Qualifications of management consultants (in a fast-paced world)

What makes management consultants effective in interactions with clients, seen from the eyes of the client (as well as from the consultant)?

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Drs. Elsbeth Reitsma MCM
C3 consultants and managers
P.O. Box 170
3830 AD Leusden
The Netherlands
T: 00-31-33-4343170
F: 00-31-33-4343171
E-mail: elsbethr@xs4all.nl

Prof. dr. Léon de Caluwé
Vrije Universiteit / Twynstra Gudde
P.O. Box 907
3800 AX Amersfoort
The Netherlands
T: 00-31-33-4677261
F: 00-31-33-4677471
E-mail: lca@tg.nl

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Abstract

In this study we want to learn more about factors of success and failure of client–consultant interaction. We see interaction here on the micro-level: it deals with patterns of actions and reactions of consultants and clients in their conversation during two specific stages in the consulting process: diagnosis and intervention during action planning.

In this study we address the actual behaviour of the consult leading to success as perceived by the client. We assume that a management consultant in interaction with a client is likely to show behaviour he, or she, feels will lead to success. But does this correspond to the client's perception and the client's expectations? By addressing the client's perception about success, a mutual understanding of success between the client and the consultant can be developed. This can result in a better understanding of what behaviour (not) to engage in.

The study focuses on 12 management consultants who are involved in an educational program of a large Dutch management consultancy firm and on 6 management consultants who participate in a postgraduate training program of one of the Dutch postgraduate business schools for management consultants. As part of both programs, the consultants go through an intensive simulated consulting process with clients of a fictive company. Consultants and clients go through a process that is very close to real life. Both contexts have the same characteristics.

In this paper we will describe the research model, the theoretical framework, the research strategy and the first results.

1. Introduction

There is more and more research on what managers and employees in client organizations expect from the consultant. These studies indicate what the perceived added value of the consultant is from the client's perspective. Outcomes of these studies based on interviews and participation give us a sharper picture of the mechanisms about closeness and distance between consultant and client (Skovgaard Smith, 2007). Or on the consultant roles that managers emphasize (Harste & Richter, 2008). And on the different perspectives and needs of the decision makers and the people seconded to a project (Czerniawska, 2007).
This study aims to explore even on a deeper level. What happens in the interaction between clients and consultants?

This study is a follow up on the research on competencies of management consultants. In our research on competencies we asked experienced consultants what they would do in a specific situation and what competencies a consultant would need to be able to be successful. Consultants told us what they would do. But that points immediately to the question: how would they act in reality? In real life in interaction with a client? In this study that is the key question. The situations that we created in a simulation are very similar to real life.

In a study in the Netherlands we want to learn more about factors of success and failure of the client–consultant interaction. Interaction is seen here on the micro-level and deals with patterns of actions and reactions of consultants and clients in their conversation during two specific stages in the consulting process (diagnosis and intervention during action planning).
The central research question is: *What makes management consultants effective in interactions with clients, seen from the eyes of the client?*

We expect to see differences in the perceived success of the consultant's interactions. We will look for possible explanations of these differences. We will try to explain the differences through the following research issues:

- are there certain competencies or characteristics that make certain consultants more successful than others?
- is the fact that intentions of the consultant and expectations of client are aligned a factor that can explain success?
- is the fact that expectations and experiences during the process by the client are aligned a factor that can explain success?
- are there critical moments during the process that can explain success and what is the nature of those critical moments?

In the next section the research model and the theoretical backgrounds will be described.

2. Research model & theoretical framework

As indicated before this study can be considered to be a continuation of the research on competencies of management consultants. (De Caluwé & Reitsma (2006, 2009)). Based on research among 40 experienced management consultants, we concluded that management consultants indicate that they would use a specific intervention and specific competencies in a specific context. Before meeting the client, the consultant has certain intentions as to what he or she is going to do and how he or she will do it. But in the actual encounter between consultant and the client, there will be interaction. In this interaction both the consultant and the client engage in actual behaviour. Behaviour that may, or may not, corresponded with the initial consultant's intentions. This is the theory-in-use (Argyris, 1990).

The actual behaviour of the consult leading to success as perceived by the client will be addressed here. A management consultant in interaction with a client is likely to show behaviour he, or she, feels will lead to success. But does this correspond to the client's perception and the client's expectations? By addressing a client's perception about success, a mutual understanding of success between the client and the consultant can be developed. This results in a better understanding of what behaviour (not) to engage in.

The research model (figure 2.1) shows a starting point in a consulting process. That is a given context in the consulting process. This context we used in the simulation will be defined more precisely in section 3.1.

As indicated before, the client may have some expectations about the consulting process and the consultant's contribution in it. After the interaction with the consultant, the client is able to tell something about his or her experiences during the interaction and the perceived effectiveness of the consultant's behaviour.

At the other hand the consultant may prepare the interaction that will come. He or she may have some intentions. The consultant also has some characteristics, such as competencies where he or she is good at, notions on the effectiveness of consultancy or a certain degree of self-monitoring. The consultant's intentions and characteristics will influence the interaction between the consultant and the client.

We can ask both the consultant and the client for their perceived effectiveness.

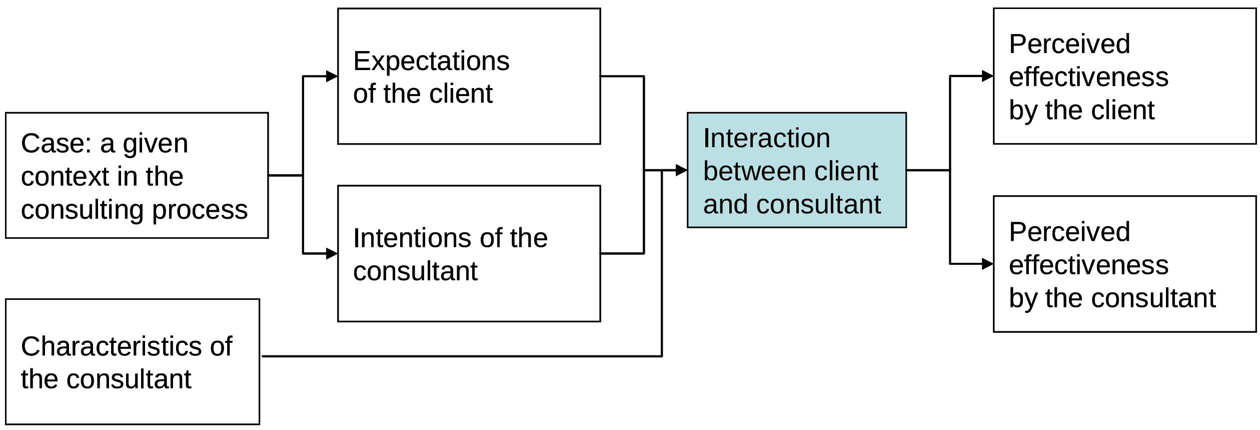

Figure 2.1 The research model: the effectiveness of management consultants in interaction with their client.

In the next sections we will describe the main theoretical insights we used in the operationalization of the variables of the research model:

- the management consultant: characteristics
- interaction and behaviour
- success and effectiveness

2.1 The management consultant: characteristics

Management consultants “have trouble agreeing about what is the nature and the status of their work and who might and who might not be included in this profession” (De Sonnaville, 2005). One clear and uniform definition cannot be given. We summarize some definitions given by well-known authors in the field of management consulting.
Greiner and Metzger (1983): management consulting is “an advisory service contracted for and provided to organizations by specially trained and qualified persons who assist, in an objective and independent manner, the client organization to identify management problems, analyse such problems, recommend solutions to these problems and help when requested in the implementation of solutions”.
Block (2000) “A consultant is a person in a position to have some influence over an individual, a group or an organization, but who has no direct power to make changes or implement programs.” Consultants can be internal, defined by Block (2000) as people doing staff work for an organization where they work full-time, or external.
Kubr (2002) sees management consultants as “service providers assisting managers and organisations in achieving organisational purposes by solving management and business problems”.

Besides these definitions there are specific phases in the management consulting process. Cummings and Worley (2005) describe a general model of planned change based on Lewin’s Planned Change Model, the Action Research Model, and the Positive model. Kubr (2002) has developed a similar, management consulting specific model: the consulting process. The consulting process comprises the various activities the management consultant and the client engage in, in order to achieve the desired outcome. The model provides a clear overview of the main phases in a management consulting process, and thereby allows for a deeper understanding of what it is management consultants do. The following model represents the consulting process as described by Kubr (2002):

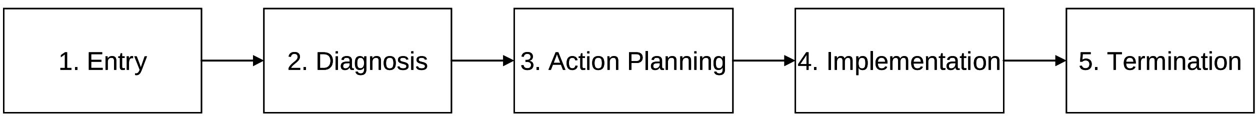

Figure 2.2 The Consulting Process (Kubr, 2002)

Figure 2.2 is represented as a linear process but the activities also may have an iterative character.

What becomes clear from all of the definitions is that consultants assist clients but have no explicit power in the client's organization. We will use the word management consultant as an external consultant who works for a consulting firm and gives advice to a client about management and organizational problems, but who has no direct power in the client's organization. The management consultant and the client are involved in this consulting process with specific activities in order to achieve a (desired) outcome.

The next question is which characteristics and qualities a management consultant needs to perform successfully. What is required in assisting organizations? In this study we focus on two aspects: competencies and self monitoring.

Competencies

The definition we use for competencies is: something someone is good at (Hoekstra & Van Sluijs 2000, 2003). This definition encompasses an extensive list of competencies based on the work of Hoekstra & Van Sluijs (2003), Yukl cs (1993) and Volz & De Vrey (2000). In this study we use the results of the research on competencies of management consultants (De Caluwé & Reitsma, 2006). According to those results, a management consultant needs a basic set of competencies in order to function well. In addition to these basic competencies, consultants need specific competencies in order to be able to execute specific interventions, such as interventions aimed at strategic problems or interventions aimed at the improvement of business processes. In applying a certain type of intervention a consultant may choose either an expert or a process approach. Depending on which approach will be taken, additional competencies are required. An overview of the outcomes is presented in table 2.1.

Approach-specific competencies	Intervention-specific competencies
• *Expert approach:* Entrepreneurship, Market oriented, Boldness, Independence, Result orientation, Quality orientation, Leadership, Consultation and Risk awareness • *Process approach*: Restraint, Organizing ability, Making coalitions, Energy, Awareness of organizational context, Coaching, Personal appeal and decisiveness	• *Strategy and processes between people:* Awareness of organizational context • *Structure, processes and HRM:* Planning, Organizing ability and Result oriented • *Governance and control:* Boldness, Planning, Result oriented, Attention to details and Problem solving • *Training, development and continuous learning and changing:* Coaching and Inspiring
Basic Competencies • **Showing resilience:** Flexibility • **Analyzing:** Analytical skills, Conceptual thinking, Learning orientation, Creativity • **Considering:** Balanced judgment, Awareness of external environment, Generating vision • **Facilitating:** Listening, Sensitivity • **Influencing:** Communication, Presentation, Persuasion • **Inspiring confidence:** Integrity, Reliability, Loyalty, Creating a favorable atmosphere	

Table 2.1 Overview of Basic Competencies and Approach- specific and Intervention-specific Competencies

At the bottom of table 2.1 are the basic competencies that every consultant needs. At the left are the two generic approaches: expert and process approach. The competencies needed for these approaches are listed. At the right are the four specific clusters of interventions that we found, with the competencies needed for each of these clusters. A list with the definitions of the competencies is available from the authors of this paper. This list is used in the stage of data gathering (see section 3).

Self monitoring

Self monitoring is a social psychological construct, concerned with the differences in the degree to which people can, and do, observe and control their expressive behaviour and self-presentation (Snyder, 1974). High and low self monitors thus differ in a variety of ways: motivation, ability, attention, use of ability and behavioural variability (Snyder, 1979, 1987). High self monitors have extensive attention for the social environment. Out of a concern for social appropriateness, high self monitors attend to the behaviour of others, and use that behaviour as a guide for their own words and actions. As social appropriateness of behaviour is of great importance to high self monitors, there is an ongoing feedback process between the high self monitor and the situation. In monitoring the situation the high self monitor will look for cues to adapt their behaviour in such a manner that it is appropriate. The behaviour of high self monitors therefore tends to be situational specific.

Compared to high self monitors, low self monitors have a relatively low concern for the social appropriateness of their behaviour. More important to low self monitors, is self validation, and being true to yourself (Barrick, Parks & Mount, 2005). Low self monitors will therefore behave in a fashion consistent with their own values and believes, rather than adapting their behaviour to that of others. Besides the absence of motivation to regulate expressive self-presentations, low self monitors have been argued to lack the ability to do so. Low self-monitors have difficulty carrying off appearances and engaging in impression management (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). In the behavioural expressions of feelings, low self monitors will thus manifest greater consistency, than do high self monitors.

Although researchers do not have reached consensus about the reasons, characteristics and motivations of high and low self-monitors, they do all agree that people differ in the degree to which they monitor their own behaviour and that of others and based on that change their self-presentation (Briggs and Cheek, 1980; Ickes cs., 2006).

Snyder and Gangestad developed an instrument, which measures the degree of self-monitoring (Gangestad & Snyder, 1986). We used a translated Dutch version.

2.2 Behaviour and interaction

What is behaviour and why do people (consultants) show certain behaviour? What is the impact of consultant’s intentions? And are behavioural intentions shown in interaction? These questions will be considered in this section.

One of the most clear and concise definitions of the concept behaviour is provided by Tosi, Mero, and Rizzo (2000), who state that “Actual behaviour is an overt act of a person, that can be observed and measured “. A more complex definition of behaviour is provided by Ajzen (2002a). According to Ajzen behaviour is the manifest, observable response in a given situation with respect to a given target (Ajzen, 2002a). Behaviour does not occur spontaneously, it is a response directed at a given target. How behaviour occurs has received a lot of attention. In particular the question whether behaviour emerges unconsciously (i.e. spontaneously), or through a conscious process.

The <u>first stream of thought</u> considers behaviour to be formed through an unreasoned, unconscious process. One of the most prominent researchers in this stream of thought is the organizational theorist Weick, whose writings have had profound influence. Whereas most theories of reasoned behaviour assume that reasoning and sensemaking takes place before the performance of behaviour, Weick (1979) argues that this process does not occur until after the performance of the behaviour. According to Weick (1995) “the basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment, which emerges from efforts to create order, and make retrospective sense of what occurs”. Weick’s theory is based on the conception that individuals perceive chaos in their environment, which they want to reduce.

Searle (1969) argues that interaction can be seen as a process of mutual accommodation. Interaction is thus considered to be an ongoing process of action and reaction. In this process Weick (1979) distinguishes between an interact and a double interact. An interact encompasses the first phase in the interaction process, an action of person A evokes a response in person B. A double interact encompasses the complete sequence of an action by person A evoking a specific response in person B, which is then responded to by person A. Hollander and Willis (1967) have argued that double interacts should be preferred over interacts in the description of this interpersonal influence. The logic of this argument is that you can not understand the interpersonal influence unless you have seen the response it caused. This statement will have consequences for our way of observation during the interaction between consultant and client. The observation must contain both types of reactions.

According to the second stream of thought, behaviour is the result of a conscious, reasoned process (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Tosi, Mero, Rizzo, 2000). These rational reasoning models of action outline how responses are guided by conscious intentions, which represent plans of action in the pursuit of behavioural goals (Ajzen, 1991; Triandis, 1980). Instead of giving meaning to behaviour in a retrospective manner, these theories argue that individuals attach meaning to behaviour in performing the behaviour itself. Behaviour is developed through a conscious, reasoned process in which meaning is given to the behaviour at hand.

In the Theory of Planned Behaviour there are three determinants in the prediction of behavioural intentions: attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control.

Ajzen developed questionnaires to measure the strength of the intentions of a person before and after interaction. We have constructed a questionnaire for our research, based on the questionnaires of Ajzen.

Even though an individual may have strong intentions to behave in a certain way, these intentions are not always acted upon. According to Ajzen (2005) there are multiple reasons for this failure to carry out intention: (1) failure of the prospective memory, which is concerned with remembering an intention; (2) procrastination, the deferment or avoidance of an action or task; (3) change of mind - even though an individual may have formed intentions, new information or the re-evaluation of existing information may decrease this intention significantly or even nullify it and (4) the distinction between the hypothetical and the real situation. An individual may have expectations of a hypothetical situation and/or event which are not consistent with the real situation.

In this research we will use both perspectives: the unreasoned behaviour and the planned behaviour. We will find out in what way consultants prepare for the interaction with the client and how they actually behave during the interaction. But we are also interested in how the client and the consultant make sense during the interaction.

2.3 Success and effectiveness

In this research success and effectiveness are related concepts. Effectiveness is defined as ‘the quality of being able to bring about an effect’ (Wordreference.com). In interactions with clients consultants might differ in the effects and results they want to achieve. Sometimes consultants might want to gather information, cooperate to define the right approach, teach the client, show his expertise, convince the client of the chosen method, define the problem etcetera. In this sense a consultant is thus effective and is successful if he achieves the result he intended to achieve beforehand. But as Grönroos (1990) states, in offering services, “it should always be remembered that what counts is quality as it is perceived by customers”. So what is important is what the customer perceives as effective. According to Grönroos (1990) the total perceived effectiveness, is a function of the effectiveness expected by the customer and the effectiveness experienced by the customer. When the experienced effectiveness meets the expectations of the customers, that is, the expected effectiveness, then the perceived effectiveness is seen as good.

It is important to note that the expectations of the consultant and the client are not necessarily the same. It can happen that they differ in their expectations as well as in their experience. It is possible that the consultant considers the interaction effective, because he achieved the result he expected, and the client does not, because the experienced effectiveness does not satisfy his expectations. The reverse can also be the case: although the consultant did not achieve the effects he wanted beforehand, the client perceives the interaction as effective, because it did live up to his expectations.

For this study the focus will be on what the client perceives as effective: the consultant can be considered effective when the client perceives him effective, that is, when the experienced effectiveness meets the expected effectiveness.

The definition of effectiveness as mentioned before can not be captured in one set of the determinants or criteria of effectiveness. Multiple researchers have concluded that there is no general theory, or definition, which addresses the criteria of effectiveness (Lewin and Minton, 1986; Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1986; Campbell, 1977). For the purpose of this study we use the combination of levels of effectiveness criteria identified by Philips (2000) and the framework of effectiveness criteria of Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1986), which are integrated into a management consulting specific list of effectiveness criteria by De Caluwé and Stoppelenburg (2002, 2003).

The list of effectiveness criteria developed by De Caluwé and Stoppelenburg distinguishes between three categories; formal criteria (8 items), content criteria (5 items), and process criteria (6 items). Formal criteria encompass the formal agreements and the structure of the consulting projects. Content criteria on the other hand address the goals to be achieved by the project. The third and final category, process criteria, is concerned with the approach taken in the project. The following table indicates the items contained by the three categories (table 2.3):

<table>
<tr><th>Formal criteria</th><th>Content criteria</th><th>Process criteria</th></tr>
<tr><td>Degree to which goals are accomplished</td><td>The degree to which the client system has learned</td><td>The degree to which a specific method has been used</td></tr>
<tr><td>Degree to which a solution has been found to the e problem</td><td rowspan="2">The degree to which the co-operation/atmosphere is improved, the degree to which communication has improved</td><td rowspan="2">The degree to which an approach is developed gradually</td></tr>
<tr><td>Degree to which consultant has contributed expertise</td></tr>
<tr><td>Degree to which tasks set tasks are being executed</td><td rowspan="2">The degree to which the client system is working more effective/efficient/systematically</td><td rowspan="2">The degree to which the consultant and the client system are equivalent</td></tr>
<tr><td>Degree to which the required resources are used</td></tr>
<tr><td>Degree to which the given time scheme is followed</td><td rowspan="2">The degree to which movement/energy/creativity/scope enlargement has been created in the client system</td><td rowspan="2">The degree to which the consultant provides concrete instructions concerning the activities to be undertaken to the client system</td></tr>
<tr><td>Degree to which the given budget is followed</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Degree to which the client system participates in the consulting project</td><td rowspan="2">The degree to which the client system has been brought closer to a decision point/the degree to which interests have been brought closer to one another</td><td>The degree of frequent communication between the consultant and the client system</td></tr>
<tr><td>The degree of involvement of the consultant and the client system in the consulting project</td></tr>
</table>

Table 2.3 Effectiveness criteria of management consulting (De Caluwé & Stoppelenburg, 2002).

We will use these criteria as an operationalization of effectiveness in management consulting. De Caluwé and Stoppelenburg developed questionnaires based on the criteria as stated in table 2.3. One can use the questionnaires for measuring the opinions about the effectiveness of a management consulting process in general or for a specific assignment or case.

In this section we gave the theoretical background about the variables of our research model. In the next section we will elaborate on the instruments we will use during the empirical stage of our research.

3. Methodology

This section will describe the instruments we use during the data collection and the data processing.

3.1 Research strategy and research setting

This research is a qualitative explorative research, which we execute as a case study. As defined by Brohm (2006), a case study is “an in-depth inquiry into a particular phenomenon, using multiple data collection methods, with the attempt to describe the configuration, characteristics and qualities of this phenomenon”. The phenomenon we are interested in is the consultant, or more specific the consultant in interaction with the client. We include several cases in the research and we used a multiple-case design as described by Yin (2003). The dataset of each of the 18 management consultants involved in this study, are treated as a case. Yin distinguishes two types of multiple-case designs, the holistic and the embedded one. In a holistic case study the global nature of a case is examined. In an embedded one the case study involves more than one unit of analysis. This study can be seen as an embedded multiple case design. Some of the sub-units have already been identified, namely: the competencies the consultant posses, the degree of self-monitoring, the strength of the intentions before interaction, the opinion of effectiveness in consulting (the effectiveness criteria). But as this research is an exploratory one we remain open to possible other sub-units of ‘the management consultant’ that can influence the extent of effectiveness of the consultant. .

The study focuses on 12 management consultants who are involved in an educational program of a large Dutch management consultancy firm and on 6 management consultants who participate in a postgraduate training program of one of the Dutch postgraduate business schools for management consultants. The consultants participate voluntary in the research. The consultants’ ages are between 25 and 55; 13 of them are male, 5 female. There are 6 consultants with work experience between 1 – 5 years; 4 between 6 – 10 years and 8 over 10 years work experience. All consultants are high educated in science or social science (polytechnic or University level).

As part of both programs, the consultants go through the consulting process with clients of a fictive company. The fictive companies (respectively a middle sized manufacturing plant for water pumps and a publishing firm) have a management team consisting four managers: the director (CEO), the head of production, the head of finance & control or the head of the personnel department and the head of marketing. In fact the managers are consultants in daily life but they are very familiar with their role. The situations that were created here, are close to real life.

Both contexts have the same characteristics. The fictive companies have a lot of bad results lately and need help in order to survive. The consulting process in the simulation of the plant for water pumps is about the stage of diagnosis with interviews, the feedback to the clients and an action proposal. The consultancy process of the publishing firm contains a part of the stage diagnoses (interviews) and en part of the stage of action planning finding a solution to the problem(s).

3.2 Data collection

Some days before the simulation the consultants are asked to fill in questionnaires about their competencies, about self-monitoring and about their view on effectiveness of consultancy in general. At the day of the simulation the consultants are handed out questionnaires about their planned behaviour and intentions. The clients are given

questionnaires and they are interviewed about their expectations of the consultant's behaviour. During the simulation the interaction between consultants and clients is recorded on video and written down in an observation script by the researchers. After the interaction the clients give feedback to the consultants and both the clients and consultants filled in some questionnaires.
Shortly after the day of the simulation summarizing documents are made for every consultant in which the data per consultant are described. The consultant is asked to validate these data. Finally in a reflective interview the consultant is asked to give an opinion about his or her performance during the interaction and about possible explanations on the outcomes of the questionnaires.

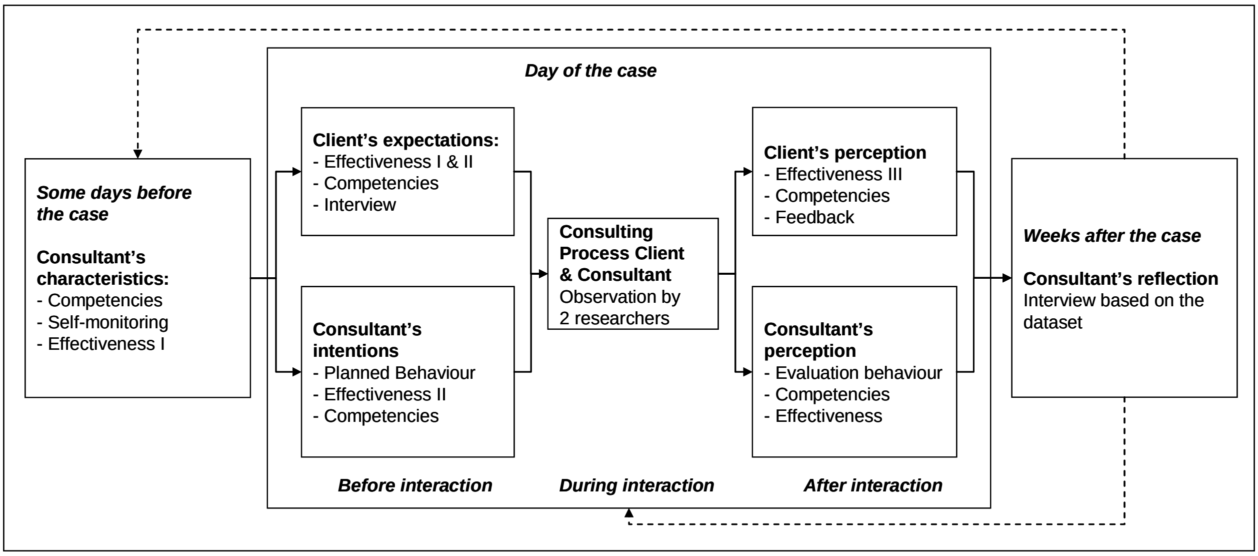

Figure 3.1 Overview of data collection.

An overview of the data collection is reflected in figure 3.1.

3.3 Data processing

De data processing contains (1) the outcomes of the questionnaires, (2) the data from the interviews with the clients and the consultants and (3) the observation script of the client – consultant interaction. The transcripts of the interaction sessions between consultant and client, along with the interviews before and after, are analysed with a qualitative analysis tool, Atlas Ti. For that purpose we made a code book. The codes have different origins; some codes are based on theory (see section 2) which gives us the opportunity to link theoretical insights to empirical data. But some codes are self-created; they emerge from the data. The next step was coding the data.

To warrant the reliability of the coding process, two researchers individually coded the same parts of text and thereafter compared and discussed the choices made, for each part of text. The discussion led to a definitive choice for the use of a code on a particular part of text. Additionally, a third researcher overlooked the process and studied the results periodically. This process that effectively resulted in the final coding scheme was performed in an effort to improve the inter-coder reliability.

Atlas Ti helped us to uncover and systematically analyze complex phenomena hidden in text and multimedia data. The program provides tools that let the user locate, code, and annotate findings in primary data material, to weigh and evaluate their importance, and to visualize complex relations between them.

4. Analysis and results

We expected to see differences in the perceived effectiveness of the interactions, seen from the eyes of the client. In order to be able to explore these differences, we developed a special way of measurement through a yardstick. The position on the yardstick is marked by the client's feedback about:

- The consulting process: the interaction between the client and the consultant;
- The consultant's behaviour: his or her strengths and weaknesses.

The yardstick contains three categories:

- Effective, this means that the client's perception about the consulting process and the consultant's behaviour is mainly positive.
- Nuanced effective, when the client's perception about the consultant contains both positive and critical elements.
- Counter-effective, when the client's perception is mainly negative about the consulting process and the consultant's behaviour.

Table 4.1 reflects the differences in the consultants' perceived effectiveness by the clients:

	Effective	Nuanced effective	Counter-effective	Total
Number of consultants	7	5	6	18

Table 4.1. Differences in the perceived effectiveness by the client.

The 18 cases (consultants) in this study contain 7 cases that are labelled as effective, 5 as nuanced effective and 6 as counter-effective. The next question is how this perceived effectiveness by the client can be explained. Will certain consultant's competencies or characteristics clarify that some consultants are more successful than others? Can the fact that intentions of the consultant and expectations of client are aligned be a factor that can explain success? Is alignment between the client's expectation and the experience during the process an explanatory factor? Are there critical moments during the consulting process that can explain success and what is the nature of those critical moments? The answers on those questions will be given in the paper available in June 2009, because we are still in the stage of data processing.

Right now we can give some results about the differences between the perceived effectiveness by the consultants and by the clients. In this study the consultants were asked about their effectiveness' perception just after the interaction with the clients and some weeks after the interaction, during a reflection interview. Table 4.2 provides the similarities and differences between the client's and consultant's perception.

	Effective	Nuanced effective	Counter-effective	Total
Comparison client – consultant just after interaction		Missing: 1		1
Same perception	4	2	5	11
Different perception	3	2	1	6
Comparison client – consultant after some weeks				
Same perception	5	5	6	16
Different perception	2			2

Table 4.2 Comparison between the consultant's and client's perceived effectiveness

Striking is that though the client's perception is effective, some consultants have different perceptions. Those consultants are critical about their own performance. In fact those consultants are high and very high self-monitors.
But one cannot conclude that high self-monitors are always effective. From the consultants who received the rating of 'counter effective' 4 of the 6 consultants are high or very high self-monitors. One of them did not even recognize the clients' negative perception just after the interaction in the consulting process. In the reflection interview this consultant told us, he was 'out of shape' during the consulting process. After this event he was ill for several months. Long time afterwards he recognized his counter effective performance.
So we can conclude that in this study consultants who act counter-effective have the same perception as their clients.

A section with results, discussion and conclusions will be described in the final paper.

5. Literature

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