Function	Company
1	Client	1-10 employees	CEO	TBP composites
2	Client	1-10 employees	Owner	Move your crowd
3	Client	11-50 employees	Managing director	DEMCON production
4	Client	11-50 employees	CCO	AIMSS
5	Client	51-250 employees	CEO	Eurodev
6	Client	51-250 employees	CEO	OV software
7	MC	1-10 employees	MC	Freelancer
8	MC	1-10 employees	MC	Freelancer
9	MC	11-250 employees	CEO	Present media
10	MC	11-250 employees	Partner	Eshuis accounting & advisory
11	MC	250> employees	Business consultant	Wolter Kluwer
12	MC	250> employees	Senior MC	McKinsey

Notes. CEO = Chief Executive Officer
CCO = Chief Commercial Officer

Table 3.2. "Selection of participants for the interviews"

A criteria for the selection of the right clients was that they had worked previously with a MC. Since the work of a MC is mostly on the strategic and tactical level it was decided to only talk with someone of the board of directors. The criteria for the MCs was that they worked for a larger amount of time in the business and had completed multiple projects with different clients on the strategical and tactical level. Based on these criteria both groups were selected. Furthermore, during the interview these criteria were tested again to ensure to collect the information from the right respondents.

This study is an explorative research and the main goal is to explore which factors influence the success of MCP agreed on by both the clients and consultants. This is different than a confirmatory research and consequently, the results of this thesis are hard to generalize. Therefore a limited amount of interviews for each group are planned. However, if there are too many differences between the two planned interviews in one sub-group an extra interview will be planned. If there are still too many differences this will be noted in the results section.

Focus group | to validate the results of the interviews executed earlier, one of the participants in each sub-group is selected to take part in the focus group. The selection of the participants is displayed in table 3.3. "Selection of participants for the focus group".

	Interview group	Company size	Function	Company
1	Client	1-10 employees	CEO	Move your crowd
2	Client	11-50 employees	CEO	Backbone
3	MC	1-10 employees	Partner	De betekenis fabriek
4	MC	11-250 employees	CEO	Present media
5	MC	11-250 employees	Partner	Eshuis

Notes. CEO = Chief Executive officer

Table 3.3. Selection of participants for the focus group

Getting multiple random people at the right time, in the right location and obtaining the right data can be hard (Hennink et al., 2011; Chioncel et al., 2003). Especially if all of these people have to work at a different company. To partly mitigate this problem, multiple actions were taken to make the focus group easy assessable for respondents. The focus group was planned at the end of the week, on a Friday afternoon since most people working do not have meetings in these time slots. The focus group took place on a central location in Enschede and a drink and something to eat was offered to the participants. Moreover, there was an opportunity for the respondents to attend a networking event after the focus group that was ongoing at the same location. This was done to incentivize the respondents to come.

During the interviews each participants was asked if they knew someone who could be interested in participating in the focus group, also known as the snowball effect (Harrell, 2009). By doing this the researcher made use of the network of each of the participants which helped to find respondents for the focus group. Unfortunately, there were still some difficulties experienced in the process to find enough respondents. Secondly, just before the focus group interview participants did not show up. Therefore, the decision was made that some of the respondents, who already participated in the interview, were also invited to come. In the end, just before the focus group interview started, one of the participants contacted the researcher that he could not make it. As a result, only 5 respondents were available instead of the 6 people that were scheduled to be there.

The same selection criteria were used for the respondents in the focus group. Based on these criteria both groups were selected. Also during the interview these criteria were tested to ensure to collect the information from the right respondents.

3.5. Data analysis

After completing all of the interviews a transcript of each interview was made in Dutch. After making a transcript of each of the interviews an email was written to the interviewee wherein was asked if the interviewee agreed with the transcript. This is done to ensure the reliability of the results (Dicicco-Bloom, 2006). After making the transcript of the interviews is it recommended to use software programs for coding and to structure the findings. This enables the researcher to compare and connect the findings of each interview together (Dicicco-Bloom, 2006). A major disadvantage is that this method takes a great amount of time. But the advantage is that no information is lost during the process. The qualitative data analysis and research tool Atlas.ti will be used to code all of the interviews. This enables the researcher to structure all of the findings together.

Similar as the interviews the focus group session was recorded, however a disadvantage is that, if the researcher does not know the voices, some misunderstanding could happen (Sim, 1998). Therefore, it is recommended to capture the interview on video. Doing this ensures that the non-verbal communication can also be noticed and it becomes clear for the researcher who was talking (Sim, 1998; Kidd, 2000).

After the focus group a transcript was made of the process, similar to the one of the interviews, to increase the reliability (Dicicco-Bloom, 2006). After making a transcript of the entire focus group an email was written to the each participant wherein was asked if the transcript was correct and no information is missing or had to be added. Same as for the interview analysis, Atlas.ti is used to analyse the transcript.

To ensure the construct validity, the findings are supported by quotes from the interviews and focus groups. Also arguments which contradict with the general findings of the interviews are discussed in each section to strengthen the internal validity. Lastly, for each factor a comparison will be made with the literature and empirical data found during the interviews and focus group. Based on this the final conceptual model will be developed.

3.4. Reliability and validity

To ensure the reliability and the validity of the outcome of this research a combination of methods is used, this is also known as triangulation. To be sure the output of the interviews also have a certain internal reliability a focus group will be executed to cross reference the output of the interviews.

Brink (1993) described four major sources of error in relation to reliability and validity for qualitative research methods. Since these have effect on both the focus groups and interviews they will have an effect on both these types of research. First of all, it is important to be aware of the fact that the researchers could also have major influence during the interview on the participant. The first solution to solve this is that the researcher has to be aware of this fact (Brink, 1993). Secondly, preparing for an interview or focus group is important. The researcher could participate in an interview or focus group training to get to know more about how to use these types of research methods properly. However, this is time consuming, it could help the researcher to understand which questions to ask and which assumptions he takes during the data gathering session. An easier solution is reading multiple books about how to execute an interview or focus group (Brink, 1993). Therefore, the research can prepare himself by reading some guides about performing an interviews. An advantage is that the researcher already performed multiple interviews for his bachelor, however a focus group is something new. Third, using an informant, especially in the beginning, could help the researcher to ensure all of the necessary information is collected (Brink, 1993).

Secondly, the respondents participating in the research have a major influence on the reliability and validity. To limit these threats and risks multiple actions can be performed (Brink, 1993). First, it is important to make sure the participants know what the research is about. Therefore, a short description about the interview or focus group can be send to each participant. To inform the respondents about the interview and focus group a protocol is made as mentioned earlier. The protocols can be found in Appendix V "Interview protocol" and Appendix VI "Focus group protocol. Next, building a trust relation with the participants could improve the information the respondent will give. The only problem in this research is that the time limit, which is too short to perform multiple interviews with each participant. However, people from the network of the researcher can be used as respondents. Since they know each other most likely more trust is present (Brink, 1993).

Lastly, to ensure all of the information is gathered from both interview groups, MCs and clients, are categorized in three groups. This is done to ensure all of the sub-groups are represented in the research.

	Interviews	Focus group
Internal reliability	• Interviews recorded • Using Atlas to code the interview • Let interviewees' check interview afterwards	• Using pre questions • Using the outcome of SLR
External reliability	• Semi-structured interviews based on the findings of the SLR • Defined selection of interviewees	• Recorded • Multiple clients and consultants from different sub-groups will be invited
Internal validity	• Between the clients and MC different sub-groups will be interviewed.	• During the focus group all sub-groups are invited
External validity	• Using more than one interviewee for each sub-group • Extra interview planned if the data is not the same	• Using different sub-groups of clients and consultants. However, data cannot be generalized.

Table 3.4 "Overview of actions taken to increase the reliability and validity of the research"

What can be seen from the table 3.4. "Overview of actions taken to increase the reliability and validity of the research" that there are not any problems with the internal and external reliability. However, the external validity is not that high. But this can be explained by the fact that this research is an explorative research. Therefore, it is no threat for this research.

3.5. Research design

The framework for this research is illustrated in figure 3.1. "Research framework". To start with a scoping research is done and the research proposal is developed. Afterwards the first sub-question will be answered by executing a systematic literature review to develop the framework based on scientific literature. In the next stage sub-question two will be answered by interviewing six MCs and six clients. Besides the interviews one focus group will take place to ensure the data is reliable and valid.

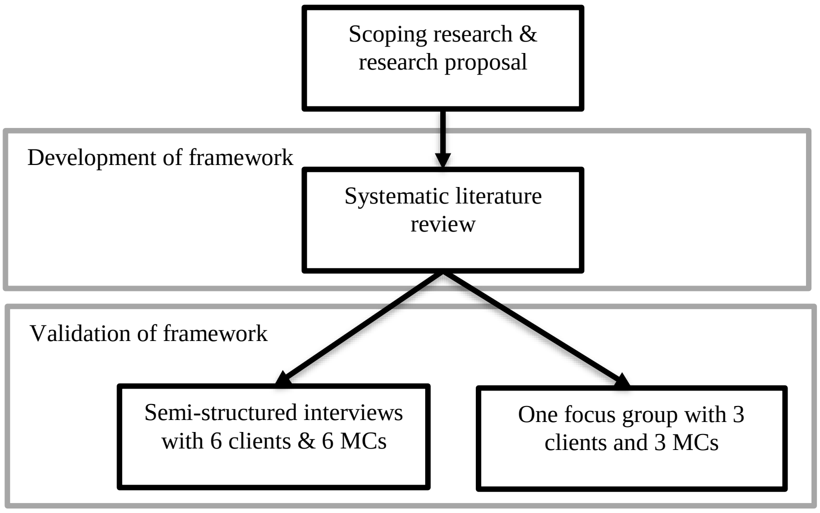

Figure 3.1. Research design

4. Results

In this chapter the results are explained based on the outcome of the interviews and the focus group. In each of the following paragraphs all of the factors found earlier are individually explained. Based on the comparison of the findings from the literature from chapter 2 and empirical findings from this chapter the new conceptual framework is developed and can be found in the last paragraph.

To ensure the construct validity, the findings in this chapter are supported by quotes from the interviews and focus groups. Also arguments which contradict with the general findings of the interviews are discussed in each section to strengthen the internal validity. To identify which quote is from who a coding method is used. Each quotations starts with the letter I (interview) or F (focus group) this is followed by the letter R representing the respondent.

4.1. Management consultant capabilities

In this section all of the findings from the interviews and focus group concerning the MC capabilities are described. In the end of this paragraph a comparison made between the literature found earlier and results from the data collection.

Personal characteristics

The following criteria described in this sections also say something about what kind of profile a MC needs.

Reflection | the importance of the capability to be able to reflect on the actions performed by MC during the project is mentioned by the major part of the respondents. From the start of the project a MC must be able to reflect. For example, one of the respondents (see quotation) gave an example about her reflection skills during the first phase of a MCP she performed. By reflecting on her actions she was able to improve the situation and receive the assignment in the end. Other respondents described that you can reflect during, and in the end, of the project. Based on these results it can be argued that the reflection capability is a capability which can be used during the project and potentially increase the success of a MCP.

I R7*: "you know, once, during the first meeting with a potential new client I went completely out of time. I was way too enthusiastic about things I had done and was constantly talking about it. I completely forgot to tell them what I was capable of, for this specific project they wanted me for. After the meeting I realized I screwed up. Instead of thinking that I would do it the next time better I immediately tried to solve the situation. When I came home I send them an email and told them that I knew I was wrong and I completely forget to talk about what I could do for the organization. They replied and told me that it was good that I send the mail afterwards. In the end they hired me for the assignment".*

I R12*: "it is like top sport. With top sport, you have to evaluate the match afterwards that is exactly what you learn. How went this and this. What happened exactly: 'wait we forgot to do this and also in the wrong order'. Or: 'you were a real asshole, because you did not what you were supposed to do, that is the reason why we had to work harder' ".*

Ability to listen | nearly all of the respondents agreed with the fact that one of the most important capabilities of a MC is the ability to listen to the client and client organization. As respondent 9 argues, this is also one of the hardest capabilities for a MC.

I R9: *"I think the most important I would say, is listening, and not talking too much. But that is immediately one of the hardest things for a MC".*

Objective | this capability is mentioned multiple times both during the interviews and focus group. This capability was also discussed during the question: "What are bad habits of a MC?". Multiple respondents answered with the answer: 'what the client wants to hear, is something bad to do'. A MC has to be objective during the entire project. Being objective was also compared with being fair during the interviews. Some respondents compared being objective to being a doctor, since a doctor also does not just states what the client wants to hear. Instead, the doctor is objective.

I R12*: "being objective, like a doctor. Do not justice people about their behaviour, but you have to come up with a clear treatment".*

Organization sensitivity | multiple respondent referred to the importance of knowing how the organization works, how the communication works, which people make the decisions and what are the roles of the key people within the organization.

I R12: *"organization sensitivity also includes that you understand how the people work, how the politics work within the company, which person is responsible for which actions".*

I R8: *"look for the resistance within the company. What is in it for them? Think from their perspective. You can think in terms of documentation, but also from the perspective of the client. A bit of empathy. Understand the organization, know how it works, political, who decide and where do you have to be".*

Confidence | a MC has to have some kind of confidence. MCs also have to work, most of the times, with well-educated people which have a lot of experience, like respondent 4 argues. Also the appearance of a MC gives the client and the client company certain expectation When a MC comes in, you immediately get an expectation about his or her capabilities. One of the respondents, during the focus group, made a joke about grey hair. All of the respondents had a laugh about the joke, but in the end all agreed that grey hair could stimulate the outcome of the project since this could indicate that the MC is wise or experienced.

I R4: *"in SMEs, if you are hired for implementing a business strategy. You are working mostly for family business. What you can see over there is that they want someone with a certain personal profile. Who can stand their ground. Most of the times you are working with well educated, technical people who have lots of experience they must be convinced".*

Patience | earlier the ability to listen was described as a personal characteristic. An addition is having patience as a MC. MCs have most of the times experience with multiple projects. Based on their experience a MC could be able to detect the problem immediately. According to the results from the interviews it is sometimes better to have patience. Sometimes a client just wants to tell the MC the entire story. Also, if the MC is too fast details about the problem may be missed. Next, since MCs have experience with multiple projects they know what is happening, or could be the reason for the problem, but the client does not. The client has to understand the problem. This takes sometimes more time, therefore having patience as a MC can be valuable.

I R11: *"I think you need patience. You have to deal with multiple levels within the client organization. One person understands it directly, the other does not, you must be able to switch constantly, and sometimes the client just want to tell you his story. While you already know what he wants to tell you. Sometimes when you are patience you hear that little detail what you other ways would have missed. Therefore patience is important".*

I R4: *"When you have intelligent people (MC), you could think about a management team that: "hey why are you that slow" or "Goddamit why are you still thinking". That also does not stimulate the process".*

Empathy | another personal characteristic of the MC is empathy. A change process within an organization is an emotional process. According to the respondents, if a MC understands the employees also on the emotional side this could increase the success of a MCP, since the MC must be able to communicate with the employees, convince them and stimulate them. Understanding their emotions and show that the MC understands it may be beneficial in the end.

I R9: *"most of the change management projects fail, because of the employees who are not convinced by the necessity or the advantages of the project. Therefore a good consultant must not only be able to write a report, but also have a certain feeling about the organization. Thus this means certain empathically power and the ability let people believe in the story of the MC".*

Emotional intelligence | this personal characteristic has some similarities with empathy. A consultant must, besides understanding the emotions of the client and his employees, also be able to manage the emotions of them. Understanding the 'pains' of the employees, the emotions which are used to make certain decisions could be helpful during the project. Being aware of these pains and knowledge how to translate these pains in gains can stimulate the outcome of a MCP.

I R4: *"MC must be of course intelligent, but intelligent on two levels. First of all, they have to be intelligent, but also emotional smart. They have to deal with a lot of analysis but also political situations within the firm, business decisions which are sometimes made on emotional grounds. You have to understand these decisions. Thus for me a good MC is someone who understands and masters both".*

Drive | also important is that the MC has energy and drive. He must be enthusiastic, this is important since a client and a client's organization can be stimulated by this kind of energy. This can be helpful according to multiple respondents, since this energy also influences the client and the client's organization during the process.

I R5: *"you expect a certain amount of energy from the MC. I think this is also an important characteristic. That the consultant brings some energy with him".*

I R7: *"characteristics are maybe that you want to work hard, not a 9 to 5 mentality. But a 4 to 6 man, drive, energy, a Duracell rabbit".*

Creativity | lastly, according to the respondents, a MC must be creative. He must be able to improvise on certain situations. He must be able to have a different look on problems or solutions as the client or the client's organization has.

I R4: *"another important capability is creativity, yes, creativity in the sense of creative solutions. Because in the end, as a MC, you help the strategical team of the company. (...) these people are not stupid, they are definitely smart and have a lot of experience and experienced what not has worked for the company over the years. You have to base your arguments on findings. Thereafter you have to present your findings or solution, but from a different perspective. The perspective the client would never be able to have. This must help you as a MC to convince them enough to make the decision".*

Comparison literature

If the empirical results are compared to the literature, the following similarities, but also differences, can be spotted. The following aspects are similar: ability to listen, empathy, reflexivity and emotional intelligence. There are also some characteristics which are quite similar to each other, but are just named differently. The first one is integrity, honesty and fairness. During the interviews and focus group these were mentioned, however the respondents described this as objective.

Personal characteristics	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Integrity and honesty Fair	Objective
Discipline of the consultant	Drive
Reputation	Capability commercial
Ability to listen	Ability to listen
Empathy	Empathy
Reflexivity	Reflection
Improvisation	Creativity
Emotional intelligence	Emotional intelligence
Intuition	-
-	Patience
-	Organization sensitivity
-	Confidence

Table 4.1. "Comparison literature with empirical data personal characteristics"

There were also some criteria mentioned which could not be found in the literature, like patience, organization sensitivity and confidence. These characteristics could be added to the final framework. Interestingly, the criteria 'intuition' was not mentioned by any of the respondents. Lastly, the criteria reputation was mentioned in multiple interviews, however not linked to the personal characteristic but to another capacity. As a result, it can be concluded that this characteristic was identified, but may be categorized under a different capacity.

Competences

The second MC capability, which will be discussed, are different competences that a MC must be able to switch between during the project. During the interviews it became evident that it is important for MCs to have different competences. Working on various assignments, communicate with multiple people within the organizations, and working in different environments and new situations demand multiple competences.

Expert | both the client and MC agree that MCs are primarily hired for projects for which the client does not possess the required knowledge or experience. Based on the experience and knowledge of the MC the problem can be identified and sometimes a solution can be presented. Thus, it can be concluded that the MC also has an expert role during the project. Respondent 12 even compares the MC role with the role of a doctor.

I R8: *"some consultants try to sell you something, but they are not an expert in it. You have to understand what your speciality is, but also your weakness".*

I R12: *"actually, a MC is like a doctor. There are organizations which understand the problem and have a clear target, because they have the feeling what is happening and afterwards checking if it is true. However, the real good medical specialists, they rule out certain diagnosis. Not what it is, but what it is not. That is drilled at McKinsey "not jumping to conclusions". That is an important difference in quality".*

Politician | respondent 7 notes that decisions are sometimes made through enforced power. Respondent 7 also argued that some organizations are a real mess, a real "political spider web". If you are working as a MC in a political organization you need some political skills. Firstly, to get an understanding of how the organization works and secondly to manage the project within the organization. You have to deal with these people who think as a politician. Sometimes it is needed that you approach them on the same level. If a MC is not able to manoeuvre through the organization and cannot manage the project within the organization this project can never be completed.

I R7: *"somethings things will happen due to power, not on behalf of content".*

Devil's advocate | being able to confront the client's behaviour, actions or ask certain questions the client does not like is something that a MC must do according to the respondents. If the MC is not able to confront its client or ask some questions which the employees do not like and gets punished by this, the working conditions or the selection process did not went well. It can therefore be concluded, based on the results of the data collection, being the devil's advocate is definitely a skill of a MC.

I R3: *"playing the role as devil's advocate. A good MC is someone in my opinion which is standing on the toes of the client. Constantly asking questions the client does not want to hear and answering with questions he does not want to hear. A friendship with the consultant or client or a bad selection process can be a problem".*

F R1: *"it does say a lot about the working conditions and selection process, what is allowed and what is not. You must be able to play the devil's advocate and step on the toes of the client. But afterwards you have to shake each other hands and say it feels good again".*

Team player | the last role mentioned during the interviews and focus group is the role of a team player. In the end of the project the organization and the people within the organization must be able to do it themselves. In the role as a team player the MC can help both the client and the client organization within the process.

I R1: *"success of a MCP is particularly based on teamwork, you cannot evade teamwork during a MCP, since you have to apply your knowledge in an organization with people".*

Comparison literature

If we take a closer look at the comparison between the criteria from the literature and empirical data, the following can be concluded. A couple of criteria are both mentioned in the interviews and literature: team player, politician, expert and doctor.

A couple of criteria are not mentioned specifically during the interview, but are similar as capabilities of a MC. For example, a safeguard and manager are mentioned at the factor project manager. Next, the role of a researcher is not mentioned. Instead, analytical skills and finding the problem criteria are mentioned multiple times. As a result, it can be concluded that the role of researcher is mentioned during the interviews.

Competences	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Safeguard	Capability project manager
Expert	Expert
Doctor	
Manager	Capability project manager
Researcher	Capability problem solving
Politician	Politician
Team player	Team player
Counsellor	-
Leader	-
Chairman	-
-	Devil's advocate

Table 4.2. "Comparison literature with empirical data competences"

Three criteria are not mentioned during the interviews and cannot be compared to other capabilities, these are counsellor, leader and chairman. Moreover, the competence of the devil's advocate was not found in the literature but mentioned multiple times in both the interviews and focus group.

Project management

Goal oriented | based on the objective of the client the MC must be able to define clear goals during the project. In the end of the project this goal has to be reached to become successful. If the situation changes and subsequently the plan to reach the goal, the plan has to be adjusted. The MC must be goal oriented and monitor the situation to reach the desired goal.

I R5: *"I think it is really important that clear goals during the project will be formulated".*

I R3: *"when you say, this is my goal and made this action plan for it. But, during the project you come across something else and have to adjust the plan or maybe the goal have to be adjusted. This is not a problem, in the end you have to reach the goal".*

Managing scope | half of the respondents said that project management capabilities are necessary for a MC especially when the project gets bigger. Mainly to manage the project goals, budget and time, and like respondent 11 describes, managing the scope. Secondly, you have to determine if the goal is achievable in the amount of time and with the current resources. If not, the MC must adjust the scope. As a result, it can be concluded that a MC must be able to manage the scope of the project.

I R11: *"budget, time, there have to be enough financial resources to realize the demands with a realistic time path".*

I R6: *"project management, yes that is his job, he has to sense it. That is also his added value. If he makes a plan and follows it without thinking ahead about consequences and actions which are necessary and looking over it the first time you cannot reach the objective".*

Division of tasks | everyone in the project has a certain role. A MC must be able to divide the work between the project team in the most effective manner. This is exactly what R2 argues; in the end, the organization has to do it, therefore it is important that the organization is included in the project. It is not the job of the MC to solve the problem, the organization has to do it and understand why it is necessary. Thus, the MC must facilitate the organization and divide and manage the different tasks which have to be done.

I R2: *"it must be clear what every person does, the roles must be clear. What does the company, what does the manager. A MC is in my option not an interim manager who is sitting on the chair of the client and say I will fix this. There must be clear roles, knowledge, skills. But the execution must always be done by the people of the organization".*

Risk management | every situation is different and consequently requires different actions and since each organization has different characteristics it has its own risks. According to the results of the interviews a MC must be able to execute risk management during the project. This enables the MC to manage the risks that are likely to occur. Risk management also enables the MC to show the client in advance what potentially could go wrong if certain actions are, or are not, implemented. Therefore, it is argued that risk management influences the MCP.

I R8: *"for example, if a department does not want to implement the recommendation, you have to know what exactly the risks are and how to handle these. If I am working on a big project I really like to use a risk analysis. A top 10 or 20 with risks what can potentially go wrong. You know, they will happen eventually".*

I R11: *"most of the people are busy with the result of tomorrow and are not busy with the consequences of a choice. I think that a MC must be able to plan and think ahead about the consequences of his decisions and decide if it is worth the risk".*

Comparison with the literature

All of the criteria, from both the literature and results from the interviews and focus group, are displayed in table 4.3. "Comparison literature and empirical data project management". What can be seen from the comparison that most of the criteria from the literature are also mentioned during the interviews. However, some of them are mentioned differently but, nonetheless, can be compared to each other. A criteria which was not found during the interviews was structured information. Maybe this is a criteria which is not taken into account as significantly relevant. Interestingly, multiple researchers argued structured information to be an important factor but divided this criteria under the capability communication. Lastly, risk management was mentioned multiple times during the interviews. In the literature nothing was found about this criteria in combination with the capabilities of a MC.

Project management	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Manage the scope	Managing scope
Clearly defined goals	Goal oriented
Clear roles	Division of tasks
Structured information	Capability communication
-	Risk management

Table 4.3. "Comparison literature and empirical data project management

Knowledge

It is argued multiple times during the interviews and focus group that MCs are demanded for their knowledge and expertise. Also from the interviews and focus groups it became clear that knowledge has a major influence on the success of a MCP. More than 80 times a form of knowledge was quoted by the respondents.

Financial knowledge & business models | according to the respondents, in most of the cases, the output of a MC assignment much be shown in financial data. Thus, a MC must be able to understand how the client's operations make profits. The MC must understand that cash flows and what the business model of the organization is. Based on the financial knowledge and business model knowledge a MC can determine if the client is executing the business model properly or not. A MC must be able to understand the essentials of a business, therefore knowledge about both the financial statement and business models is required

I R4: *"I think it is an advantage if a MC has a background in economics or completed a MBA. You have to understand a balance sheet. You cannot work for SMEs if you do not understand a balance sheet, since in the end in it all comes together in a balance sheet and it is about the money. Secondly, as a MC you have to understand business models. You have to understand the business model of a company and you need to knowledge of which other models there are".*

People knowledge | only a few respondents mentioned this but knowledge about how people make decisions, how people get committed, or how people think could help the MC to increase the success of a MCP. Especially, when the organization is in bad weather, losing large amounts of money or employees are forced to leave the company. In these situations people will most likely make decisions based on their feelings or maybe some people do not have control over their decisions resulting in overreaction through their emotions. If a MC understands how people are likely to respond it could have beneficial effects during the project management, increasing the success rate.

I R2: *“the knowledge, maybe the most important piece of knowledge is people knowledge. You have to be able to sense certain feelings”.*

I R6: *“I think people skills, skills that you can convince people, but you also have to be aware of the impact decisions have on people”.*

Sector knowledge | sector knowledge was mentioned in nine of the twelve interviews. Notable were the different thoughts about sector knowledge. Some respondents stated that sector knowledge is a must for a MC. The other half stated that it is not a must, but that some affinity is needed. Since you have to put things into perspective and be able to do this in the sector of the client. Based on the results it can be said that it all depends on the assignment of the MC. If the MC must advice about the market, benchmark the company to its current competitors or advice about the trends and developments in the market, sector knowledge is a must. But developing a mission, vision or implementing a change project a MC has to deal with people who are all the same in different organizations. Affinity can be beneficial to stimulate the conversations as discussed earlier.

I R9: *“I do not think is it necessary. The client always thinks it is necessary, they argue that if you never worked for a specific sector you will never be selected to work for that sector since this knowledge is a must. For example, hospitals or municipalities. In my opinion it is all about principles, not about sector knowledge. The specific knowledge for a sector is always available within the organisation. I only have to take this specific information out of the organization. You know, I use the other 83 experiences of earlier MCP that we have done before. If I take a look how much we have learned from different sectors it can also be argued that this really helped us to give the client even better advice”.*

Theoretical knowledge | methodology or theoretical knowledge is quoted for more than 20 times and both discussed in the interviews and focus group. Based on the results it can be argued that when MCs and clients talk about methodology they talk about models or working methods. All of the consultants used some kind of model during their projects. However, multiple models are available and a consultant must be able to choose the right one for the particular situation. A model or a methodology has multiple purposes. First, it can help structure the analysis, like respondent 2 referred to. Secondly, it forces a client and MC to talk in the same language like respondent F4 described. Also, it has to be taken into account that a model is a tool to structure the complex reality and is not always correct. It can happen that it does not describe the reality like respondent 4 argued.

I R2: *“if both the model and the MC agree with the problem, the MC can more easily tell the management of the client what the problem is. Since the fact that you can also show in steps what the problem is, because you used the model, the management can have a look for themselves. Secondly, if you have a proper model you can explain it in a simplified language instead of MC definitions”.*

F R4: “*because the reality is complex, therefore you need one language. You learn the client to reason in one language by using a model. But do not let it be leading. Not a new paradigm of the truth. It can be that according to the method and results everything is right, however your feeling indicates that it is not correct. A MC must always double check, it is just a tool, it is not always right”.*

Practical experience | besides having theoretical knowledge practical knowledge is also something to take into account. This experience could make the MC more efficient to easily apply knowledge (respondent 5). Secondly, if a MC has experienced a reorganization himself, or a similar experience, this could help to understand what the consequences are of different choices and makes his advice potentially more useful like respondent 3 describes.

In the focus group a question from one of the respondents was asked to the entire group: Could a MC be younger than 30? The answer was two folded. Based on being a specialist and having theoretical knowledge a MC can be younger than 30. However, if the combination is needed and someone has to say something about decision making structures and consequences due to a reorganization everyone answered 100% no. Therefore it can be said that experience is important and a good MC needs practical experience.

I R5: *"knowledge for a specific aspect you asked for. Than you talk about theoretical knowledge, but also practical knowledge. A MC must have it done ten times. Someone with more experience should work more efficient. The combination of knowledge, experience and applying of the knowledge that is exactly wherein a MC can make the difference".*

I R3: *"I think that you can actually give a good advice when you know what happens in practice. That you know what happens over there and you have experienced it yourself. I think the best MC talk from their own experience".*

Expertise | expertise can be compared with practical experience. If you have practical experience, you will most likely also have the expertise to work on a problem, implementation or something else. However, practical experience does not mean that the MC has the right expertise. A MC must have the expertise needed to solve the problem. If the MC is not capable to apply the knowledge, the knowledge is "worthless" like respondent 10 argued.

I R10: *"a fool with a tool is still a fool". You can give a MC a great tool. But if he does not know how to use it, or only think from his perspective and not the client perspective you are nowhere".*

Vulnerable about knowledge | during the problem solving of the project a MC must determine if he is able to solve the actual project. More than the half of the respondents and both the clients, MCs and the entire focus group agreed that being vulnerable about the knowledge of a MC is a success factor. Being vulnerable about the knowledge begins already at the start of the project to check if the MC is able to work on the assignment based on the knowledge of the MC and his experience. Also if the MC is able to execute the project, but during the project he does not know something it is not bad to ask for help. Multiple clients during the interviews and focus group appreciated that a MC is fair about his speciality. What was also noticed during the interviews that at some project multiple MC were working together to be sure all of the necessary knowledge and capacities were include to finish the assignment properly. By doing this they can help each other to have all of the necessary knowledge, expertise and capabilities.

I R2: *"it can be that you are asked specially for this project, but you are maybe not the most suited MC. You have to indicate based on the diagnosis what is my preferred method, what is my quality and what can my colleagues do. Than you have to question yourself if you are the most suited for the project".*

F R5: "*if a client asks me if I have done this type of project earlier in his sector? Suppose I did not in his sector. I say that I did it earlier, however not in this sector, I have to be fair".*

Also clients see it as a competitive advantage if the MC is vulnerable about his knowledge. A MC can even determine to give back the assignment to the client if he thinks that he is not capable to accomplish the project by himself. However, this is not seen that often according to the focus group. Since the fact that a MC has to earn his money by doing his work. The entire focus group was impressed by a remark what one of the respondents said. However, everyone agreed that this was definitely a characteristic of a good MC.

F R5: *"my ultimate action is to give back the assignment".*

Up to date | being up to date is not a capability, it is more a condition that the knowledge of a MC is constantly up to date. The MC or MCC is responsible for his own knowledge in the end. One of the respondents compared the status of knowledge of the MC with the annually test of vehicles safety of the Ministry of Transport (MOT). Secondly, the MC must be able to reflect on himself to determine if the knowledge is still up to date and meets the required standards.

F R5: *"the MOT test, in our case, a day not read or not learned you actually have to stop with your profession. Thus a reflection ability. Every time you have to question yourself if you are still functional, are you still up to date in your profession. Being able to execute a trick once is in my eyes not enough to be functional".*

Comparison with the literature

From the comparison in table 4.4, "Comparison literature and empirical data knowledge" it can be seen that most of the criteria from the literature are identified during the interview but also some additional criteria are identified. Criteria which are quite similar or similar are the industry knowledge, expertise, experience, methodology and vulnerable about knowledge.

There were also some criteria found which were not stated in the literature. Like financial knowledge, knowledge about business models, people knowledge and lastly the fact that a MC must make sure he is constantly up to date with his knowledge.

Knowledge	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Industry knowledge	Sector knowledge
Expertise	Expertise
Experience	Experience
Methodology	Theoretical knowledge
Vulnerable about knowledge	Vulnerable about knowledge
-	Financial knowledge
-	Business model knowledge
-	People knowledge
-	Up to date knowledge

Table 4.4. Comparison literature and empirical data about knowledge

Communication

The communication capability is the firth capability discussed and also one of the most important skills of a MC according to the respondents. Every respondent mentioned something about the importance of communication. First, a client hires a MC, most of the time, for his knowledge or experience with a certain aspect. This knowledge has to be communicated to the client. Consequently, it has to be explained through verbal communication. Next, nonverbal communication skills stimulate the conversation. By being able to combine these two aspects the MC can add value. In this section all of the mentioned criteria under the capacity communication are discussed.

Communication skills | the first criteria under the communication capability is the communication skill. Without the communication skill a MC is not able to communicate. He must be able to read, understand and interpret the client and the client organization.

I R4: *"I would say you have to have communication skills. You have to be able to sell your knowledge, arguments or the vision, explain the analysis to the client and organization. Especially the last one. If you have a great defined analysis you also have to communicate and convince your client. That is exactly his job. If you are not able to do this you will never become successful".*

Transparent | what also got mentioned a lot of times, during the interviews, was that a MC must be transparent in the communication. If something bad happens or the result of the analysis are problematic a MC must mention this. In the end, the MC also wants to achieve the objective of the client. Working with a double agenda does not work. Also, if the MC is transparent this could stimulate the client to be also transparent like respondent 11 described.

I R12: "*the communication to the client is important. You have to communicate transparent, also when the news you have is bad. You have to be clear and transparent in your communication".*

I R11: *"I notice if I am open about things, at a client, tell him what I know and what I do not know, they also do it back".*

Reporting | having a talk or discussion is not all the MC does. The findings of the analysis or results of a meeting have to be reported to the client. But it has to be taken into account that the findings the MC report to its client have to be relevant and useful. Like respondent 9 argued, a MC must not be a paper tiger. Reporting is good, but the client has to use it, it needs some added value in the process. A MC must be able to report only the essential information clearly.

I R9: *"I see a lot of MCs not thinking conventional. They can make a nice plan. But they cannot think in the needs of the organization and its people. This results in paper tigers. There are too many of them, especially at the bigger consultancy firms".*

Presentation | presentation skills are also something to take into account as a MC. A MC must be able to give a presentation to a big audience, or convince the board of the directors through his presentation skills. For example, if the board is still not convinced about the results of the analysis a MC could shift this thought during a presentation. Therefore, it is important during a MCP that a MC is able to give a proper presentation.

I R4: *"presentation skills that is something what is really important. Sometimes you see a presentation and you immediately think, wow this is really bad. Just simple presentation skills. You can achieve a lot with this, some consultancy companies are just amazing in this".*

Expectation management | expectation management is essential in communication, as respondent 5 argued. Sometimes a client does not understand the message of a client or misinterprets it. This could result is some misunderstandings or expectations which are not going to be fulfilled later on. In the end of the project the results of the project must fulfil both party's expectations. During the interviews it became clear that the expectations of a client could also shift during the MCP. Thus, it is even more important to constantly check if the expectations are still fulfilled or if the project is on track to fulfil these.

F R3: *"the most important in communication is expectation management. It sounds really stupid, but having a clear view of the clients expectation".*

I R5: *"sometimes something goes wrong with the communication. I notice this often. Two days later you receive an email that it was not clear or the client has still some questions. A MC must be able to read, understand and interpret constantly".*

Visibility | visibility plays also a role during the MCP according to the respondents. If the client or employees of the client see that the MC is actually over there and working, i.e. putting in effort. According to the respondents this could develop some kind of respect, by seeing the MC work and not just someone who drops by, delivers a report, and presents a presentation and cash in.

I R7: *"visibility also plays an important part, therein is speed also an aspect, this stimulates the process".*

I R11: *"be physically present and say what you have done".*

Same level communication | the last criteria mentioned by the respondents was a similar level of communication. A MC must also be able to adapt to the 'level' of the person communicated to. In the example of respondent 5 it is argued that a different level is needed when a MC is talking to the CEO and COO compared to when the MC is talking with someone else in the organization.

I R5: *"in an organization you have to be flexible or adaptable as a MC. For example, if you are having a conversations with me as a CEO or the COO, you need a different role, style or maybe different kind of communication than when you are talking with different people within the organization. Therefore you have to be able to be flexible or adaptable to be efficient as possible".*

Comparison with the literature

The comparison is displayed in table 4.5. "Comparison literature with empirical data concerning communication". In the comparison with the literature a couple of things can be noted. Four criteria are similar: communication skills, transparent, reporting and lastly communication on the same level. Two other criteria, relationship management and shared values and common vision were mentioned, but they were categorized under the process of a MCP.

Three criteria were found only in the literature and were not mentioned during the interviews and focus group by one of the respondents. These were: structured information, responsive communication and lastly networking. Lastly, three criteria (presentation skills, expectation management and visibility) were mentioned during the interviews and focus group multiple times, but not found in the SLR.

Communication	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Communication skills	Communication skills
Openness of communication	Transparent
Documentation	Reporting
Same level	Same level of communication
Shared values & common vision	Categorized under the process
Relationship management	Categorized under the process
Personal fit	Categorized under process
Structured information	-
Responsive communication	-
Networking	-
-	Presentation
-	Expectation management
-	Visibility

Table 4.5. "Comparison literature with empirical data concerning communication"

Problem solving

Problem solving is the sixth of the MC capabilities list. Problem solving exists of multiple sub criteria which are necessary to actually solve the problem. In the following sections the findings from the interviews and focus group are described concerning the problem solving capacity.

Analytical skills | to start with, a MC must be able to find the problem. Therefore, analytical skills are needed. More than half of the respondents referred to the fact that analytical skills are essential. Finding the actual problem asks for different skills than solving the problem.

I R4: *"you have to be to the point. You must be able to separate the men from the boys and find the root cause fast. If you cannot find the root cause, you are not suitable for the job".*

I R12: *"actually, it is like a doctor. There are MCs who go for their target, because they have the feeling what is happening and afterwards checking if it is true. However, the real good medical specialists or MCs, they rule out certain diagnosis. Not what it is, but what it is not. That is drilled at the company I worked for "not jumping to conclusions". That is an important difference in quality".*

Problem solving skills | solving a problem is different than finding the problem. However, when you are giving an advice on how to solve a problem the MC has to be aware of the conditions which are necessary for reaching the desired objective. Thus, the MC has to understand how certain problems can be solved by applying problem solving skills. Multiple respondents also argued that a MC must be creative sometimes since each situation is unique and always needs a different solutions. As a result, the MC has to apply knowledge, experience and creativity to develop a custom made solution.

I R12: *"the conditions for the success what you recommend. Back in the days this was a 'no go' zone, with as a result that a lot of project were not completed, or half implemented. Nowadays it is an entire department with experienced implementation managers. So yes, as a good MC you have to determine if the conditions are available to achieve the desired objective".*

Put the organization first | it was stunning to notice that nearly all of the respondents argued that it still happens that a MC just tries to stay longer at a client to provide his wallet with more money. Also, what respondent 12 argued, a client could try to implement an action what only benefits the client and not the organization. A MC must take this into account that this is also possible and act in the best interest of the organization.

I R12: *"that is also important as a strategy advisor. Act in the benefit of the client organisation and that is not in the importance of the client as a person".*

Making yourself dispensable | right at the start of a project you have to begin the process of leaving the company according to one of the respondents. Two third of the respondents agreed that you have to help the organization to do it themselves and ensure that the organization will be able, in the future, to do it themselves.

F R5: *"saying goodbye already starts at the beginning of the assignment. Thus I think you have to constantly think, when I am gone, what the client must do to be able to achieve the objective, since the fact that you, as a MC, are just temporary".*

I R7: *"making yourself dispensable. That is maybe one of the most important factors, that you do not make an organization too depended on you as a MC. You have to help them to do it for themselves and ensure they can do it themselves".*

Biased information | information can be misleading. If the MC plans interviews with multiple employees it could happen they will tell something different and let the MC know that everything is alright when it is not. It is therefore important that the MC takes biased information into account. A MC must find the true information, cross checking could help to solve this problem.

I R6: *"you do not know everything. A MC has to find it out for himself. During the MCP people could say that you are allowed to look everywhere and it is always accessible for everyone, but it could be that everything is locked normally. Than you experience the organization different than it normally is".*

Practical relevant | actions during the project of the MC have to be practically relevant. Like respondent 8 described a balance between thinkers and executers is necessary. Also what earlier is mentioned an organization or client is not interested in a pile of papers. A client wants that the organizational problem is solved. Consequently, it is important that this pile of paper is useable and practically relevant.

I R8: "*I see it myself. MCs delivering the board of directors 'screws' when they are normally working with 'nails'. However, the advice is great. But was out of the league of the organization, just two levels too high. It was maybe the best solution ever, that is another discussion, but the organization could not do anything with it. The advice have to fit the organization".*

Looking ahead | as a consultant it is your job to look ahead. What multiple respondents argued, most companies are stuck in there working method for years. It is important to be continuously on the look-out for new trends, developments and consequences of actions taken.

I R6: *"it is important that you are constantly one page ahead. If you are a MC this is easy, since the clients are stuck in their decision makings processes for ages, responsibilities, tasks and culture. As an outsiders this is quite easy if you have the required skills".*

Comparison with the literature

Nearly all of the factors found from the articles of the SLR are mentioned during the interviews.

Three criteria were not found in the literature, but were mentioned by multiple respondents during the interviews. These are: looking ahead, making yourself dispensable and put the organization first. These criteria could be added to the framework.

Problem solving	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Diagnostic skills	Analytical skills
Bias reduction skills	Bias reduction skills
Practical relevance	Practical relevant
Problem solving capacity	Problem solving skills
-	Looking ahead
-	Making yourself dispensable
-	Put the organization first

Table 4.6. "Comparison literature with empirical data problem solving"

Commercial

The commercial capability is the last MC capability, this capability is completely new. Based on the interviews and the focus group it became clear that in the smaller firms a consultant is also responsible for getting new assignments. The second reason why this capability is important is that, if the MC is not able to get a new assignment, the MC can never accomplish a successful MCP.

Acquisition skills | to find new assignments a MC must have acquisition skills according to the respondents. If a MC is not able to find a new MCPs, successful completion becomes impossible.

I R4: *"I think an important capability is acquisition skills, because without acquisitions skills a MC could not survive, especially not in the SME industry".*

Personal brand | according to multiple consultants and clients a MC creates a kind of personal brand. If you are working in a specific field of management consultancy some people or clients are going to recognize you. Based on the personal brand clients get an expectation from a MC. In the end, a personal brand as a MC, could help to get new assignments according to the respondents. As a result, it can be concluded that this criteria supports the commercial capability.

I R10: *"I normally uses the word 'brand', walking brand. I think a MC, definitely a senior MC will become a walking brand".*

I R9: *"personal brand, I have a small MC firm, since we are already working for more than 20 years in this sector. I talk about it, I developed a personal brand for myself which enables me to sell all of the projects".*

Networking | networking can be two folded. First, networking can be used to find other people who know something you do not know. Secondly, if you have to find a new assignment you have to search within your network, go to events to meet new people. Lastly, during the project you have to find your way through the organization. You have to find the right people and also build a relationship with them. Therefore, it is essential to have some networking skills as a MC.

I R7*: "networking or finding other people if you do not know it anymore. Secondly, finding work".*

Comparison literature

The commercial capability of a MC was not found in one of the articles of the SLR. However, the reputation of a MC was partly mentioned in the literature, but was categorized as a personal characteristic. This criteria can be compared with the personal brand criteria mentioned multiple times in the interviews. The other two criteria, networking and acquisition skills could be added to the framework. This entire capability can later on be added to the conceptual framework.

Commercial	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Reputation	Personal brand
-	Networking
-	Acquisition skills

Table 4.7. Comparison literature with empirical data commercial capability

4.4. Management consultant company characteristics

Based on the output of articles from the SLR it became clear that the MCC characteristics also could influence the capabilities of a MC. The outcome of the interviews and focus group agreed with this fact.

Human resource management

First of all human resource management could influence the capabilities of a MCP and therefore in the end the success of a MCP.

Training | some respondents also talked about training the MC to increase certain capabilities like communication skills and education support training to be constant up-to-date with their knowledge. One of the respondents also referred to a MOT, the annual safety test for cars. During an annual test the MC could be tested if their knowledge is still up-to-date and if anything has to be improved through training.

I R4: *"I think that the success of a good MC could be increased if you offer MCs communication training. More specific, I think that it is getting more important to explain and communicate in MCPs".*

Challenging employees | employees can be stimulated by multiple things. A bonus is mentioned multiple times to stimulate the motivation of a MC, like a success fee with a lower salary, or extra incentives. However, it was also mentioned that a challenge for a MC is sometimes more important than a financial bonus. I R11: "*A project has to be fun. It sounds really stupid, but it is a fact, a MC gets stimulated to do better. It is not always a financial thing, it can be a financial bonus, but to a certain extent after completion of the project there can be a feeling of proud. I do not say this is necessary, work is work, but it helps. You have to be happy in the end. If the MC does not like the project it will never become a success".* This statement illustrates that a financial bonus can help to stimulate the success of a MCP, but challenge is potentially an even bigger stimulator. Another respondent argued that you need these kind of challenges to perform the best.

I R10: *a MC has to challenge himself. Yesterday, I told the group (company of the respondent) during a dinner a short anecdote. Some time ago I had to give a presentation in a theatre for the cultural sector. I only prepared one word. I was the last speaker, I had no notes or slides. That presentation came out of my toes. I can give a presentation perfectly with sheets, but I needed to experience the challenge again. I had to challenge myself. I was finally nervous in a long time, sweat on my back, adrenaline though my blood vessels. It is a stupid example, but you have to challenge yourself now and then. This results in a kind of sharpness you need as a MC".*

These findings also correspond with a personal characteristic of a MC mentioned earlier. When a MC gets challenged he can become more driven, which can result in more enthusiasm. A driven MC can, in the end, stimulate the client and the organization according to the respondents. Therefore, it can be important that a MCC tries to challenge their employees constantly.

Satisfied employees | similar to the earlier mentioned criteria. This statement also indicates that being happy, i.e. satisfaction, also stimulates the success of a MCP. If the MC is not satisfied it could influence the drive and energy of the MC. As a result, it also influences the client and a client can notice this lack of motivation.

Personal development | personal development is only mentioned once during an interview. However, it is worthy to mention. Developing the capabilities or personal characteristics for a MC have a great influence during the MCP. Therefore developing them could help to achieve the desired goal during the MCP.

I R4: "*you have a junior and a senior consultant. How do you become as fast as possible a senior, a senior role has nothing to do with that you are working two years. It has to do with how fast you are with personal development".*

Knowledge management

Knowledge management was not mentioned often in the interviews. Also none of the people of the focus group talked about this aspect. Nonetheless, according to one of the respondents knowledge management is essential for a MC company to become successful and efficient.

I R12: *"the competence of the organization is also important. We have been talking about a person, but in the organization the knowledge have to be mobilized, distributed and made productive, because other ways you have to do it twice. Also, there is your competitive advantage. Clients have to be amazed, therefore you need leading edge knowledge. That is also the main reason to ask the biggest MCC for their knowledge".*

Another part of knowledge management is the part where the company knows which qualities, competencies and capabilities each consultant has. Being aware of these differences, the company could create a team of different MCs to complement each other. This is also a form of knowledge management within the firm which can influence the success of a MCP.

I R9: "*everyone has different qualities, you just saw it in the discussion with my colleague. By asking me questions she tries to get the best out of me. By doing this she can use my knowledge and as a result she is also able to perform the job on her own. You combines these powers. You also challenge yourself to get the best out of yourself if you are working together and push each other to the limits".*

Back office

A back office was mentioned by multiple respondents as something which could help the MCP. For example, if the MC is not available for the client to call. Secondly, the back office could help the MC to perform simple tasks which create more time for the MC to focus on the MCP.

Comparison literature

If we take a closer look at the criteria found from the articles of the SLR only three criteria were described as an outcome of the SLR: human resource management, satisfied employees and knowledge management. All of these criteria were mentioned by the respondents. However, during the interviews it became clear that human resource management was too limited and needed more explanation. Therefore training, challenging employees and personal development was added. However, training and opportunities were not specifically mentioned in the earlier framework. They were mentioned in the literature, but were summarized under the criteria human resource management. Thus, both of these criteria were actually found in the literature and interviews, and are added to the comparison table.

MCC characteristics	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Human resource management	Human resource management
Training	Training
Enough opportunities	Challenging employees
Satisfied employees	Satisfied employees
Knowledge management	Knowledge management
-	Back office
-	Personal development

Table 4.8. Comparison literature and empirical data MCC characteristics"

Criteria which were found during the interviews, but not mentioned in the articles from the SLR were a good back-office to rely on as a MC and personal development. Personal development was actually categorized under human resource management.

4.5. Client characteristics

Based on the articles from the SLR it was argued that both the client characteristics and the client company characteristics could be summarized under one factor, since the literature did not really focus on the client characteristics enough. From both the output of the interviews and focus group it became clear that the client characteristics have a great influence to the success of a MCP. Therefore client characteristics and client company characteristics are the fourth factor which influence the success of a MCP.

Vulnerable | first of all the client also has to allow the MC to be critical. Not only about the organization, but also about the behaviour of the client and the decisions which the client has made. In most situations the client is part of the board of directors and determines the strategy of the company, therefore a bad decision could have a negative influence on the organization. It is sometimes hard for clients to admit they did something wrong and become angry according to the respondents. Being angry is not bad, but in the end anger issues have to be resolved. Secondly, it was mentioned, during the interviews, that it could help to be vulnerable about the decisions the client made in the communication to the organization like respondent 2 described.

I R2: *"I think that the client in a MCP is biggest factor to success. Is the client able to be vulnerable, to listen, accept criticism, open for a new direction. If the answer is no thanks, the client has to do it himself, or with his own team or colleagues".*

Client commitment | a client must be committed during the entire project. More than half of the respondents agreed with this factor. You can compare it with a football game as respondent 2 does. You can see the client as a leader within the team. If something does not go according to the plan the MC has to motivate the rest of the team. Also, a leader not committed to the objective could potentially influence the rest of the team and could demotivate the rest of the team.

I R2: *"you can compare it with a football team. If someone is not helping during the match it becomes pretty difficult. If a client is not helping in the MCP it definitely influences the success of a MCP".*

Responsibility | the client must feel an amount of responsibility for the project. If something goes not according to the plan the client also must question what goes wrong. It is not only the responsibility of the MC that the project will be a success.

I R8: *"the project has to be yours as a client. It has to be your project, you as a client have the final responsibility".*

Facilitator within the organization | based on the thoughts of the respondents it can be argued that the client also has to facilitate the MC during the project. This is something what eight of the respondents argued as important during the project. The client has to give the MC the right information, must inform the organisation that a MC is coming to help the organization and that the MC has mandate to execute the assignment.

I R3: *"I think the client also has to facilitate the MC. In budget, resources and make sure the MC has enough space to perform the assignment by himself. The better the client supports the MC the better. But, I also think the MC must support the client to give him a better understanding of the process and which actions could stimulate the process".*

Flexible in his role | not only the MC must be flexible, the client must be similarly be flexible Sometimes the client is the team player, boss, leader, manager, critical friend or sparring partner. Some situations ask for a different role. If a client is not able to do this help should be asked from someone else within the organizations.

F R1: *"In my opinion the client must be able, same as the MC, to be flexible in his role. Sometimes the client is the boss or the manager. I think it is important that he also must be vulnerable in some situations, fair, step aside his ego, but in the end he must be the boss since he is the client. This also says something about the role as sparring partner. The better the role as sparring partner, the better the advice in the end".*

Critical friend | in more than half of the interviews the role as critical friend for the client was mentioned as an important role during the MCP. The MC is always trying to do his best, but he does not understand the organization as the client does. As a result, it can be concluded that it is important that the client positively stimulates the MC to explain findings and recommendations.

I R9: *"I think that the best client is also critical. I like critical clients. In some situations the client thinks you are the expert and that you are always right. But I prefer if the client asks me, nice story but is it true? Do you have some proof? How do you support your statement? In the end this will be much more helpful and develops a better advice".*

Communication skills | nearly all of the respondents agreed with the fact that communication is a must for a MC. Similarly the MC must be able to communicate knowledge to the client. The client must supply the MC with information about the organization, decision processes, working methods and procedures. Communication is key to the success of a MCP. Communication must come from two sides, not only the MC is responsible for the communication during the project.

F R2: *"I think if your communication is also transparent to the organization. Why you are asking a MC? What do you want to achieve? In my opinion being fair and communicate with your employees increases the success rate of the project".*

Clear objective | a clear objective is essential for a successful MCP according to the respondents and the focus group. In order to eventually solve the problem, first the problem has to be identified within the organization. The client has to have a view on the objective of the project and the ultimate goal. Based on this objective the MC develops a plan. If the objective is not correctly specified, it is likely that a project will never be successful. Therefore, it is important that the client knowns about the objective of the MCP.

I R8: *"you know, if you do not know the pain of the entrepreneur you are never going to solve it. Also the agreement of the organization about what exactly the problem is, especially if you are working with bigger organizations. The goal of the project, the journey to the goal is easy to discuss. But if you are not able to find the problem you will never find the right solution. The client also needs to have the courage to encounter the problem".*

Acceptance & common vision | there are multiple forms of acceptance which a client must have during the project. If the client does not accept these forms this could result in demotivation, or that the client loses commitment, according to the respondents. The respondents described four kinds of acceptance: acceptance of the necessity, the acceptance of the diagnosis, the acceptance of the action plan and the acceptance of the consequences.

It was also found that, besides the acceptance, the vision 'common vision' or main goal with the project, must be the same as the MC has. If the client is thinking differently, the project will most likely have a bigger chance to fail.

I R12: *"it is all about that they accept the diagnosis and the action plan. It is change management. Do they see the necessity, the new vision, do they agree with the action plan, does the client trust the company has the right competences and capabilities to do it themselves".*

Time | not responding on questions, or declining meetings does not stimulate the success of a MCP. During the interviews it became clear that time is an essential factor. A client has to understand that a MC only can, most of the times, not solve the problem. A client must make time for the project, help to develop the MC to finalize the action plan and in the end monitor the implementation.

F R2: *"there must be commitment within the organization, in financial terms as in the acceptance that they assignment a MC to solve the problem. But also during the project the commitment can change. A MC could experience less acceptance of the employees or that the organization doesn't have enough time to implement the changes".*

Comparison literature

As mentioned in the beginning of this paragraph based on the outcome of the SLR it was determined that both the client characteristics and client company characteristics could be summarized under one criteria. But, during the interviews it became clear that these two factors had to be divided. Since both individually influence the success of a MCP.

From table 4.9. "Comparison literature and empirical data client characteristics" it can also be seen that a lot of factors are missing or not mentioned during the interviews or described in one of the articles from the SLR. Six criteria were similar: client commitment, responsibility, clear objective, selecting the right team, stimulate collaboration, common vision and acceptance. Selecting the right team and stimulate collaboration are summarized both under the criteria facilitator in the organization. It has to be taken into account that the criteria, facilitator in the organization, consist of more than only these two criteria. Therefore, facilitator in the organization is mentioned twice in the comparison table, since creating mandate for a MC within the organization and giving access to the information also belongs under this criteria.

Client characteristics	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Client commitment	Client commitment
Ownership client	Responsibility
Selecting right team Stimulate collaboration	Facilitator in the organization
Clear objective	Clear objective
Common vision	Common vision
Acceptance	Acceptance
Responsiveness	-
Client participation	-
-	Flexible in his role
-	Critical friend
-	Communication skills
-	Vulnerable
-	Time

Table 4.9. "Comparison literature and empirical data client characteristics

Two criteria were not specifically mentioned during the interviews, but were found in the literature, these criteria were: responsiveness and client participation. Other criteria which were not found in the literature but mentioned in the interviews were: vulnerable, flexible in his role, critical friend, communication skills and time.

4.6. Client company characteristics

Next to the client characteristics the company could need some characteristics to stimulate the success of a MCP. In the following section the characteristics of a client company are described based on the results from the interviews and focus groups.

Top management support | the top management of the company must support the project. This is important since only the management team and board of directors are able to implement policies or changes that will stay for a longer time. If one of the members of the management team or board of directors doubts the project it can get problematic later on in the project. Moreover, this team member can negatively influence the board members or even the entire organization. Therefore, it is important that the MC ensures the entire top management supports the project.

I R4: *"you know, if you do not have the commitment of the board of directors, you will be never able to complete a successful MCP. That is also the reason why you want the board of directors as your client during the MCP. Within the client organization the board is only capable to change the entire company".*

Team commitment | besides the client commitment, the organization and the team working on the assignment must be committed to the MCP. The same argument is used for the client commitment. If one team member of a football team is not committed to achieve the objective you could potentially have a problem and not succeed in the end of the project, ergo the entire team has to be committed.

I R2: *"you can compare it with a football team. If someone is not helping it becomes pretty difficult. If a client is not helping in the MCP it could never be a success".*

I R4: *"sometimes you are mistrusted as a MC. Since, one guy (the client) gave you the assignment. But the other four or five people are thinking that they will lose their job. Sometimes the MC is also 20 or 30 years younger, the client's team could be sceptical. Therefore it is important that you connect with them based on knowledge, a clear analysis".*

Right team | setting up a team in the client organization could have some positive influences. This also became evident during the interviews. For example, the people can get a feeling they are heard and included within the decision process. This could create extra motivation and commitment to help to implement the project. Secondly, if the employees of the company help to set-up an implementation plan it potentially suits more to the needs of the employees. Therefore, they are more likely to accept the implementation. Lastly, the team must be able to implement the actions. If the team does not have the right capabilities this could negatively influence the outcome of the project.

I R10: *"in my professional your action can be great. But if the organization does not have the capabilities to execute the MCP it will fail".*

Participation | commitment, right competences and the right team are not enough to complete a successful MCP. Participation of the organization, team and members was mentioned in more than half of the interviews as an important criteria. In the end, the organization has to do it themselves. Therefore, it is of importance that the organization participates in the project. Also, what respondent 11 argued, people who are not committed have to be involved in the project. This was also mentioned by other respondents during the interviews. Involving these people can maybe change their mind and their opinions and criticism can be really useful during the project.

I R11: *"it does not help to exclude the people who are not committed to the project. Instead, try to involve these people earlier in the project to convince them. Try to understand their thoughts and try to convince them. This information can also be used for the rest of the client organization".*

Shareholders | dealing with shareholders could have a major influence during the MCP. Not only the client, but also the shareholders have to agree with certain decisions. Consequently, it is important for the MC to take the shareholders into account during the project.

I R4: *"shareholders have to be aware, also before the project, you have to discuss this with the client how the decisions or the project is supported by them. The client has to answer this question. Because if the assignment is not supported by the shareholders they could say we do not pay you as a MC".*

I R7: *"if the company is in ownership of shareholders or not. That are two completely different levels in the same organization. Sometimes it is really difficult to create the same thoughts on both side. The decisions are also difficult to understand, since sometimes a decision is made by the management of the client company or the by shareholders. Shareholders think most of the times on the short term, it could be that the organization is not happy with that decision in the long run".*

Resources | the company needs resources like time and is constrained by a budget. If the client has a certain goal and there is not enough money or enough time for the project, the project will most likely be unsuccessful.

F R2: *"there must be commitment within the organization, in financial terms and as in the acceptance that they hired a MC to solve the problem. But also during the project the commitment can change. A MC could experience less acceptance of the employees or that the organization does not have enough time to implement the changes".*

Asses to information | the organization must understand that a client is not trying to demolish the organization. As stated by respondent 3, a good introduction can mitigate this potential hazard. If the organization does not stimulate, or give the MC information, the MC does not get a full understanding of the organization so access to information is essential.

I R3: *"a connection with the organization is a must, you have to think in terms of good communication and visibility within the organization. It all begins with a good introduction, it looks simple but it is of great importance. A consultant who just walks in and does not introduces himself or tells what he is doing could result in a bad relationship".*

Acceptance of the organization & common vision | acceptance within the organization is something that is argued for multiple times as an important factor during the MCP. Actually, after ever phase during the project, the organization has to accept the findings. It all begins with the acceptance of the necessity of the project.

Secondly, the organization must accept the diagnose of the problem. Next, is the acceptance of the action plan. In conclusion, the acceptance of the organization is a must during a MCP. If one of these acceptances is missing it could influence the next phase of the project, the commitment or willingness to work on the MCP could decrease.

What was also mentioned multiple times in combination with the acceptance was the common vision which was needed during the project. The employees of the firm must agree with the vision and objective what the MC is trying to implement within the firm.

I R9: *"a condition is among other things organization acceptance. Adoption and acceptation. On the one hand the new developments and changing processes have to fit the structure of the organization. On the other hand the soft side, the understanding and acceptance.*

Comparison literature

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, client company characteristics and client company are separated. What can be seen from the comparison is displayed in table 4.10. "Comparison literature and empirical data of the client company characteristics". The criteria which are similar are selecting the right team, top management support, participation, team commitment, common vision and team acceptance of the organization.

In the literature from the SLR multiple definitions are described which are not mentioned during the interviews: responsiveness and client sponsor. However, during the review of the framework most of the respondents agreed that these factor were of importance, but were not specifically mentioned during the interview. Next, business culture was mentioned during the interviews, but was mentioned mostly during the process of a MCP and the respondents argued that a MC must be able to adapt to the business culture of the client organization. What was also noticeable during the discussion about the framework was that multiple respondents argued that companies do not work with a supplier programme for MCs, especially not in the SME sector, therefore it can be said that this criteria is conflicting with articles found concerning the importance of this criteria.

Client company characteristics	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Selecting right team	Right team
Top management support	Top management support
Participation	Participation
Team commitment	Team commitment
Acceptance	Acceptance of the organization
Common vision	Common vision
Business culture	Mentioned somewhere else
Supplier programme	Conflicting with interview results
Responsiveness	-
Client sponsor	-
-	Shareholders
-	Resources
-	Asses to information

Table 4.10. "Comparison literature with empirical data client company characteristics"

Lastly, during the interviews a couple of other criteria were mentioned which could influence the MCP. These criteria were: shareholders, resources and asses to information.

4.7. Management consultant project process

Based on the results of the interviews and the output of the focus group it can be concluded that the process of a MCP is essential. From the interviews and focus group a great amount of information was gathered concerning the MCP. In this paragraph the same phases as described as in chapter 2 are used: pre entry phase, during and post evaluation. First, it was noticed that two criteria were active during the entire project. Consequently, these two criteria are first described and not divided under one specific phase.

Communication | communication enables all of the stakeholders in the MCP to interact with each other. This is necessary in all of the phases and not only one phase. Therefore it can be said that communication is an ongoing activity during the entire project and it is not divided in one specific phase. Communication was described by all of the respondents in both the interviews and focus group and was by far the most quoted criteria.

The communication can be both verbal like talking through the telephone, discussions, presenting or non-verbal like giving a hand. The capabilities of the MC, the quality of the analysis or recommendations, perfect conditions or the client company characteristics can all be great but if the people who are involved within the project are not able to communicate with each other the project will never become a success. This corresponds with respondent 10. Also what respondent 6 argued, there can never be too much communication. During the entire project you have to deal with people who say they never received your message also if they received the message it can be possible they have a different interpretation.

I R10: *"if you have a look to MCP, most of the projects are not going wrong based on the analysis. Everyone can do an analysis, but how the results are communicated. By the client organization, the MC. The relation between those two. The content is important but does not makes a difference".*

I R6: *"you have to keep talking with people. The receiver never gets enough information. People will always argue: "Why did not I know that earlier or I never heard about it". Communication is essential, you can send a newsletter 10 times, but people still manage not reading it or have they have their own interpretation. You have to constant give them more information but also bet here physically and tell them what you did for them".*

Relationship management | the relationship between the client and MC is also described a lot during the interviews, in nearly every interview the importance of the relationship was described. The start of the relationship begins already at the first contact. A relationship with the client or the employees in the organization could potentially stimulate the success of a MCP. However, being best friends is not necessary according to the results of the interviews. Some distance could also be important. Trust, openness, being fair and having respect for each other could stimulate the success of a MCP. Lastly, a confrontation must not be able to negatively influence the relationship. Both the client and MC must accept that a confrontation will most likely happen during the project and that it will stimulate the success of a MCP.

F R4: *"there must be a click, however it is not needed that the MC and the client like each other. Because at a certain moment during the project a confrontation can happen. You are not best friends, you just want to help each other. You can describe it as an acceptation or trust what is important in this relationship".*

I R3*: "a connection with the organization is a must, you have to think in terms of good communication and visibility within the organization. It all begins with a good introduction, it looks simple, but it is of great importance. A consultant who just walks in and does not introduces himself or tell what he is doing could result in a bad relationship".*

Comparison with the literature

According to the literature both communication and relationship management are essential for a MCP during the entire MCP process. Since both the relationship management and communication have to be done throughout the entire process the two criteria are mentioned separately.

4.7.1. Pre entry phase

First contact phase

During the first contact with a client and a MC the actual project already starts. There are multiple reasons why a client contacted a MC.

Selection | during the literature review different selection criteria were given, but during the interviews multiple respondents argued that this was only happening in bigger companies and not as often in SMEs. What also turned out is that a client of SMEs looks for a MC in its own network. This has some limitations. A friendly relationship with a MC and a client could influence the professional communication between the two. This was argued by multiple respondents. Since the fact that during a MCP they have to be fair to each other, confront each other and the MC must be forthcoming. A relationship must not stop this. What could also influence the selection process of a client is a MC's earlier experience with a similar assignment, brand image, personal brand, if the MC is referred.

What was also argued during the interviews was that multiple clients argued that sector knowledge is of importance. This was also seen during the interview with the MC. However, they argued that sector knowledge is more important during the first contact phase. Based on the results it can be concluded that experience with a similar assignment is of more importance than sector knowledge. It is not a must to have sector knowledge, it can, however by handy as it stimulates a dialogue.

I R7: *"it is also important to know how the MC came in contact with the company. In my experience most of the times it is about favouritism. The client 'knows' anyone and is not searching for specific skills. By doing this the client does not select the MC on their capabilities".*

I R8: *"when you are talking about selection criteria you are talking about the bigger companies. What you see in the SME sector that have a problem and a random MC just flies by".*

F R5: **"***some time ago I did an assignment for a company in Suriname, a company within the oil industry. I did not have any knowledge about the oil industry or any chemical knowledge. I was there because a colleague knew a lot about this industry. For the entry phase sector knowledge could be important. But the second question is, which professional do I need?"*

The problem statement development | during the first contact you also talk about the problem statement of the client. A client could ask a MC for the assignment based on previously experience.

F R2: *"it all begins with a good intake meeting. During this meeting the problem statement and objective have to be discussed. Because I think, and you guys can confirm this. In most situations the problem is accepted too fast. When you fix a problem which is determined to fast without a proper analyse it could actual be the wrong 'problem'. I think that in a lot of situations, especially when it gets more complicated, the root cause of the problem can be found deeper in the organization. Therefore a better analysis is needed".*

Scoping the project | during the first contact the scope of the project has to be determined. The MC must know what exactly what the objective is.

I R4: *"I think that it is also important to determine the scope of the project. Is the MC allowed to leave the boundaries of the company. Is he allowed to talk with clients and partners during the MCP. This also helps with fact checking. This is really important to discuss".*

Expectations management | before a word is spoken, a client and a MC have a certain expectation of each other. Based on the brand image of a company, website, personal brand of the MC, appearance of the MC car or the recommendations the MC obtained from earlier projects whereby a client contacted the other organization all influence the expectations of a MC and a client. This could be an advantage of the MC when all of these aspects are positive but could also result in a disadvantage. Therefore, it is important that, at the start the expectations are discussed. This provides a refreshing start for the entire project. An example which also was given during the interviews was that sometimes someone else (MCC partner) is responsible for new MC assignments for a MC. During the first contact a client could met someone else than the MC. During this conversations the sales man could overpromise results of an assignment or a profile of the MC which is not true. These are also aspects to discuss during the first contact moment with the client and the MC.

I R9: *"also another important factor is the person who refers you for the job. If I meet a client for the first time and he says I never heard of you, let's have a talk. It is much harder to complete a successful project than when a client tells another client: You know who you want to have as a MC. This also has to do with personal brand and expectation management".*

Orientation phase

During the second phase, the organization phase, a MC must use the information from the first contact to find out what the real problem could be. Based on the orientation phase a MC can determine what has to be done to fix the problem. The output of the orientation phase can be used to create an offer for the client.

Getting a better understanding | before a MC accepts the assignment, the MC needs an understanding of the situation. Getting a better understanding can be achieved by obtaining more information about the situation through interviews of the employees of the client organization. Based on the extra information the MC can develop a better offer and could tell the client what it takes to solve the problem.

I R6: *"in the beginning you receive a problem statement. This must happen, this is the problem. The client can be really sure about the problem. The first thing what you have to do is to think about this problem* *statement. Who says this and what does he say. First you have to get a clear overview what the client see as a problem. In most of the situations the client will also give you immediately a solution. This is my problem and solve it for me. Than you have a problem statement with questions marks. You have to ask yourself if it is actually the problem".*

Assignment match | a MC must determine if he is the right person to find and solve the problem based on the output of the interviews and a better understanding of the assignment. If the MC misses certain knowledge or capabilities, colleagues or other organizations could be involved to assemble a team with the needed capabilities. Secondly, there is a match between the organization, MC and client. In the end, the MC is working with the organization and client for a longer time and a good fit could influence the success of a MCP. If both the assignment match and personal fit are missing the MC can decide to give the assignment back to the client.

F R5: *"my ultimate action is to give back the assignment"*

Getting the assignment | multiple factors influence whether the MC is hired. In the end, if all of the previously mentioned criteria are completed, the contract has to be signed.

Comparison literature

In the literature multiple articles were found which described multiple criteria that were important during the pre-entry phase of a MCP. The table 4.11. "Comparison literature with empirical data pre entry phase" displays both the criteria found in the literature and empirical data.

According to the respondents the right knowledge, expertise and understanding and top management support, credibility can be summarized under criteria selection & assignment match.

There were also two criteria mentioned during the interview, but these were divided under other a different factor (responsibility of the client and providing enough information).

Pre-entry phase	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Appropriate knowledge, expertise and understanding Top management support, credibility	Selection & assignment match
Contract	Getting the assignment
Responsibility of CC	Found under the client characteristics factor
Providing enough information	Found under the client characteristics factor
Decrease uncertainty	-
-	Getting a better understanding
-	Expectations
-	The problem statement
-	Scope the project

Table 4.11. "Comparison literature with empirical data pre entry phase"

Also some factors were only mentioned during the interviews or only in the literature. Only described in the literature was 'decrease of uncertainty'. What was not found in the literature was getting a better understanding, expectation management, problem statement development and scoping the project.

4.7.2. During phase

During the interviews it became clear that it is essential that the employees of the client company are constantly involved in the process. In the end, the organization has to execute the project and must be committed to the problem, solution and implementation. Therefore, involving the organization is most likely essential during the entire 'during phase'.

Involving the organization | according to the respondents including the organization in MCP could have some positive effects on the success rate of a MCP. The respondents argue that, by involving the organization, can stimulate the trust, respect, acceptance and commitment of the client organization. In the end, the organization has to be able to perform the action plan since the MC will leave and the organization cannot fall back on the knowledge and experience of the MC. During the process the MC has to make sure both top management of the clients firm and the organization agree with the changes, according to the respondents by involving the organization during this entire process this could be stimulated in a successful MCP.

I R5: *"at the moment you determine a certain objective, or you made the decision which is too ambitious or not even ambitious, you are doing your work not well enough. Because the organization has to do it in the end".*

Research phase

Based on the output of the orientation phase the MC can make a pre action plan and begins with the real analysis in the research phase. However, it depends on the type of assignment the MC receives. Finding the root cause of the problem is important during a MCP, just as respondent 10 argued. If the root cause cannot be find a solution can never be developed.

I R10: *"Getting a clear question is 75% of your research. That is also for me management consultancy, paid question clarification. Because the journey to the solution is quite simple".*

Research methods | during this phase the MC must try to find what exactly the problem is. What respondent 2 also argued is that in 9 out of 10 assignments the solution for the problem is already known within the organization consequently the MC must get the solution out of the organization. In responds the MC can use multiple methods like interviews, workshops, analysis, brainstorming sessions or even set-up an experiment. Extra tools like models can be helpful to structure the information and talk in the same language.

I R2: "*it is actually the extension of the orientation phase. I think that a good MC must have, how do you say that, maybe a listening ear to the employees of the firm. I am convinced that in 9 of the 10 MCP the solution is already known within the organization. This results in a lot of interviews, feeling, observation, and checking procedures if they are actually executed by the employees".*

I R10: *"yes, a diagnosis can be really short in just one meeting. Afterwards you can already make an offer with the action plan. But a diagnosis can also be an entire MCP. A diagnosis can be based on facts, figures and numbers. But it can also be a good conversation, an analysis or an experiment. I prefer to determine how to find the problem together with the client in a session".*

Solution phase

Solution creation | what became evident during the interviews is that a MC must understand that every organization is unique. This also has an effect on the developed solution. As argued by multiple respondents, you cannot just duplicate the solution implemented in earlier work for other organizations. In table 4.12. "Aspects to take into account when developing a solution" the aspects which have to take into account during the development phase of the solution are displayed.

Take into account	Description
Business culture	Every organization has another business culture. This influences the communication of the MC. In the end the business culture must accept the solution.
Ownership of the company	Some companies have multiple shareholders. A solution of a project can be different when a MC have to deal with shareholders.
Size	A MC must understand that a smaller company have different policies and procedures than a bigger organization.
Different levels	While communicating with the organization a MC must communicate with multiple people within the organization. Sometimes it is needed to communicate differently with different layers within the organization.
Phase of the organization	Some organizations are in a mature state and are already fully developed. But some organizations are just experiencing a new phase. The solutions has to fit the phase of the organization.
Background	An organization could have earlier experience with a MC. Or has some preconceptions based on the history what happened with the organization. It is essential the MC is aware of these facts.
Understanding	The client and organization must understand the solution. Sometimes a MC writes down a high quality recommendation, but the organization is not able to understand it. Common language is sometimes essential.

Table 4.12. "Aspects to take into account when developing a solution"

Execution phase

After the development of the solution and action plan everything has to be executed. It depends on the project if the MC is also allowed to implement the action plan. Depending on the project, someone else is needed with potentially different capabilities or experience.

Implementation | during the implementation the job of a MC is to facilitate the organization. Since the clients have to be able to do it for themselves.

I R4: *"ok, let's see how the execution phase looks like to implement the solution and how are we going to realize it, feasibility, is it achievable. If the feasibility is checked you show the client the advice which they have to think about. Then you have to wait on their agreement, maybe convince them".*

Celebrate success | celebrating success is not mentioned by many respondents. Nonetheless, one of the respondents argued that celebrating success is essential for a successful MCP, since it motives employees to go on and let them know success, it is the little things that make a difference. As a result, this factor is mentioned.

Gates

Gates arise during the different phases of a MC project. Since a lot of factors influence the outcome of the project, evaluation is necessary. There are multiple factors the MC has to take into account during the project. A continuous evaluation could be perceived as annoying for the client, however some MCs said that constant evaluation of the project is happening, sometimes even after just one meeting. Based on the results of the interviews a 'gate control' between the different phases is recommended. If one of the phases is completed a check-up can be planned to evaluate a couple of aspects. Naturally, the MC must utilize project management capabilities to successfully complete the project.

I R8: *"what you can do at the start, a quarter or at the half of the project. Make sure you are constantly up to date do not miss the boat. Speak with the negative and the positive employees. Talk to the critical people of the project. By doing this you make sure you know about the status of the project. Set up the monitoring of the project to evaluate your scope. The client sometimes deviates from the actual objective. You have to monitor this constantly".*

Expectation management | at the end of each phase 'expectation management' should be applied. To determine if the expectations are still similar as during the start of the project or the previous phase. Does the client still expect the same as in the beginning which is agreed upon? Did the expectations change or does the agreement need to change? A MC should be aware of a shift in expectations and should adapt accordingly. Maybe something changed, the faster the MC is aware of a change the faster he can response to it. Expectation management is mentioned by more than half of the respondents as an important factor during a MCP, especially in combination with communication.

Scope and objective | a MC tries to create an offer which includes all of the hours needed for executing the assignment. It could happen that a MC miscalculates something or that the expected problem is not actually the root cause. During the interviews it became clear that changing the scope or objective of the project, by offering suggestions, is not a big problem. As long as it is discussed with the client and the suggestions are met with support and the objective of the project is reached. A small check after each phase could help to evaluate if the scope and the objective are still the same to reach the goal in the end.

Acceptance | the multiple aspects that must be accepted by both the client and the organization are already described. For the MC, it is key that checks are made during the project if the acceptance is still the same. It could happen that the acceptance of the project changes during the project. Therefore, it can become beneficial to check if the acceptance changed or not. The acceptance can be checked through the following aspects: necessity, diagnosis, action plan and the acceptance of the consequences. Note, if one of the aspects is not accepted it is the MC's responsibility to convince the client or the client organization together with the client.

Comparison with the literature

Due to the fact that not much information was found from the articles of the SLR this comparison with the literature will follow a different approach. Both evaluation and acceptance were mentioned during the interviews when discussing the process. Only the same level approach was not mentioned during the MCP process. However, this criteria was mentioned as a criteria for the communication capability for a MC. In table 4.13 "Comparison literature with empirical results MCP phase during" the criteria are displayed which were found for the phase 'during'.

Gate	Research phase	Gate	Solution creation phase	Gate	Execution	Gate
Evaluation	Involving organization	Evaluation	Involving organization	Evaluation	Involving organization	Evaluation
- Expectation management	Research methods	- Expectation management	Solution creation	- Expectation management	Implementation	- Expectation management
- Scope and objective		- Scope and objective		- Scope and objective	Celebrate success	- Scope and objective
- Acceptance		- Acceptance		- Acceptance		- Acceptance

Table 4.13. "Comparison literature with empirical results MCP phases during

4.7.3. Post evaluation

The last phase after completion of the project is the post evaluation phase.

Evaluation | evaluation provides a learning opportunity for both the MC and the client. Evaluation is essential according to the respondents, since it can help the MC to perform the similar projects better. Next, if something went wrong during the implementation a MC still has the opportunity during a post evaluation to improve the situation. In addition, one of the respondents argued that a post evaluation is essential when you are working with shareholders in the client's company. Shareholders want to know if the MCP was successful.

I R2: "in my opinion it cannot be true that a MC writes a plan and that is it. I think that a MC, how do you say that, must measure the temperature after a quarter? Regularly coming back to have a look and check if everything went according to the plan".

Recommendations | asking for recommendations could not influence the success of the MCP after completion. Nonetheless, for a next assignment, recommendations could potentially increase the success rate of a project as mentioned by multiple respondents. If a client is told a great story from the client of an organization who has worked with the same MC it could stimulate the success of the MCP.

Comparison with the literature

The literature suggests that evaluating a project after completion can be beneficial for both the MC as well as the client. This was also mentioned multiple times during the interviews. What was also mentioned during the interviews, but not found in the literature, that it could be helpful to ask a client for recommendations. However, this recommendation does not influence the success of the project, it could influence the success of a next project of the MC.

Post phase	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Evaluation after implementation	Evaluation
Long term evaluation	
-	Recommendations

Table 4.14. Comparison literature with empirical data post phase

4.8. Factors which determine the success

Client satisfaction | nearly all of the respondents agreed with the fact that the success of a MCP is partly based on the client satisfaction. If the client is not happy the MCP will also be most likely unsuccessful.

Compliance with budget and schedule | this factor, together with client satisfaction, is discussed during multiple interviews and in the focus group. Everyone agreed that in the end the project has to comply with the budget and the time schedule. However, the budget and time schedule can both be changed during the project. Hypothetically, a situation could arise in which the objective, formulated in the beginning of the project, does not result in the anticipated goal of the client. Note, however, that such changes should be discussed with the client.

Degree of acceptance | based on the information obtained from the interviews and focus group everyone agreed that the entire organization and client have to accept the project. In the end the project of the MC has to be accepted within the organization.

Degree of target achieved | this factor has a relation with the expectation management that has to be executed during the process. None of the respondents added anything to this factor and all agreed that this factor is of importance.

Comparison with the literature

Actually the performance of success is the only factor which is completely similar to what is found in the literature and empirical data.

Performance of success	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Compliance with budget and schedule	Compliance with budget and schedule
Degree of acceptance	Degree of acceptance
Degree of target achieved	Degree of target achieved
Client satisfaction	Client satisfaction

Table 4.15 "Comparison literature and empirical data performance of success"

4.9. External factors

Originally two factors were displayed, namely macro and the meso criteria. However, during the focus group it became clear that micro and private circumstances were missing. All of these factors will be discussed individually. The external factors influence all of the other capabilities in the conceptual framework. This is also the reason why all of the other factors are within the external factor framework.

Macro | during the interviews it was mentioned multiple times that the macro environment also influences a MCP. Especially, the culture differences between people, interpretations or habits of the client, client organization and MC. A MC could not influence these factors, therefore the MC must take these aspects into account during the project. Moreover, changes in these factors could influence the outcome. Different factors were named individually during other interviews like the cultural factor, banking sector and political choices during elections and the influence of cultural norms and values.

I R4: *"in fact you would say demographics, legal, political, economic and social conditions are important for a MC to take into account".*
I R11*: "for example, if you have a contract with a company from the US for delivering chips. In the contract is described that the delivery must have 98% of chips without errors. A Japanese manufacturer could interpret that they have to deliver 98% perfect chips and 2% chips with errors".*

Meso | the client environment, trends and developments have to be taken into account if a client advices the client. A MC must be able to explain why an old strategy has to change with a constantly changing environment.

I R9: *"you have to be alert on the environment as a MC and know what happens over there. You have to be able to understand and translate the trends and developments of the market to the needs of the client. Other ways you build something that does not match the environment".*

Micro | this one is new to the environmental factors. Note however that this factor was already mentioned earlier in the literature research. The decision was made that the micro environment is explained through the factor client characteristics. However, during the focus group interview the entire group agreed that this should be included separately.

F R3: *"for example a saving plan, the CEO dies, the office is destroyed by a malfunction these aspects could be devastating for the MCP".*

Private circumstances | in the interviews, and also in the focus group, it became clear that your home port as MC, but also as a client, can really influence the MCP. Respondent 10 compared a MC with a top athlete.

I R10: "*the profession of a MC can be compared with a top sport. The entire day you are running, running and running. Rest is key when performing sports. You need a peaceful place to rest".*

During the focus group it became clear that also other circumstances like financial position, illness, and other private circumstances have a major influence on the performance of a MC and client. This corresponds also with another thought of one of the clients; every small thing a human can think about like: *"o god I have to bring the car to the garage" or "I have to bring the children to the childcare.* F R5 stated that these private circumstances also have a major influence on the IQ of a MC: *"it is not only the home port. Also if the family is in financial shit the MC has literally 12% less IQ".*

To sum up, a stabile private situation could influence the state of a MC or even a client. F R4 described this as the "ease of mind". As a result, it can be concluded that a stable home port and private circumstances could influence the success of a MCP.

F R4: "*you have to have a certain ease of mind. If you do not have a certain peace in your head you never give good advice to a client. You have to see patterns, lines, relationship. Actually sometimes you need to walk or have a bath and then you see the overall picture and see the relationships. Or at night you wake up, and then you see it. Literally, besides my bed I have a notebook".*

Comparison with the literature

As the comparison concluded, all three criteria were found in both the literature and empirical data. The only criteria which was not found in the literature, but only mentioned during the interviews and focus group, was private circumstances.

External factors	
Results from literature	*Empirical data*
Macro	Macro
Meso	Meso
Micro	Micro
-	Private circumstances

Table 4.16. "Comparison literature and empirical data external factors"

4.10. Conceptual framework

In this paragraph the final conceptual framework is discussed. This framework is based on the results described in the comparison of each factor between the literature and empirical data. The literature is based on the results of chapter 2 and empirical data is collected from the interviews and focus group.

First of all, there were three major findings from the empirical data compared with the literature earlier found in chapter 2. Finding one, the role of the client within the framework. Based on the empirical data it can be concluded that the client company characteristics and client characteristics must be divided in two separate factors. Reasoning being, the role of the client and the client organization is differently in the MCP. Secondly, based on the literature there were 6 capabilities of a MC described, but during the interviews and focus group multiple respondents argued that commercial capacities are essential for a successful MCP. The main argument was that a MC cannot find a new MCP completion will become nearly impossible. As a result, this capacity is needed for a successful MCP. Lastly, the MCP process changed quite a lot. This can be explained by the fact that the first framework had limited development based on the amount of articles and therefore results concerning the MCP process found from the SLR. The MCP process changed from 3 phases to 6 phases.

Next, during the comparison of the empirical data and literature also similarities, differences and confronting results were found at the criteria level. Note, this study is an explorative research, consequently, any statements regarding the right- or wrongfulness of the criteria would be inappropriate. Therefore, the similarities, differences and confronting results will be mentioned in a newly developed conceptual model.

The conceptual framework is displayed in figure 4.2. "Conceptual framework of factors which influence the success of a MCP". This framework can be found on the next page. As mentioned earlier, the similarities, differences and confronting findings are displayed in the conceptual framework. The similarities of the literature and empirical data are coloured green. Factors or criteria only found in the literature are coloured yellow. Factors or criteria only found in the empirical data and coloured blue and lastly confronting findings are coloured red.

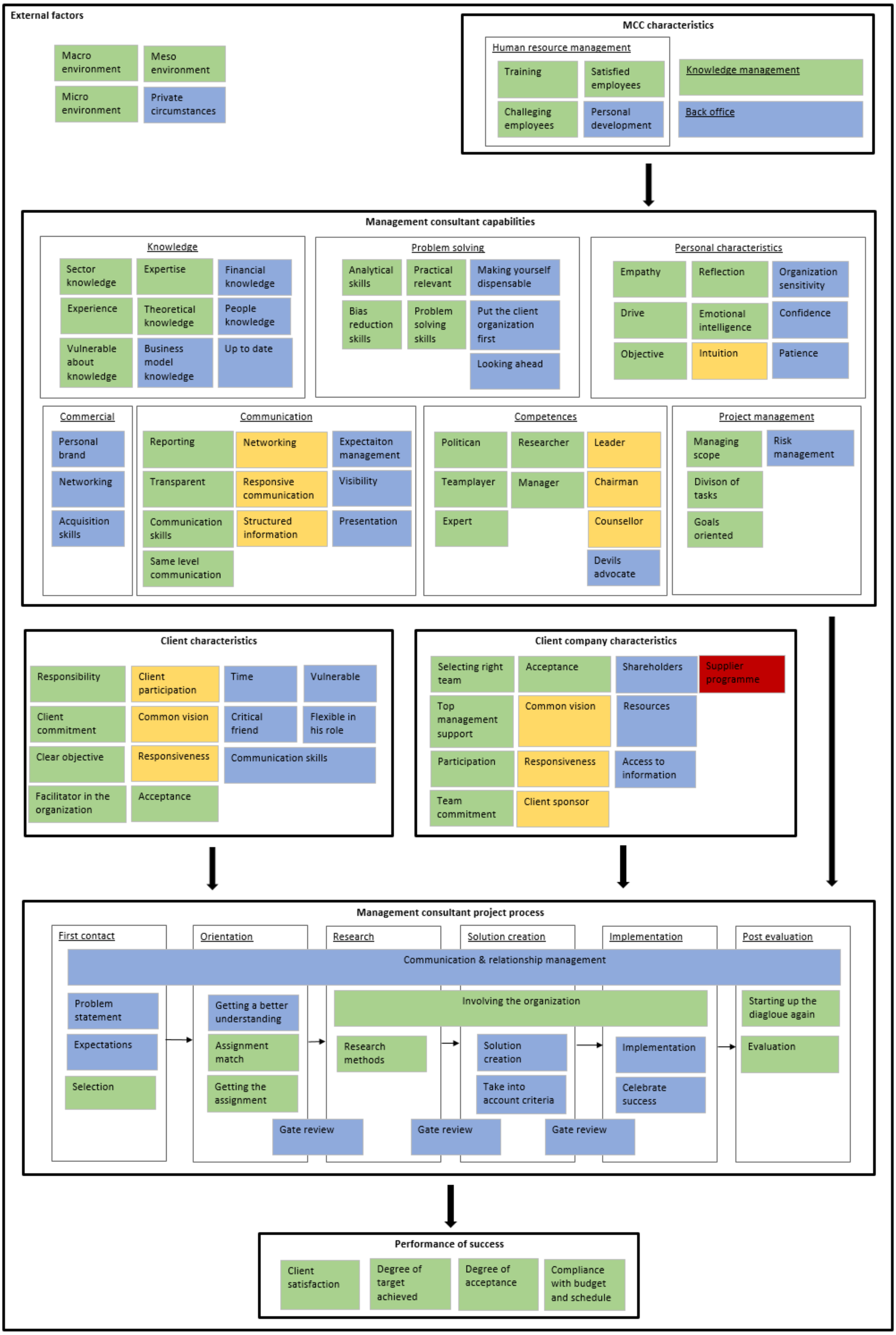

Figure 4.2. "Conceptual framework of factors which influence the success of a MCP"

5. Conclusion and discussion

In this chapter the research questions will be answered and a discussion regarding theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations and suggestions for future research are provided.

5.1. Conclusion

The main objective of this research was to find out which factors influence the success of a management consultancy project. Based on the outcome of a SLR, interviews and a focus group the following research question will be answered:

What is a necessary and sufficient set of factors to explain the success of a management consultancy project?

Based on the articles found from the SLR six factors were determined as influential for the success of a MCP. First, based on the articles it was determined that MC capabilities could be divided in six sub-capabilities: knowledge, personal characteristics, problem solving, project management, communication and roles. During the interviews and focus group these factors were confirmed. However, an additional capability, the commercial capability, also presented itself as important since MCs unable to find new MCPs will never become successful.

The second factor found in the literature was the MC company characteristics. Based on the literature three criteria were described HRM, knowledge management and a client satisfaction and have an effect on the MC capabilities. During the data collection all of these criteria were found but client satisfaction was instead categorized under the criteria HRM and an additional criteria was identified. Namely, the back office reliance possibility of the MC's company.

Next, the factor client company characteristics was defined based on the articles from the SLR. This factor was confirmed by the respondents and it was also argued that the role of the client was not mentioned explicit enough since as an essential factor in the success of a MCP. Thus, the decision was made to add the role client characteristics.

The factors MC capabilities, client characteristics and client company characteristics come together in the factor MCP process. During this process, communication is essential and enables all of the factors to combine and interact with each other. Both the client and MC are responsible for the success of the MCP. Whereby the MC facilitates the client and client organization based on experience and knowledge. The client must provide guidance, with support of the MC, to achieve the objective.

The only factor which influences everything is the external factor. Based on the literature it was categorized into three levels: macro environment, meso environment and micro environment. But during the interviews and focus group it became clear that the private circumstances of an employee, client or MC, are also essential and are therefore added.

In the end, the success of a MCP is measured by four criteria. Based on the budget compliance and time schedule, degree of acceptance, and degree of target achieved, the client satisfaction is determined. These factors were similar in both the literature and empirical data.

To answer the research question, based on the results of this research, it appears that the success of a MCP is a complex multidimensional construct. Success depends on multiple factors and interrelated interactions of factors. Six factors influence the success of a MCP: external factors, MC capabilities, MC company characteristics, client company characteristics, and client characteristics. Whereby the MC company characteristics influence the MC capabilities and the external factor influence all of the factors. The factors: MC capabilities, client company characteristics and client characteristics come together in the MCP process. In this process communication is essential, without communication the different factors cannot interact with one another. Even though communication is essential, the three factors MC capabilities, client company characteristics and client characteristics are also needed for a successful MCP. In the end, the success of a MCP is based on the process which is linked to the to the last factor that measures the success of a MCP. Based on the MCP process, and therefore the MCP process is linked to the last factor, performance of success, which measures the success of a MCP.

5.2. Discussion

The objective of this study was to get a better understanding of which factors influence the success of a MCP. While the research of Jang (1998) and Bronnenmayer (2016) describe and tested a limited amount of success factors. This research developed a framework, displayed in paragraph 4.10, of multiple factors, criteria and relations between all of these. It can be concluded based on the results that the success of a MCP is a complex multidimensional construct and cannot be explained by a set of factors. This also corresponds with the description of success of Gable (1996): *"Success is a complex multidimensional construct. While a single overall measure appears tenable, interesting and revealing results may be realized from analysis of the individual dimensions. Research addressing only subset of the dimensions may be misleading"* (Gable, 1996, p. 1194). Regardless of the complexity, the developed and proposed framework can give both clients, MCs and the academic world a better understanding about the factors influencing the success of a MCP. In conclusion, the results of this research cannot be used to make statements regarding the effectiveness of a particular criteria. To establish effectiveness more research is needed that uncovers the degree of effectiveness rather than conceptualizing it.

There are a lot of capabilities described based on the results of this research with are needed for a MC. This also correspondences with the findings of Simon (2001). This paper indicates that successful consulting firms should employ experienced, knowledgeable and multi-skilled consultants. Ideally, these firms have to operationalise and implement all multiple strategic capabilities, functions and skill values (Kumar 2000). The results of the research show that a MC must be multi-skilled, based on the 7 capabilities described. Additionally, the client characteristics and client company characteristics also influence the success of a MCP and are together with the MC capabilities the input for the MCP process. Even though all of factors and criteria are needed in the process, the presence of all of these factors and criteria cannot guarantee the success of a MCP. Success depends on the MCP process itself. Consequently, the interaction of all of these factors is needed, which is based on the communication between the three stakeholders.

Next, the developed framework displays differences between the literature and empirical data. The differences found in the comparison of the literature and empirical data have to be taken into account with some caveats. There are multiple factors and criteria described which were only found in the empirical data and not in the literature, for example the commercial capability of a MC. The reader must take into account that for this research used SLR before the empirical data collection. It could be the case that there are articles written about factors or criteria found during the interviews and focus group, which were not picked up by the SLR search string.

Secondly, there are some criteria described in the literature which were not mentioned by the respondents during the interviews or focus group. During the interviews the respondents were questioned to describe the factors that influence success. However, the researcher tried to let them specify the different factors. There are no questions used that forced the respondents to argue about specific criteria. It can be argued that since the respondents did not mention these criteria, these criteria are not of importance, or do not influence the success. It can, however, be argued that the MCs and clients could learn from these factors and criteria since they are not aware of them.

Lastly, during the comparison of the literature and empirical data there was one criteria found which were not similar to each other, the supplier programme. However, according to the literature a supplier selection programme could help the client to ensure the right consultant for the right price, none of the respondents agreed with this fact. They argued that, especially SMEs, do not use these kind of programmes. It can be argued that this criteria does not belong in this framework. However, based on the results this cannot be concluded since the results are based on a limited amount of interviews.

5.2.1. Theoretical contributions

In the current literature most articles are written about success factors for a MCP and are mostly focussed on the capabilities of a MC. This research showed that beside the capabilities of the MC also the client characteristics and client company characteristics influence the success of a MCP. Furthermore, this research is the first research which categorized the success factors described by Jang (1998), Kumar (2000), Simon (2001) and Bronnenmayer (2015) and other researchers all in one framework.

Another theoretical contributions is the developed framework with all of the factors and criteria found both from the literature and interviews and focus group. The framework is displayed in figure 4.2. and can be found in paragraph 4.10. In this framework the empirical data is compared with the results from the literature review. All of the similarities between the literature and empirical data are displayed in green, factors and criteria found in only the literature are displayed in yellow), factors and criteria only found in the empirical data are blue and lastly criteria and factors which were conflicting are displayed in red. Especially, the criteria only found in the empirical data and conflicting results are theoretical contributions.

In addition, one of the theoretical contributions from this research is the fact that the commercial capability of a MC also influences the success of a MCP. Next, the fact that conflicting information was found concerning the one of the client company characteristics 'preferred supplier programme' from the interviews, focus group and literature. According to Sieweke (2012) some companies use preferred supplier programs to select MC to reduce costs and transaction costs. However, none of the respondents described a preferred supplier programme. Also during the discussion about the theoretical framework none of the respondents agreed with the fact that this was a factor which influences the success of a MCP, especially in the SME category. Therefore it can be questioned if a preferred supplier program stimulates the success of a MCP. Secondly, multiple researches found out that the interaction between the client and MC is essential for the success of a MCP (Poulfelt, 1994; Nikolova, 2009; Solomonson 2012, Solomonson, 2015; Nikolova, 2015). However, these researchers focus on the client-consultant relationship, this research showed that the relationship between the client, organization and MC is of importance, since the fact a relationship can stimulate the success of a MCP. Lastly, during the SLR there was no literature found about the MCP. While Jang (1998) and Bronnenmayer (2015) tried to explain the success of the MCP in the form of factors. They only argue that multiple factors are responsible for the success of a MCP, but do not argue that the interaction (MCP process) determines this success. Based on the results of this research it can be argued that the interaction of the factors and criteria in the MCP process could determine if the project will become successful.

5.2.2. Practical implications

The framework has multiple purposes for both the client and MC. First of all, MC companies could use this framework to develop training material for their MCs to get a better understanding and insights in what influences the success of a MCP. Next, MC companies can use this framework for the personal development plan for each MC. Whereby the framework can be used as tool. Each capability of the framework can be evaluated and based on the evaluation new personal development goals can be identified. Secondly, during the project the framework can be used as checklist. A MC can reflect on whether he uses all of the capabilities. Next, a MC can use the framework to evaluate if the client organization and client have all of the necessary characteristics. If not, the MC can try to stimulate the creation of certain characteristics by workshops or presentations. The framework can also be shown during these workshops or presentations. Lastly, after the project the framework can be used as evaluation tool. To determine what went well and what did not and where the potential improvements are.

What was also noticed during the interviews with clients was that knowledge management is not mentioned often. Only one of the respondents described something about knowledge management at the MC's company. According to multiple researchers it is argued that knowledge management is essential for a MC's company. Therefore, it is recommended for MCs to have a look at what knowledge management can provide for their companies.

Based on the results of this research it became clear that the role of the client is essential during the project. During the interviews and focus group some MCs made it clear that it is important that the client understands the need for certain characteristics. Both the client and MCs must understand that if the client or MC does not have the necessary characteristics the project has more chance to fail. Telling the client that you are not able to perform the MCP or tell the client that some characteristics are essential does not decrease the personal brand of a MC. It even stimulates the personal brand of a MC according to the respondents since the MC is actually performing his profession correctly.

5.2.3. Limitations

One limitation of this research is generalizability. The clients were only from Dutch SMEs and it cannot be said that these factors are representative for bigger companies and international companies. Since all of the selected client respondents were working for SMEs.

A second limitation is the chosen method to collect the required scientific literature, the SLR. Tranfield (2003) state: *"Management reviews are often regarded as a process of exploration, discovery and development. Therefore it is generally considered unacceptable to plan the literature review activities closely. A flexible approach much make explicit what the research intents to do, however the changes during the process have to be state explicitly what changes have been made"* (Tranfield, 2003, p. 215). Based on this it can also be argued that the SLR was not appropriate. Even though multiple actions were taken into account to prevent problems, it could still happen that not all of the relevant articles are found during the literature research.

Another limitation in this research is the scope of the research. First of all, this research tried to find the factors and criteria which influence the success of a MCP which is wide scope and not that specific. It can be argued that all of these factors and criteria are way too many to conduct proper research about. There was also limited time to talk with all of the respondents during the interviews and focus group about all of these factors and criteria. Secondly, a MC can be active in multiple markets or industries. It could be that different skills, capabilities or factors influence the success of a MCP different market or industries. Secondly, some respondents had a hard time answering what the role of a MC was. Even though the researcher discussed the role of a MC with every respondent, it could still happen that one of the respondents had a different interpretation of the role of a MC. Therefore the results could be biased.

5.2.4. Future research

This research is an explorative research and resulted in a framework with factors that potentially influence the success of a MCP. Since these factors are suggested by literature, interviews and the focus group it cannot be stated that these factors really influence the success of a MCP. Secondly, in this research it cannot be stated to what extent every factor influences the success of a MCP. Both of these questions provide fruitful opportunity for further research.

In the current research the clients were selected working for SMEs. A future research can be conducted by including also larger firms or public organizations. As NG (1999) notes that there is a difference between the demand of clients of contractors in the public and private organization in the form of contract, management capabilities, progress of work and relationship. Also the industry of the SME is not defined in this research. A future research can there also chose one specific industry to find out which factor influence in these type of industries.

During the focus group a suggestion was made by multiple respondents that it could be interesting to find out which capabilities are used during certain phases of the project. This could also be an interesting research topic for future research.

As mentioned during the theoretical implications the role of the client, importance of the MCP process and relationship between the client, organization and MC are underexposed and provide therefore subjects for future research.

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Appendix I | SPICE framework

Setting (where?)	SME
Population/perspective (who?)	Management consulting
Intervention (what?)	Factors
Comparison (what else?)	
Evaluation (what results?)	Success

	Constructs	Narrower terms	Synonyms	Broader terms	Search location
S	SME	Enterprise Small and medium-sized enterprises Company Companies			All fields
P	Management consulting	Consulting Management consultancy Management consultancy service	Professional service Business service Knowledge industry	-	All fields
I	Factor	Criteria Aspect Capabilities Functions Values Indicators Competences Characteristics Ability	Skills	-	Title/abstract
C	-	-	-	-	-
E	Success	Increasing Impact Rate Better Effectiveness Success Stimulating Revenue (Kumar, et al., 2000) Profitability (Kumar, et al., 2000) Growth (Kumar, et al., 2000) Customer satisfaction (Kumar, et al., 2000) Job satisfaction (Kumar, et al., 2000) Repeat business (Kumar, et al., 2000) Referrals (Kumar, et al., 2000) Longevity of practices (Kumar, et al., 2000) Meeting the budget (Kumar, et al., 2000) Financial results (Kumar, et al., 2000)	Organizational performance	-	Title/abstract

Appendix II | Search string

Setting (where?)	Customers
Population/perspective (who?)	Management consulting
Intervention (what?)	Factors
Comparison (what else?)	
Evaluation (what results?)	success

- **SME |** SME OR sme OR Enterprise OR company OR companies OR customer OR customers OR clients OR client OR project
- **Management consulting |** management consulting* OR consultant* OR management consultancy OR professional service OR knowledge industry OR consultation OR external consultant OR external consultants OR ‘process consultation’ OR ‘consulting industry’ OR consultancy OR ‘consulting service’
- **Factors |** criteria* OR factor OR aspect OR capabilities OR functions OR value OR indicator OR competences OR competence OR characteristic OR ability OR skill OR phases OR phase
- **Success |** success OR ‘organizational performance’ OR satisfaction OR increasing OR impact OR rate OR effective OR stimulating OR revenue OR profitability OR growth OR ‘customer satisfaction’

Search string Scopus

Search string result: 2583: (((TITLE-ABS-KEY (consultant OR consultancy OR "management consulting" OR "management consultancy" OR "professional service" OR "knowledge industry" OR consultation OR "external consultant" OR "external consultants" OR "process consultation" OR "consulting industry" OR "consulting service") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (criteria OR factor OR aspect OR capabilities OR functions OR value OR indicator OR comp etences OR competence OR characteristic OR ability) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("critical success factor" OR critical OR successful OR unsuccessful OR failed OR important OR key OR success O R satisfaction OR organizational success OR increasing OR impact OR effective OR stimulating OR growth) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (sme OR sme OR enterprise OR company OR companies OR customer OR customers OR cli ents OR client OR project)))) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (consultant OR consultancy OR "management consulting" OR "management consultancy" OR "professional service" OR "knowledge industry" OR consultation OR "external consultant" OR "external consultants" OR "process consultation" OR "consulting industry" OR "consulting service") AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI"))

Search string Science Direct

Search results: 2,380 results found for (TITLE-ABSTR-KEY(SME OR sme OR Enterprise OR company OR companies OR customer OR customers OR clients OR client OR project) and TITLE-ABSTR-KEY (“critical success factor” OR critical OR successful OR unsuccessful OR failed OR important OR key OR success OR satisfaction OR organizational success OR increasing OR impact OR effective OR stimulating OR growth) or TITLE-ABSTR-KEY(criteria OR factor OR aspect OR capabilities OR functions OR value OR indicator OR competences OR competence OR characteristic OR ability)) and TITLE-ABSTR-KEY(consultant OR consultancy OR "management consulting" OR "management consultancy" OR "professional service" OR "knowledge industry" OR consultation OR "external consultant" OR "external consultants" OR "process consultation" OR "consulting industry" OR "consulting service") AND LIMIT-TO(topics, "project,customer,firm,company,china,europe,service,organization,business,client,unite state,research,knowledge") AND LIMIT-TO(contenttype, "JL,BS","Journal")

Search results: 296 results found for TITLE-ABSTR-KEY(consultant OR consultancy OR "management consulting" OR "management consultancy" OR "professional service" OR "knowledge industry" OR consultation OR "external consultant" OR "external consultants" OR "process consultation" OR "consulting industry" OR "consulting service") AND LIMIT-TO(topics, "project,customer,firm,company,china,europe,service,organization,business,client,unite state,research,knowledge") AND LIMIT-TO(contenttype, "JL,BS","Journal")(TITLE-ABSTR-KEY(SME OR sme OR Enterprise OR company OR companies OR customer OR customers OR clients OR client OR project) and TITLE-ABSTR-KEY (“critical success factor” OR critical OR successful OR unsuccessful OR failed OR important OR key OR success OR satisfaction OR organizational success OR increasing OR impact OR effective OR stimulating OR growth) or TITLE-ABSTR-KEY(criteria OR factor OR aspect OR capabilities OR functions OR value OR indicator OR competences OR competence OR characteristic OR ability))

Search string Web of Science

Search string results: 584: (TS=(SME OR sme OR Enterprise OR company OR companies OR customer OR customers OR clients OR client OR project) and TS=(critical success factor OR critical OR successful OR unsuccessful OR failed OR important OR key OR success OR satisfaction OR organizational success OR increasing OR impact OR effective OR stimulating OR growth) and TS=(criteria OR factor OR aspect OR capabilities OR functions OR value OR indicator OR competences OR competence OR characteristic OR ability)) and TS=(consultant OR consultancy OR "management consulting" OR "management consultancy" OR "professional service" OR "knowledge industry" OR consultation OR "external consultant" OR "external consultants" OR "process consultation" OR "consulting industry" OR "consulting service")

Appendix III | Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:

Type of literature used

- Articles
- Reviews

Topics

- Selection criteria of MCP
- Purchasing policies
- Explaining specific factors which lead to MCP success
- How value is created in management consulting projects

Exclusion criteria:

Type of literature used

- Books
- Conference papers

Topics

- ERP implementation
- Infrastructure projects
- About the consultancy market
- Financial frameworks
- Organizing events
- About specific market researchers of consulting activities in countries
- Factors which lead to successful performance in SMEs
- Different phases a successful SMEs

Appendix IV | Interview & focus group questions

Achtergrondinformatie

1. Wat is uw functie binnen de organisatie?
2. Hoe lang bent u werkzaam in deze functie?

Verifiëring vragen relatie management consultancy project (MCP)

3. MC | Hoeveel ervaring heeft u binnen de management consultancy branche?
4. MC | Hoeveel projecten heeft u afgerond als management consultant?
5. Klant | Hoeveel ervaring heeft u met management consultants?
6. Klant | Heeft u wel eens, of meerdere malen, gewerkt met een management consultant?

Eigenschappen management consultant (MC)

7. Wat zijn kenmerken en of capaciteiten van een management consultant?
8. Welke factoren/capaciteiten/kennis zijn er nodig om als MC aan de slag te kunnen gaan?
9. Wat zijn slechte eigenschappen die een MC eigenlijk niet mag hebben/tonen?

Fases MCP

10. Kunt u uitleggen hoe u normaal te werk gaat bij een MCP (werkwijze/tools)?
11. Kunt u de fases definiëren die in een MCP worden doorlopen?

Kenmerken van de opdrachtgever in een MCP

12. Wat voor een rol speelt de opdrachtgever in een MCP?
13. Hoe moet een opdrachtgever zich opstellen in een MCP om het tot project een succes te leiden?

Overige factoren

14. Welke factoren hebben nog meer invloed op het MCP buiten de capaciteiten om van de MC?

Stimuleren van het succes van een MCP

15. Door middel van wat voor een acties kan het succes van een MCP worden gestimuleerd bij de klant?
16. Door middel van wat voor een acties kan het succes van een MCP worden gestimuleerd bij de MC?
17. Kan het succes van een MCP geborgd worden, zo nee waarom niet, zo ja, hoe dan?

Succes factoren

18. Welke factoren/capaciteiten zorgen voor het succes van een MCP?
19. Welke factoren/capaciteiten zorgen voor het falen van een MCP?
20. Wat zijn de vijf belangrijkste factoren die leiden tot een succesvol MCP?

Het raamwerk "succes van een management consultancy project"

21. Wat zijn uw algemene gedachte over dit raamwerk?
22. Welke factoren zou u nog willen toevoegen aan dit model en waarom?
23. Mist u nog criteria onder één van de factoren in het huidige model?
    a. Management consultant capaciteiten
    b. Kenmerken management consultant bedrijf
    c. Kenmerken bedrijf klant
    d. Het MCP proces
    e. Externe omgeving
24. Zijn de relaties tussen de diverse factoren correct weergegeven of missen er nog relaties?

Afsluiting

25. Wilt u nog wat toevoegen aan uw antwoorden?
26. Heeft u nog vragen en/of opmerkingen ten aanzien van dit onderzoek?

Appendix V | Interview protocol

Interview protocol

Allereerst zou ik u willen bedanken voor deelname aan dit onderzoek. Om u eerst een beter beeld te geven van de context van dit onderzoek heb ik een aantal punten voor u opgesomd.

Persoonlijke informatie | mijn naam is Harmjan Oonk en ben momenteel bezig met de afronding van mijn Master Business Administration aan de Universiteit Twente. Als afronding van deze studie voer ik een onderzoek uit voor de Universiteit Twente. Hierdoor zit er geen commercieel doel einde aan dit onderzoek en is het raamwerk straks voor iedereen beschikbaar.

Doel van dit interview | De aanleiding van dit onderzoek was mijn eigen interesse naar de wereld van advisering door management consultants. Hiernaast is door eigen vooronderzoek gebleken dat er in de huidige wetenschappelijke literatuur nog geen raamwerk aanwezig is die alle factoren in relatie tot het succes van een management consultant project weergeeft. Samen met mijn begeleider Dr. Ir. J. Kraaijenbrink heb ik de onderzoeksvraag als volgt geformuleerd:

"What is a necessary and sufficient set of factors to explain the success of a management consultancy project"?

Onderzoeksopzet | allereerst is er een raamwerk opgezet aan de hand van relevante literatuur die betrekking heeft op een dergelijk project. Dit raamwerk wordt op twee manieren gevalideerd. Ten eerste door middel van zes interviews met management consultants en zes interviews met klanten die gebruik hebben gemaakt van een management consultant. Ten tweede, wordt er een groepssessie georganiseerd waar zowel drie klanten als drie management consultants aanwezig zullen zijn om zowel de literatuur als de informatie uit de interviews te valideren.

Verwerking informatie | wanneer u geen bezwaar heeft zou ik dit interview graag willen opnemen, zodat ik het gesprek later terug kan luisteren om er een transcript van te maken. Wanneer dit is gebeurd zal ik het bestand verwijderd worden. Hierna zou ik u willen vragen om het transcript goed te keuren of deze met het werkelijke gesprek overeenkomt. De resultaten van dit interview zullen anoniem blijven.

Tijdsbestek interview | het interview zal ongeveer een uur duren.

Opbouw | het interview bestaat uit ongeveer X vragen en is opgedeeld in een aantal delen. Het eerste deel gaat over de persoonlijke informatie van de respondent. Hierna zal er dieper worden ingegaan op de factoren die invloed hebben op een management consultancy project.

Voorbereiding | ik zou u graag willen vragen om een blik te werpen om het raamwerk wat op de volgende pagina.

Appendix VI | Focus group protocol

Focus group protocol

Allereerst zou ik u willen bedanken voor deelname aan dit onderzoek. Om u eerst een beter beeld te geven van de context van dit onderzoek heb ik een aantal punten voor u opgesomd.

Persoonlijke informatie | mijn naam is Harmjan Oonk en ben momenteel bezig met de afronding van mijn Master Business Administration aan de Universiteit Twente. Als afronding van deze studie voer ik een onderzoek uit voor de Universiteit Twente. Hierdoor zit er geen commercieel doel einde aan dit onderzoek en is het raamwerk straks voor iedereen beschikbaar.

Doel van dit interview | De aanleiding van dit onderzoek was mijn eigen interesse naar de wereld van advisering door management consultants. Hiernaast is door eigen vooronderzoek gebleken dat er in de huidige wetenschappelijke literatuur nog geen raamwerk aanwezig is die alle factoren in relatie tot het succes van een management consultant project weergeeft. Samen met mijn begeleider Dr. Ir. J. Kraaijenbrink heb ik de onderzoeksvraag als volgt geformuleerd:

“What is a necessary and sufficient set of factors to explain the success of a management consultancy project”?

Onderzoeksopzet | allereerst is er een raamwerk opgezet aan de hand van relevante literatuur die betrekking heeft op een dergelijk project. Dit raamwerk wordt op twee manieren gevalideerd. Ten eerste door middel van zes interviews met management consultants en zes interviews met klanten die gebruik hebben gemaakt van een management consultant. Ten tweede, wordt er een groepssessie georganiseerd waar zowel drie klanten als drie management consultants aanwezig zullen zijn om zowel de literatuur als de informatie uit de interviews te valideren.

Verwerking informatie | wanneer u geen bezwaar heeft zou ik dit interview graag willen opnemen, zodat ik het gesprek later terug kan luisteren om er een transcript van te maken. Wanneer dit is gebeurd zal ik het bestand verwijderd worden. Hierna zou ik u willen vragen om het transcript goed te keuren of deze met het werkelijke gesprek overeenkomt. De resultaten van dit interview zullen anoniem blijven.

Tijdsbestek interview | Het focus group interview zal ongeveer een uur duren zonder lunch of korte introductie. Al met al duurt de sessie 90 minuten.

Opbouw | De sessie begint allereerst met een gezamenlijk lunch waar alle participanten kennis met elkaar kunnen maken. Deze neemt ongeveer 30 minuten in beslag. Hierna wordt er gestart met een algemene introductie en brainstorm sessie over succes factoren voor een management consultant project. Deze neemt ongeveer 20 minuten in beslag. Tot slot wordt het opgezette raamwerk gepresenteerd en kan de groep hierover in discussie gaan en beoordelen of deze voldoet aan ieder zijn wens.

Voorbereiding | ik zou u graag willen vragen om een blik te werpen om het raamwerk wat u ook in de bijlage kunt vinden.

DECEMBER2016

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.