



Relational factors in consultant-client consulting for a go-to-market project

FADLI - Amin

BACHELOR'S THESIS

April 2021

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Bachelor Business Administration in International Business

Amin FADLI
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Bachelor's thesis 31 pages

August 2021

This thesis aims to understand the relationship between a consultant and his client during a consulting project. The aim is to understand the impact of the project on the creation of knowledge. It seems interesting to look at the individual and relational factors between a client and his consultant that allow the creation of knowledge. The human relational factor is a complex variable. The objective is to understand the key concepts studied by the experts of the subject in the literature. Consulting is based on the interactions between the client and his consultant. It is therefore relevant to study this relationship and the key concepts. The client describes the problem, and the consultant will try to solve the problem with him. This project is a learning process for the client, and a way to position himself correctly in a new market.

The objective of this thesis will be to answer the question: "What are the relational factors that impact the consultant-client relationship in a go-to-market consulting project? This thesis will include a review of the literature with the confrontation of the ideas of experts in the field. The results of this review highlighted the importance of both parties collaborating with each other in order to get the maximum benefit from a project. It is the collaboration of the client and the consultant that will allow the creation of knowledge. A collaboration requires a trusting and healthy relationship, which allows to create a durable and favorable relationship to the creation of knowledge.

Key words: consulting, go-to-market, relationship, relational factors, collaboration, knowledge creation

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Introduction

The management consulting industry is a growing part of the economy. Both public and private organizations, rely on consulting firms to support them in their transformation challenges. According to a study conducted by Alexis Jouan (2021), the global consulting industry will be worth approximately 178 billion dollars in 2019, which undoubtedly demonstrates the importance of this industry in today's economy.

The consulting market was growing at about 8% per year before the crisis in 2020. With the lockdown and slowdown of the global economy, companies were more cost conscious. This has led to a slowdown in the use of service providers as many have deemed consulting as "non-essential" in relation to the economic crisis. Europe is the continent most affected by this drop, according to Global Research (2020), consulting has dropped by 22%, compared to 2019. The consulting and auditing market is dominated by a Big Four (PwC, Deloitte, EY, KPMG) that represents 73% of the market share.

Management consulting firms are considered "knowledge-based companies" which means that they possess knowledge that is passed on to their clients in order to support them in their major transformation projects. This knowledge is used by the consultants, whether they are beginners or experienced. These consultants represent the human capital of a consulting firm. It is their expertise in a subject that allows them to advise. By providing their services and accompanying their clients in their challenges, consulting firms provide the latter with competence, experience and, above all, creativity in relation to a given problem.

When a company wants to enter another market, it must define its go-to-market strategy. It has only one chance to make a good impression and to start correctly. After doing a market study, it must define its target market, which is different from the one in which it is already established. The value of the proposed offer must be adapted to the market and the selection of the marketing channels must be

thought out. The consultant helps the company on the different steps, in the strategy and in the management.

However, despite this weight in the market, consulting is often misunderstood by the general public. In the literature, experts have not reached a consensus on the definition of management consulting. Experts such as Fincham (1999) describe management consulting as a response to increasingly competitive markets, in order to provide assistance in the strategy of client companies in positioning themselves in relation to their competitors. However, Kubr (2002), management consulting appears as a support to the strategy of organizations and considers the strategy as the factor that allows an organization to move forward. Nevertheless, the experts converge on an aspect in management consulting which explains that the consulting project requires an interaction between the client and the consultant. The customer calls upon the consultant to accompany him in the resolution of a problem, and the consultant helps him and brings his expertise.

Some authors like Qureshi and al. (2013) explained the importance of taking into consideration factors to build a healthy and sustainable relationship with the client. Integrity is one of the values that the consultant must share in order to be authentic towards his client. Werr and Stjernberg (2003) evoked them the importance of the expertise of the consultant. The experts concentrated on the individual factors of the consultant, not on the relational factors. The relational factors are distinguished by the human aspect because it is about an interaction.

1 Thesis Plan

1.1 Thesis Topic

The thesis will focus on consulting, more precisely the relationship between the client and the consultant. Understanding the factors and the environment that enable knowledge creation. The aim is to focus on consulting projects for companies with less than 100 employees. These are projects that help companies to expand internationally and into a new market, known as "go-to-market". Many growing companies want to position themselves in new countries, and this requires a certain amount of research and consulting in order to avoid making major mistakes. Some clients use consulting projects in order to prepare the best possible way for the internalization project of a company. The consultant brings his expertise on the strategy to adopt and offers services to prepare the internationalization of the company. This project is very expensive for companies, and a bad start in a new market can lead to the abandonment of the internationalization project. That is why companies choose consulting to establish market studies but also advice on the positioning strategy in the market that is not known. An internationalization is very difficult, and takes time, the preparation is crucial in the strategy because they are different markets, with specificities, and therefore with different expectations. The case of Macdonald's in India is the most concrete example of a bad preparation and a failure at the beginning. Beef consumption is lower, and Macdonald's took a long time to regulate and adapt a menu for this market. Indeed, the consultant has a crucial role in the strategy and launch of the project. Here, the advice itself will not be the most important. However, it is the analysis of the need and the relational factors which allow the creation of knowledge in connection with the needs of the customer.

1.2 The thesis objective

The objective of the thesis is to understand what the relational factors between a client and a consultant that are allow the creation of value and knowledge in a consulting project in a go-to-market context. It is thus advisable to question the

behavior of the consultant with his customer. The goal is to understand how a client, faced with his business problem, reacts and expresses his needs. Because the more the needs are understood by the consultant, the better he will be able to work and answer his needs. This requires an in-depth analysis of the client's needs and a relationship of trust. By definition, the consultant is external to the company, trust is a major issue for the project to go well. The consultant can reveal confidential information to his competitors, which requires the most absolute professional secrecy. This secrecy requires a relation of confidence between a customer and his consultant in order to understand the needs and the stakes of the project. Within the framework of a go-to-market, the risks can be important considering the stakes. A healthy relationship is built with time, and the goal here is to understand what are the factors that allow to build a healthy and trustworthy relationship. If the consultant is aware of these factors, he will be able to use them in his next projects to create the most added value for his customers, and eventually increase sales.

The objective of this thesis is therefore to understand and analyze the factors that influence the client-consultant relationship in the creation of knowledge in a consulting project.

1.3 The thesis research question

The thesis research question is “What are the relational factors that impact the consultant-client relationship in a go-to-market consulting project?”

A secondary question will be studied on the creation of knowledge following a consulting project. How can the consultant-client relationship enhance knowledge creation?

This is an interesting and relevant question and to date no one has really studied it. The question of implicit factors of the relational order is interesting because it has an impact on the creation of knowledge. The literature on the subject has not studied the issue specifically. The factors of both sides have been studied but

independently, but nobody has yet studied the question of knowledge creation for a go-to-market and an internationalization of a small company.

Werr & Stjernberg (2003) concentrated on the knowledge and the expertise that a consultant could bring to his customer, but they do not study the question of the relational factor of the customer and the consultant. In other words, these two authors studied the question in a separate way from the customer or here it is a question of concentrating the relation between the two actors of the project. How their relation will influence the creation of knowledge within the framework of an internationalization of a company and the opening of a new market.

1.4 Concepts and theory

According to the Oxford dictionary the consulting is: “engaged in the business of giving expert advice to people working in a specific field”. In other words, according to Consulting.com it means that consulting is “the business of providing expert advice to a specific group of people”.

However, there is no consensus among experts in the field on the definition of Management Consulting and Consulting. There are different views on the purpose of management consulting.

Management consulting is a tool to improve KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). The improvement of the organizational structure favors the improvement of individual and collective performance. According to McLarty and Robinson (1998), management consulting by qualified, experienced and independent professionals enables private and public organizations to meet the organizational challenges they face in order to achieve optimal performance. The independence of the consultant allows his neutrality, and thus a point of view different from that of the members of the organization. Kubr (2002) evokes the point of the independence as an essential element to the consultant.

The management consulting is also a way to accompany the customer in the challenges which they face. It is Weiss (1992) who explains that the consultant aims at accompanying the customers in their current and future challenges. It is a vision of the Management Consulting which evokes this will on behalf of the consultant to help to solve the problems of business with its competences and its expertise. It is the first motivation which must drive the consultant. Lippitt and Lippitt (1986) explains that the Management Consulting has for objective to help an organization to take up a challenge by optimizing its resources (internal or external). The consultant is in the project to give his recommendations, which clears him of any responsibility of the taken decisions. It is the independence which allows him not to be responsible for the decisions, it is the customer who decides to apply the recommendations or not. The responsibility of this decision belongs to him.

Management consulting can be defined in particular with the collaborative relationship between the client and the consultant. This collaboration between the two has a role in the success of the project, and for the creation of knowledge. For Gowan (1999), the knowledge is created from the agreement and the collaboration between the two. Another expert confirms this hypothesis. Kennelly (2005), who explains that when the maximum effort is made on the part of the consultant and the client, it allows to take advantage of the opportunity and the possibility to solve the problem. It is thus relevant to study the way in which the consultant and the customer will maximize their effort for the success of the project.

The purpose of management consulting is:

- Find solutions adapted to the situation.
- Respond to the client's request for information.
- Assess the situation to define the problem
- Provide recommendations to the client.
- Assist in the implementation of the recommendations.

Gable (1996) develops a model to measure the success of a management consulting project. The first criteria are the recommendations of the consultant in

relation to the problem. The second is the client's learning about the problem and the future challenge. The third is the performance and the process of the consultant. Gable mentions five aspects to evaluate the success of a project:

- The client's acceptance of the consultant's recommendations.
- The client's satisfaction with the recommendations.
- Client's understanding of the solution to the problem.
- The client's satisfaction with the understanding of the final situation.
- Client's satisfaction with the consultant's performance.

Strategy consulting is one of the sections of Management Consulting. It is the advice that the consultant will give concerning the different choices of strategy according to the resources. The relational factor between a strategic project and management is similar.

1.6 Thesis structure

The structure of the thesis should be divided into several chapters.

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Chapter 1: Thesis Plan

Chapter 2: Literature review

- Section 1: The management consulting
 - o Definition
 - o The management consulting utility
- Section 2: The relationship between the client and the consultant
 - o Theories

- Relationship approach (positive, constructive, critical)
- Section 3: Knowledge creation
 - Definition
 - Advantages
- Section 4: Go to market
 - Definition
 - Factors in decision making

Conclusion / Research limits

References

2. Literature review

The literature review will present the different analyses and explanations of the experts in the subject.

2.1 The management consulting

2.1.1 Definition

It is necessary to understand and define the concept of management consulting. Indeed, if the question is asked in the street to people very few will be able to come up with a definition. The word "consulting" is related to the word "advice" and its unfamiliarity to the general public explains the definition that may still seem unclear to a large audience. As previously mentioned, there is no global consensus on the definition of management consulting. The existing literature presents different views about management consulting. The next lines of this section present these different views.

2.1.2 The management consulting as a support

Weiss (1998), Lippitt and Lippitt (1978) put forward that the consultant's desire was to help the organizations to take up their current challenges and to face the future challenges. According to this vision, the management consulting is thus defined as an accompaniment coming from the outside and bringing a new glance on the situation. The first motivation of a consultant would be his desire to make the situation progress by bringing his knowledge and competences towards the problematic of the client organization.

Lippitt and Lippitt (1978) stipulate that the management consulting has for mission to offer an intervention with the aim of helping an organization or an element of this last one (person, group...) to take up a specific challenge by the optimal use of its resources that they are internal or external.

However, as mentioned earlier, the independent character of the consultant associated with the desire to help in management consulting makes so that the consultant does not decide of the execution of the emitted recommendations. The

consultant's first objective is to provide an expertise, competences as for a given problematic and to support the organization (Weiss, 1998). It thus proves important to make the difference between the role of the consultant who acts as coach or as executor (Lescarbeau, 1998). The final decision to apply or not the recommendations and alternatives proposed is directly up to the customer and the organization.

2.1.3 Management consulting as a problem-solving tool

Experts such as Greiner and Metzger (1983) see management consulting as a tool for solving problems. These authors explain that management consulting allows organizations to make optimal use of internal and external resources. In terms of internal resources, this means the existing knowledge within the organization. This is the starting point for the search for a suitable solution, and thus the development of new knowledge. In terms of external resources, this means external entities that are specialized and able to help them with their current operational or strategic needs. For example, a service provider who could help them with their market research.

Canbäck (1998) sees management consulting as being aimed at solving a specific problem according to three arguments. The first is that management consulting is a consulting process aimed at solving a specific situation in an organization. The second is that it is an objective, neutral and independent process. The third point is that management consulting must provide training by qualified and competent people in their field of expertise. It should not be based only on the personal experience of the consultants.

2.1.4 The management consulting as a way to improve KPI's

Management consulting is seen by experts as having the primary role of enabling organizations to optimize their organizational performance. Management consulting helps to achieve organizational performance by identifying opportunities, improving existing knowledge and implementing significant changes while remaining independent and neutral to the given situation.

According to McLarty and Robinson (1998), management consulting by qualified, experienced, and independent professionals enables private and public organizations to address the organizational challenges they face in order to achieve optimal performance. Kubr (2002) supports this opinion and explains the need for independence of the management consultant. This allows him a neutral status in the project and in the choice of his recommendations. The independence allows him to have a new approach on the problematic, which cannot be the case of the customer.

2.1.5 The management consulting as collaborative relationship

The literature has explored the idea that management consulting can be defined as an active collaborative relationship between the consultant and the client. Collaboration is an essential element to be considered in management consulting because it is this collaboration that allows the success of the project and creates positive spin-offs for each of the stakeholders. For Gowan (1999), knowledge is created from the understanding and collaboration developed between the different stakeholders. Kennelly (2005) echoes Gowan's (1999) idea that it is the agreement between the two that creates knowledge in a consulting project. Gowan takes this theory a step further by explaining that it is the effort of both the consultant and the client that allows them to take advantage of possible opportunities in order to achieve organizational goals. The collaborative and healthy relationship is important to the project. Moreover, it seems interesting to reflect on the transfer of knowledge from the consultant to the client. This is the key element of management consulting and for a go-to-market consulting project.

2.1.5 Management consulting and organizational development

Management consulting is seen as a way to develop the capacity and autonomy of the organization. This allows for the ability to cope with potential changes. Meyer and Stensaker (2006) elaborate on the capacity to change of an organization and show the important and decisive role of a consultant who is involved in this change. According to them, consulting has an impact on the

organization (positive or negative) and its main objective is to enable the achievement of organizational objectives in the short, medium and long term. Kubr (2002) believes that management consulting can both solve an organization's problems and can also be seen as a catalyst for opportunities. It builds learning capacity by creating knowledge and change to develop the organization.

2.1.6 The success factors of management consulting

Gable (1996) described several factors that enhance the success of a consulting project. Several common factors have emerged from various studies by experts in the field over the past twenty years. McLachlin (1999) explains several success factors. The first factor is the most important one, which is integrity. According to him, a consultant who does not show integrity and does not take into account the essential needs of his or her clients impacts the success of a consulting assignment that will end in failure. Qureshi et al (2013) builds on McLachlin's explanation by mentioning that integrity is a characteristic that the consultant must possess. This requires the consultant to have honesty, and a work ethic that ensures objectivity towards the client. That will be beneficial for his customer but also for him because he increases the chances of success of the project and improves his advice during his career.

The other factor of success has been explained in the literature, it is the involvement and collaboration of the client. Indeed, it does not depend directly on the consultant, but the consultant must explain to the customer the interest of a maximal collaboration. What joins the necessity to establish a collaborative relation between the two. The experts are formal on this subject, the implication of the customer is a determining factor of the success of a consulting project.

The expertise also represents a factor of success of a consulting project. The competence of the consultant is an essential factor. It is this expertise which allows the consultant to be legitimate in the eyes of the customer. Werr and Stjernberg (2003) define the consulting companies as a system composed of people having specific knowledge which confers them an expertise and

competences on various subjects and practices allowing them to transfer them to their customers to accompany them in their projects. If the consultant is not an expert, then he cannot advise.

To summarize, several factors enhance the success of a consulting project. Although there is no consensus in the definition of management consulting, the interaction between the consultant and the customer is a crucial element of the project. This leads us to study this relationship.

2.2 Consultant-client relationship

For many experts, the existing relationship between the customer and the consultant represents the important criterion to be taken into account for the success of a consulting project (Fincham, 1999; Werr and Styhre, 2003). The existing literature allows to understand the underlying elements of this relationship. As in the case of management consulting, there are different ways of interpreting the relationship.

The model of role-playing concentrates on the roles played by the consultant and the customer, as well as the impacts on the relation which binds them. Schein (1969) is one of the first of this theory, he comes to analyze the relation between the customer and the consultant according to three scenarios.

2.2.1 Role theory

The first scenario focuses on an expert-client relationship. Schein explains that the customer solicits a consultant essentially to obtain an opinion and an independent perspective in front of a problematic with which the customer is confronted. According to this scenario, the role of the consultant is only to provide a neutral, objective and external opinion to the situation. Daft and Huber (1987) come to confirm this scenario elaborated by Schein. It is about a data collection, but there is no real interaction.

In the second scenario, the consultant has a role more oriented towards the diagnosis which enhances the interaction with the customer compared to the first scenario with the expert-customer model. In this scenario, we refer to the "doctor-patient" model. The consultant is like a doctor, he relies on his experience and knowledge in order to identify and find an appropriate solution to the client's problem. The customer in this model is the patient. In this case of figure, the consultant is able to identify the strategic and operational problems of his

customer. This model requires to have a relation of confidence between the customer and the consultant.

The third scenario is the "process model" emphasizes the distinction of the roles and the tasks of the consultant and the customer. The consultant comes to facilitate the tasks of the customer. It is the competences of the customer which are essential because they will be used as base for the consultant. They will allow to find the solutions to the problem. The consultant provides a structure and a methodology which allows to study the problem and ideas of solution. The customer will play a major role in the identification of the solutions. The interaction between the customer and the consultant in this scenario becomes thus very important and crucial for the success of the project.

The model developed by Lescarbeau, Payette and St-Arnaud (2003) agree with Schein concerning the process model. According to them, when a major change takes place within an organization, the principal actors are the members of the organization concerned by this change. The consultant intervenes only to allow them to overcome the obstacles. Nevertheless, he can act only the members of the organization are ready to accept the change. The most important in this model is the seine and collaborative relation which allows to reach the fixed objectives. Without a sustainable cooperation of the teams there can be no positive impacts.

Pozzebon and Pinsonneault (2012) analyzed three types of client-consultant relationships. The first would be a dependent type of relationship. In this relationship, the consultant is an expert who has the skills to develop a solution to the client's problem. The customer plays here a passive role, he provides the necessary information to the analysis of the situation on behalf of the consultant. The second type of developed relation is a relation of autonomy. The customer has an important role. The consultant acts towards him as a mentor whose objective is to bring an additional help. In this case, it is the consultant who plays a more passive role. Finally, the last type of relation is a relation of cooperative type both an active role and can be "partners".

2.2.2 Learning theory

To allow to better understand the various aspects of the relationship between the customer and the consultant, the literature was interested in the learning and its added value in the relationship. Handley et al (2007) explain that learning allows to create and reinforce a healthy relationship between the consultant and the customer. Moreover, in order to learn from their clients, consultants must participate alongside them (in daily practices) in order to have a better understanding of the situation. For these authors, the customer and the consultant have different practices and thus come to conceptualize the relation between them as a learning which can go in both directions. By taking a close interest in the practices of the customer, the consultant is able to develop knowledge that he did not possess before and that will allow him to be better prepared to help and guide the customer facing the situation with which he is confronted (Fincham, 1999). It also strengthens the existing relationship between the two. According to this theory, active participation is a primary criterion to be taken into account and this can also have an impact on knowledge creation.

2.2.3 A positive approach to the client-consultant relationship

The positive approach in the relation client-consultant is a positive way to approach the relation. It puts in light the important and beneficial role that the consultant plays for an organization and its customer. Alvesson and Johansson (2001) consider the consultant as being able to create a durable relation with the customer and to tend towards an improvement of the organizational performance with the help of his competences and his advice. The literature studied this model, it is the case of the model " expert-client " of Schein. The consultant acts as an expert having skills and knowledge allowing the customer to solve the challenge he is confronted with. The model " doctor-patient " emphasizes the role and the important place that the consultant occupies within this relation. The positivity of his approach impacts the client and helps him to solve his problems and reach his goal.

2.2.4 A critical approach to the client-consultant relationship

Some consider the role of the consultant as being negative, even harmful for the customer and his organization. The supporters of this approach are skeptical about its impact on the customer and his organization. Besides the fact of wanting to bring their expertise to the service of the customer, the consultant would be considered more as an opportunist only wishing the profit to be drawn by selling his expertise to the customer.

Authors have made emerge the concepts "other" and "parasitic" to be interested in the relation client-consultant and can be associated here with the critical paradigm. Clegg et al (2004) mention that the consultant is sometimes perceived as a "parasitic" who only wishes to create a rupture within an organization, by having an impact on their way of proceeding. They based themselves on the vision developed by Kipping and Armbrüster (2002). The consultant is an external party to the organization with a critical opinion to give on the practices. There seems to be a rather pejorative image of the consultant.

2.2.5 A constructive approach to the client-consultant relationship

The constructive approach to the client-consultant relationship focuses on the development of employees and their evolution over time. The discussions logically focus on the knowledge of the expert and the client that will enable the evolution of the employees and the manager. The literature in the field has analyzed the client-consultant relationship and in particular the main goal of the client. The learning and improvement of the client allows to generate benefits in terms of human resources. The process model of Schein previously discussed which mentions the idea that the customer has an important role to play during a project and that the consultant acts here as a facilitator. He showed the importance of the relation between the two to reach a common objective. There would be thus in this situation a learning and a transfer of reciprocal knowledge. The learning theory can also be inserted in a constructive approach, the client-

consultant relationship is a complete learning process with a contribution of knowledge for the client and the consultant.

2.3 The knowledge creation

2.3.1 The importance of defining knowledge

There are many definitions of knowledge, but contrary to popular belief, there is no single definition that is unanimously accepted. Knowledge can be defined in several ways depending on the field, economics, psychology, business... McElroy (2000) and Ruggles (1998) refer to knowledge as an intangible property held by individuals. Other authors such as Spender (1994, 1996), and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1996) agree on the fact that knowledge is a justified belief on which individuals base themselves according to the observations they make of the environment around them.

Indeed, knowledge is considered as an essential element for organizations. For Drucker (1999) the concept of knowledge should be one of the key resources of an organization. The people in the organization have knowledge that is difficult to transfer to an external actor. Drucker puts forward the concept of the "knowledge worker". According to this concept and the studies carried out, what would allow an organization to tend towards a favorable and beneficial development would be knowledge. In order to move towards the development of the organization, it is therefore necessary to observe the productivity within the organization, which is directly determined by the level of knowledge held by the individuals concerned.

The literature and all the experts in the field are for the most part all in agreement on the beneficial role of knowledge for an organization. Knowledge has concrete impacts on the development of the organization. However, authors such as Schriesheim et al (1993) consider knowledge to be an abstract variable whose sole purpose is to explain a particular phenomenon. They minimize the role of knowledge in the development of the organization, but they emphasize the

supporting role of knowledge in understanding and explaining a specific phenomenon.

2.3.2 Individual and collective knowledge

Nonaka (1994) and Spender (1998) were interested in this question of individual versus collective knowledge. Individual knowledge has been divided into three categories developed by Spender (1998). The first is related to information: "know-what". The second category refers to knowledge based on the individual's experience: "know-how". Finally, the third category refers to each individual's own abilities, such as personal skills, talents and creativity.

As far as collective knowledge is concerned, authors such as Blacker (1995) have put forward that this knowledge is the direct result of the organization's culture. The corporate culture is essential to understand the concept of collective knowledge. Spender (1998) emphasizes the importance of individuals who represent the culture of the organization and who would be the very drivers of knowledge creation. Without individuals, it would be impossible to create knowledge.

2.3.3 The human dimension of knowledge

As explained by Spender, the individual has a key role but it is through the validation of the organization's culture. Nonaka (1994) supports this thesis, he even explains that the foundations of knowledge come from the human. According to his analysis, the accumulation of knowledge of individuals in the organization is the element that allows the creation of collective and organizational knowledge. He highlighted three factors that can influence each individual's own abilities. First, there is "intention" which depends on the individual's perception of his or her environment. Second, there is the "autonomy" factor, which refers to the individual's level of independence within the organization. Finally, there are the "fluctuations" present in the environment that

can influence the internal and external interactions having an impact on individual and collective knowledge.

To conclude, knowledge can be broken down into different categories and have an impact at different levels within an organization.

2.3.4 Knowledge as a source of value

Value creation and the concept of value can be defined in different ways.

Damodaran (1996) focuses on the purely financial aspect of value. Here, value creation would be the long-term financial goal of the organization. In other words, the goal of the organization would be above all to generate financial benefits for the entire organization. According to Damodaran (1996), it is possible to rely on the use of several tools in order to be able to measure and evaluate the impact of the value generated by the organization, for example the return on investment (ROI).

However, it is important to say that value is not only a quantitative aspect such as financial ratios like ROI. In the case of management consulting for example, value can be measured by more "qualitative" factors. This is a value that is difficult to measure, but it is often an important element in a consulting project. This is what Løwendahl et al (2001) raise in their study when they found that professional services firms (management consulting) do not rely solely on a quantitative aspect to generate value for the organization. These firms not only focus on their clients but also apply their knowledge to their employees to generate value. This allows for practical feedback on concepts and advice. Moreover, the advice carries more weight when the consultant applies it himself daily.

2.4 Go-to-market

2.4.1 The go to market strategy

Before establishing the go to market strategy, the consultant will start from the existing approach to understand and analyze the strategy. According to Ron Ashkenas and Patrick Finn (2016), the essential step is to focus on the company's existing customers. It is about understanding upfront how the product or service being marketed solves a problem of its customers. Because this is the crucial element, in order to prepare the go to market strategy. This approach is known as "consultative selling". The goal is to put yourself in the customers' shoes, understand their pain and how the service or product can solve the problem. These two authors insist on the fact that the go to market strategy is not fixed, it must evolve over time and adapt to the needs of customers.

2.4.2 Reasons to hire a consultant for a go to market

Consulting is seen as a simplifying role of the go to market strategy. Indeed, for a medium-sized company, this process can be complex, time-consuming and ultimately unsuccessful. A scale-up with strong growth in its local market may find itself in great difficulty in another country. The markets may seem similar but there are disparities that the consultant can help to anticipate.

2.4.2.1 Matching the product to the market

The role of the consultant will be to analyze if the product or the commercialized service corresponds to the market. He will analyze with the help of marketing analysis such as the SWOT, which will allow the segmentation of the market and the customers. The understanding of these models and these analyses will allow a better implementation on the market and a more concrete and targeted approach.

2.4.2.2 Resource gap analysis

The role of the consultant will be to analyze if the budget planned for this project is viable and will allow an implementation in the market. This is an essential point, because it is generally the most important criterion to decide whether to continue with the project. For a scale-up, identifying and estimating a provisional budget can become very difficult and sometimes far from the reality of the country. The consultant uses his expertise and his hindsight to analyze the resources to alert in case of wrong way.

2.4.2.3 Planning the launch stages

The consultant plays his role of adviser, bringing his help with the creation of objective and the steps to reach it. The collaboration between the client and the consultant must be absolute in order to exchange as much as possible, which increases the chances of success of the project. As an example, the commercial objectives are fixed in relation to the country of origin, the objectives are very often impossible to reach. The client tends to forget that the launch can take time, and adaptation is the key element.

2.4.3 The comparison between France and Luxembourg & Belgium

Having experienced the development of a new market for a French scale-up. The objective was to establish itself in Belgium and Luxembourg. The language is French for the region of Wallonia, and Luxembourg understand mostly the French language. Despite linguistic similarities, the markets are not identical. Convincing customers of the new markets was very complicated. There are two languages in Belgium, French and Flemish. Working for a French company, convincing prospects to make an appointment to listen to the proposed service takes a lot of time. Despite the theoretical advice, the operational reality reserves surprises and mistakes that allow you to adapt your strategy over time.

3. Conclusion

This thesis explored and classified the individual and relational factors that can impact knowledge creation.

The literature review allowed us to learn and deepen the concepts. Contrary to the preconceptions on the subject, the definitions are not necessarily unanimous among experts. First, we explored the concept of management consulting. This exploration brought to light an essential term, that of collaboration or the client-consultant relationship. Second, we turned to the client-consultant relationship, which allowed us to understand that knowledge creation would be at the heart of this relationship. In a third step, the concept of knowledge creation was studied. We ended with the go-to-market, exploring how the consultant helped in a project like this one for a company of less than 100 employees.

3.1 Thesis limitations

This research required significant research work. Due to the coronavirus crisis and the health situation, no qualitative studies were conducted. The research was based on the literature and the different concepts studied by the experts of the subject. This study is theoretical, it highlights the divergences of the experts. A more operational approach is difficult because these are fairly closed fields. The opinion of several experts on the concepts and their testimonies would have been a plus for the relevance of this study.

This research is limited because of the subjectivity of the actors. The relational aspect depends on the perceptions of each person, and no study can determine and predict at 100% the behavior of people between them. The feeling and the unconscious are domains that are difficult to qualify, the human relational factor is a complex variable and reserves surprises.

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