

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

**Common vision, trust and collaboration. Understanding the
role they play in contributing to a successful management
consulting engagement outcome: a client perspective.**

Vuyolwethu Nobom Lusu

Student Number: 15389309

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Abstract

The management consulting sector has been growing at an increasing rate and continues to do so. One of the reasons attributed to this growth is the worldwide move towards a Knowledge Economy. The relationship between a management consultant and their client can resemble that of a principal-agent relationship, where the client is the principal and the management consultant is the agent. Given the nature of this type of relationship, there is no guarantee that the agent will always act in the best interests of the principal. However, from a management consultant's perspective, the presence of certain factors lead to an increased likelihood of an outcome that is favourable for both the client and the management consultant, respectively. These factors are trust, sharing a common vision, and collaboration. The researcher sought to obtain a client perspective, and an understanding of why this is the case.

This study investigated the factors driving clients to utilise the services of management consultants and the client perspective, of the role that trust, a shared vision and collaboration have on the outcome of the engagement between the management consultant and themselves. In order to carry out this research, a qualitative research study was undertaken by the researcher. This study was of an exploratory design. Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees at a managerial level in organisations that had been clients of management consultants. The research findings from this study were produced from the analysis of the data that the researcher obtained in the interviews.

The research identified the client factors driving the use of management consultants. This research established why trust, collaboration, and a shared vision, contribute to a successful engagement outcome, as well as how these factors reduce the risks that arise as a result of the agency problem. Interestingly, the researcher also found that collaboration was a significant contributor to the successful outcome of the engagement. Collaboration was found to be enabled when there was a common vision shared by the client and the management consultant. Lastly, collaboration was also found to be enabled, where there was trust between the client and the management consultant. By taking this into account, managers engaging the services of management consultants can pay special attention to ensuring there is collaboration with the management consultant, as this increases the likelihood that the outcome of the engagement will be successful.

Keywords

Management Consulting

Trust

Common Vision

Collaboration

Agency Theory

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare I have obtained the necessary authorization and consent to carry out this research.

Vuyolwethu Nobom Lusu

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Keywords	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction to Research Problem.....	1
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. Purpose.....	2
1.3. Research Problem.....	3
1.4. Research Scope.....	3
1.5. Research Motivation.....	4
Chapter 2: Theory and Literature Review	5
2.1.1 Introduction.....	5
2.1.2 Definition of Management Consulting	5
2.1.3 Characteristics of Management Consulting.....	6
2.1.3.1 Knowledge transfer.....	6
2.1.3.2 Providing Advice and Assistance.....	6
2.1.3.3 Independence.....	7
2.2 Factors influencing the use of Management Consultants.....	8
2.2.1 Resistance to Change	8
2.2.2 Benefits Exceed Costs.....	8
2.2.3 Learning Opportunities	9
2.2.4 Ongoing Assistance.....	10
2.2.5 Uncertainty Management.....	10
2.3 Success Factors for Management Consulting Engagements.....	10
2.3.1 Clear Engagement Scope.....	10
2.3.2 Technical Competence.....	11
2.3.3 Client and Management Consultant Collaboration	11
2.3.4 Good understanding of the client	12
2.3.5 Regular and Open Communication.....	12
2.4 Agency Theory	12
2.4.1 The Agency Problem	12
2.4.2 Agency Theory	13
2.4.2.1 Principal Agent Theory	13
2.4.2.2 Positivist Agency Theory	14
2.4.2.3 Common Vision	15
2.4.2.4 Collaboration	16
2.4.2.5 Trust.....	18



2.5	Conclusion.....	19
Chapter 3: Research Questions		20
	Purpose of the research.....	20
	Research Question 1:	20
	Research Question 2:	20
	Research Question 3:	20
	Research Question 4:	21
	Research Question 5:	21
Chapter 4: Research Methodology		22
4.1.	Introduction.....	22
4.2.	Research Method	22
4.3.	Proposed Research Process and data collection method	23
4.4.	Interview Protocol	25
4.5.	Interview guide development	26
4.6.	Population	26
4.7.	Unit of analysis	27
4.8.	Sample	27
4.9.	Scope	28
4.10.	Data Analysis.....	28
4.10.1.	Qualitative Data Analysis.....	29
4.10.2.	Content Analysis.....	29
4.11.	Data reliability and validity	29
4.12.	Research Limitations	30
4.13.	Conclusion.....	30
Chapter 5: Results		31
5.	Introduction.....	31
5.1.	Results for Research Question One	32
5.1.1.	Independent Opinion	33
5.1.2.	Lack of Expertise	33
5.1.3.	Thought Leadership.....	34
5.1.4.	Transfer of Risk and Responsibility.....	35
5.1.5.	Capacity Constraints.....	35
5.2.	Results for Research Question 2	36
5.2.1.	Clear Engagement Scope.....	37
5.2.2.	Humility, Willingness to learn and Respect	37
5.2.3.	Technical Competence	38
5.2.4.	Client Collaboration	39



5.2.5.	Understanding Client and Key Deliverables	39
5.2.6.	Regular Feedback and Communication	40
5.3.	Results for Research Question 3	41
5.3.1.	Enables Collaboration.....	42
5.3.2.	Ensures Clear Understanding of client and the problem	42
5.3.3.	Enabling of meaningful engagement.....	43
5.4.	Results for Research Question 4	44
5.4.1.	Client ‘buy-in’ and involvement in formulation of solution	45
5.4.2.	Frequent Communication	46
5.4.3.	Understanding Client Culture	47
5.5.	Results for Research Question 5	48
5.5.1.	Maintaining Confidentiality of Client Information	49
5.5.2.	Trust Enables Information Sharing.....	50
5.5.3.	Trust is built and demonstrated by preparation for engagement	51
5.5.4.	Trust Enables Collaboration.....	51
5.6.	Conclusion.....	52
Chapter 6:	Discussion of Results.....	53
6.	Introduction.....	53
6.1.	Discussion of Results for Research Question One	53
6.1.1.	Factors Driving the Use of the Services of Management Consultants	53
6.2.	Discussion of results for Research Question 2.....	57
6.2.1.	Success Factors for Engagements with Management Consultants.....	57
6.3.	Discussion of Results for Research Question 3	61
6.3.1.	Reasons for the importance of a Common Vision	61
6.4.	Discussion of Results for Research Question 4	63
6.4.1.	Reasons for the Importance of Collaboration	63
6.5.	Discussion of Results for Research Question 5	65
6.5.1.	Reasons for the importance of trust	66
6.6.	Conclusion.....	69
Chapter 7:	Conclusion.....	70
7.	Introduction.....	70
7.1.	Synthesis of Research Findings	70
7.2.	Research Limitations	73
7.3.	Recommendations for Management	73
7.4.	Recommendations for future research.....	74
7.5.	Conclusion.....	74
References.....		76

Appendices	80
Appendix 1 – Informed Consent Form	80
Appendix 2 – Interview Guide.....	82
Appendix 3: List of Respondents	83
Appendix 4: Consistency Matrix	84
Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance Approval Letter.....	86

List of Tables

Table 1: Ranking of factors driving the use of management consultants from a client perspective.....	32
Table 2: Ranking of client perceived success factors for their engagements with management consultants	36
Table 3: Ranking of client perceived reasons for the importance of establishing a common vision	41
Table 4: Ranking of client perceived reasons why collaboration between the client and management consultant is important.....	44
Table 5: Ranking of client perceived reasons why trust is important.....	48

Chapter 1: Introduction to Research Problem

1.1. Introduction

The use of external service providers has increased dramatically over the past two decades. This increase has led to the emergence of new organisations that provide services, among others, such as investment banking, IT services and management consulting (Furusten, 2013). As a result of the new organisations that have been formed, the management consulting industry has also grown at a dynamic rate (Visscher, 2006). This growth can also be attributed to the increasing demands of medium and large corporates. More specifically, the increase is as a result of a worldwide shift from a production-focused business world, to a knowledge-focused world (Bronnenmayer, Wirtz, & Gottel, 2016).

The use of management consultants has largely been characterised by the management consultants going in to an organisation to assist with resolving strategic problems its management faces (Greiner & Metzger, 1983). Consulting projects can be very important for their clients. This is because these engagements sometimes enable management within an organisation to determine or improve their competitive advantage. The changes that are implemented within an organisation, with the assistance of a management consultant, should ultimately result in the improvement of management and the quality of their work as well as an improvement in the performance and excellence of the client (Chitakornkijsil, 2011). Management consulting engagements also come at a high cost, and as a result, it is important for both the client and the consultants to have full knowledge of the success factors (Bronnenmayer et al., 2016).

The management consulting industry is characterised by a low level of institutionalisation. As such, the barriers to entry in this industry are minimal, and are very low. The result is that there is an increased amount of information asymmetry that exists between the consultants and their clients, and clients may not always know what to expect in their engagement with management consultants (Pemer & Werr, 2013).

Further to the information asymmetry mentioned above, the relationship between a management consultant and their clients has been likened to that of a principal-agent relationship. The consultant acts as the agent and the client as the principal. The theory informing this area of literature is agency theory (Ben-Gal & Tzafrir, 2011). Agency theory is based on the premise that the principal and the agent have interests that are in conflict with one another (Lalonde & Adler, 2013). The aim of agency theory is to be able to

solve two problems with which the principal may be faced, namely moral hazard and adverse selection. Moral Hazard refers to the case where the principal is not able to ascertain whether the principal has made their best efforts in their engagement with the client. Adverse selection arises where the principal is not able to determine whether the agent has truthfully and accurately represented their ability to do the work that the principal requires (Eisenhardt, 1989). In the case of the management consultant and their client, the risks that arise as a result of agency theory are faced by the client. This is because it is the client who would have initiated the relationship requesting formal help from the management consultant, because of their ability and expertise to assist. As such, the management consultants are in a position where they could take advantage of the vulnerable position that their clients are in (Schein, 1999).

However, despite the vulnerable position risked in these types of engagements, management consultancy is still growing as an industry, where, according to Appelbaum and Steed (2005), “management consulting is here to stay” (p.68).

1.2. Purpose

Given the continuous increase in the management consulting industry, as discussed in Section 1.1 of this report, this research study aims to critically understand the factors driving the use of management consultants by clients. More specifically, this study will aim to gain a client perspective of these factors.

Further to that, the relationship between a Management Consultant and their clients is likened to that of the principal-agent relationship as mentioned in Section 1.1. This is because the client will hire the consultant as the agent to help with a specific problem. The client and the consultant may have different objectives with respect to the engagement, and there is a possibility that the client may have difficulty determining whether the agent has acted in a manner that is appropriate, and that furthermore, the client may not always be in view of the work done by the consultant. The result is that the client is placed in a vulnerable position to assess the services they receive, whereby the management consultant retains an upper hand. As such, this study will also attempt to form a client perspective on the impact that trust, a shared vision, and collaboration might have on the outcome of the engagement. Thus, exploring the possibility that the presence of these factors could have on minimising the effect of the agency problem, as experienced by the client.

1.3. Research Problem

The relationship between the consultant and the management consultant and their clients has been likened to that of a principal and an agent. The problems that arise with this type of relationship are moral hazard and adverse selection. Moral hazard here refers to the case where the principal is not able to ascertain whether the agent has given their best efforts in their engagement with the client. Adverse selection arises where the principal is not able to determine whether the agent has truthfully and accurately represented their ability to do the work that the principal requires (Eisenhardt, 1989). Therefore, there is a possibility that the agent may not act in the best interests of the principal. Management consultants may not always act in the best interests of their clients.

In the context of the management consulting engagement, the agency problem encompasses some misunderstandings that can occur between the principal and the agent. Such misunderstandings are not uncommon. In this context, the crux of the agency problem is that the agent is under no circumstances obliged to act in the best interests of the principal (Fincham, 2003).

Bronnenmayer et al. (2016) performed a study to conceptualise the management consultant perspective of success factors in their engagements and processes with their clients. The antecedent variables to the agency problem within management consulting engagements were identified as information asymmetry and conflicting interests between the management consultant and their clients. In this study, trust, collaboration and a shared vision were investigated as variables that contributed to the successful outcome of the engagement between clients and management consultants, by reducing the effects of information asymmetry and conflicting interests in these types of engagements.

Of interest to the researcher was to obtain a client perspective of why trust, collaboration and a shared vision contributed to the success of their engagements with management consultants. The researcher is therefore looking to gain greater insight in this regard.

1.4. Research Scope

The research endeavours to understand factors that influence the utilisation of the services of management consultants by their clients. The scope of this research also includes understanding, from a client perspective, the role that the client believes that trust, a shared vision and collaboration will have on the outcome of their engagement with the management consultant. Therefore, the literature will cover the areas mentioned above.

1.5. Research Motivation

As an individual employed in the South African private sector, the researcher has observed numerous occasions where consultants were brought into the organisation to assist management with solving a problem with which they were faced, and seemingly unable to resolve on their own. Management consultants have been external to the organisations that the researcher has worked in, and as such, have been observed to have their own objectives and desires. As a client in these kinds of relationships, the researcher often realised that there was no guarantee that the management consultant would act in the best interests of the client. As such, the researcher set out to discover which factors, if present, would reduce the likelihood of such. The researcher also sought to discover the factors, if present, that might encourage the management consultant to act in better interest of the client, and not in a way that might be detrimental to the client.

Chapter 2: Theory and Literature Review

2.1.1 Introduction

The theory reviewed in this section of the report defines and describes the practice of management consulting. This chapter also analyses the factors that influence the use of the services of management consultants. The focus of the theory reviewed is on management consulting, as well as trust, collaboration and a common vision and the effect that they have on the success of the engagement between the client and the consultant.

The following key themes were identified during the literature review:

- management consulting
- the agency problem
- information asymmetry
- trust
- collaboration
- common vision

2.1.2 Definition of Management Consulting

According to Greiner and Metzger (1983), “management consulting is an advisory service contracted for and provided to organizations by specially trained and qualified personas who assist, in an objective and independent manner, the client organization to identify management problems, analyze such problems, recommend solutions to such problems, and help when requested with the implementation of solutions” (p. 7).

Management consulting is also defined as a means by which practical advice and help is provided to clients. The objective of management consulting is to improve management and business practices and processes by assisting management and the executives of an organisation. It is also important to note that management consulting is temporary in nature. This is because clients approach consultants when they are faced with a problem that they are unable to solve, where the consultants will come and assist for a limited period of time. The assistance may be required by clients for various reasons. These reasons will be explored within this chapter of this document. It is also important to note that the client has the right to discontinue the relationship with the consultants at any point during their engagement, depending on the contractual terms agreed upon upfront between the two parties, thus further emphasising the temporary nature of consulting services (Kubr, 2002).

2.1.3 Characteristics of Management Consulting

According to Kubr (2002), the characteristics of management consulting include adding value by transferring knowledge, providing advice and assistance and maintaining independence. The characteristics mentioned above will be explored briefly by the researcher as they provide additional context around the role of management consultants.

2.1.3.1 Knowledge transfer

According to Kubr (2002), knowledge includes experience, expertise, skills, 'know-how' or applicable knowledge and competencies, as well as theoretical knowledge. In the context of management consulting, knowledge is a source of competitive advantage for consulting firms, where it is a strategic asset, and is a way for firms to capitalise on this asset through effective knowledge management (Pemer & Werr, 2013).

Management consultants work with different clients, and as a result they are in a unique position, where they are able to build a diverse knowledge base, built from their experience with each of their clients. This therefore enables them to combine the knowledge gained in different ways, and move it to different places to enhance innovation thereby also improving the competitive advantage of their clients (Pemer & Werr, 2013).

For the successful transfer of knowledge, certain factors ought to be in place, viz. competence, and business integrity. Managers and consultants should have no hidden interest or agendas, and should have a common goal and vision to overcome the problem faced by the client. In addition to that, the managers within the client should have a desire to acquire additional knowledge (Branko, Drago, & Boris, 2014).

In addition, effective knowledge management enables the effective and successful transfer of knowledge. Knowledge management can be defined as a set of business processes that have the aim of creating, storing, and transferring knowledge to give rise to competitive advantage (Pemer & Werr, 2013). In a study performed by Chrusciel (2004), it was found that the ability of the management consultant to transfer knowledge to the client was of more value to the client than the credentials of the management consultant. In addition, the passion demonstrated by the management consultant whilst transferring the knowledge was proved to be even more important than the credentials of the management consultant.

2.1.3.2 Providing Advice and Assistance

Consulting is a professional service, provided to clients in the form of advice. Therefore consultants do not take over from management and run the organisation that they are

advising. They are also not in a position to make decisions in an organisation, because they do not have the authority to do so. Rather, the responsibility of management consultants is to provide management with quality advice. The decision of the client to take and implement the advice received from the consultant means that all the responsibilities that come with such decisions will lie with the client (Kubr, 2002). It is therefore evident that the role of a consultant is that of a helper, and not one where the consultant is required to take away the problems with which the client is faced.

According to Schein (1999) the consulting process involves a helping relationship that is made up of trust and mutual benefit, conceived to help someone to help themselves. In order for the consultant to assist in this auxiliary way, they must always be aware of their objective. The only thing that the consultant is in a position to do, is to provide advice to the client to help them solve their own problem (Lalonde & Adler, 2015).

The role of a consultant is to help the client with achieving certain results and objectives. However, the consultant must exceed the advisory, and extend to assistance with implementation. Therefore, clients sometimes keep using the services of consultants whilst they implement the suggested changes, since their guidance can assist in directing the client as they implement the advice (Kubr, 2002).

The reality of life is such that the party who initiates the helping relationship (in the case of a management consulting engagement, this would be the client/principal), is always in a position of vulnerability. This is because the agent is in a position of power, where the position is as a result of the knowledge that they possess. As such, the agent has the ability to exploit and take advantage of the principal (Schein, 2009).

In certain instances, the role of a management consultant is not only to provide help in the form of advice. Sometimes they take up role of training, acting on behalf of clients and at times supporting the client (Kubr, 2002). Although assistance the client may be broad, and can take a number of different forms, the objective of consulting remains the same, which is to help a client.

2.1.3.3 Independence

As noted, management consultants do not form part of the client organisations that they assist (Appelbaum & Steed, 2005). Ultimately, the role of a consultant is to help management identify and analyse problems and to recommend solutions all in an independent manner. It is important that the consultant remains independent, because that enables them to make unbiased assessments and decisions not influenced by their own interests, or by the impact that the decisions made will have on them (Kubr, 2002).

Kubr (2002) argues that there are five different types of independence. These are technical independence, financial independence, administrative independence, political independence and emotional independence.

Technical independence is where the consultant has the ability to formulate their own opinion with no influence from the client. Financial independence describes a situation in which the consultant is not influenced by the decisions taken by the client. Administrative independence describes a situation in which the consultant is not treated like the subordinate of the client, and where the consultant is not affected by the administrative decisions made by the client. Political independence is where neither the client nor the consultant are influenced by each other's political powers and connections. Lastly, emotional independence is where the consultant withholds personal attachment irrespective of any of the other factors that may exist (Kubr, 2002).

2.2 Factors influencing the use of Management Consultants

2.2.1 Resistance to Change

According to Coghlan (1993), resistance to change is normal, because it requires an organisation and the individuals in the organisation to move from what they know, to what is unknown.

When an organisation is facing resistance to change from within, a management consultant has the ability to bring in an impartial and fresh view that employees may be more likely to be open to accept, increasing the likelihood that the change will be successfully implemented (Chitakornkijsil, 2011). Thus resistance to change from within an organisation may be a driving factor as to why clients may seek the services of management consultants.

2.2.2 Benefits Exceed Costs

One of the ways for a client to consider whether or not a management consultant is adding value to their organisation is by looking at whether they are continuously and proactively bringing about benefit and providing solutions to the client that reflect them having used their budget wisely to develop and deliver such solutions.

Management Consultants want to succeed, and they also want their clients to succeed. The success of their clients translates to value added to their client's business and is ultimately a benefit for the client. The desire for management consultants to succeed is better for their businesses, but it is also satisfying from a professional perspective. As

such, management consultants generally aim to over-deliver. The over-delivery by management consultants translates into benefits for clients (Jackson, 2010).

A challenge faced by management consultants in this day and age is how they can gain and maintain a competitive advantage over their competitors. The best way to gain a competitive advantage is by continuously satisfying customer needs. As expected, clients will select consultants that will provide them with the best possible value. Thus, consultants need to continuously display increased value for their clients. (Chelliah & Davis, 2010).

Consultants ought to charge their customers for the work that they have done, where the calculation of their fee can vary. However, the fees charged by management consultants are usually based on the hours that are spent on a client, on the management consultant having completed the project within a specific time period, as well as within the client's specific requirements (Chitakornkijasil, 2011).

Therefore clients will pay for the management consultant that has improved their ability to succeed, and the management consultant who has provided them with the most value, where these benefits obtained exceed the cost incurred to obtain this benefit.

2.2.3 Learning Opportunities

The presence of management consultants within an organisation adds a new learning dimension to that particular organisation. This is because management consultants use learning as a means to assist their clients achieve their goals. Thus, in practice, evidence of a successful project will be one where staff and management from the client would have learned from the consultants, and as such, will be able to apply and implement their learnings within their workplace, evidencing that they have learned from the management consultants (Massey & Walker, 1999). Clients also have an expectation that the management consultants will transfer their knowledge on to the client staff, in order to enable the client to successfully implement the advice of the consultants (Appelbaum & Steed, 2005).

Therefore, the use of management consultants provides client management with the opportunity to learn from them. Consultants bring with them special technical knowledge, new means to identify problems, as well a renewed ability to implement changes. Ultimately, consultants can assist with improving the knowledge and competence of managers within an organisation (Chitakornkijasil, 2011).

2.2.4 Ongoing Assistance

A reason why clients engage management consultants is that they are able to provide help on an ongoing basis. Staff and employees are not always available to get deeply engaged in work that involves solving a problem that at an organisation may be faced with. The benefit of using consultants is that they will provide the necessary time and they will be at the organisation for a specific time period (Chitakornkijasil, 2011).

2.2.5 Uncertainty Management

It is often said that management consultants are in the business of reducing the uncertainty with which their clients are faced. It is said that they are able to reduce the uncertainty and anxiety of their clients by providing clients with knowledge and expertise. However, it is also argued that using management consultants can lead to uncertainties for the client (Pemer & Werr, 2013).

The uncertainties that management consultants bring with them include, but are not limited to, performance uncertainty and relational uncertainty. Prior to the appointment of management consultants, the client may not have certainty with regards to their competencies and performance. Thus, clients are not able to assess current and future performance of the management consultants. Prior to the appointment of management consultants, there is also no certainty around whether they will act opportunistically or on the best interests of the client. For example, they have access to private and confidential client information that could easily be used to benefit the competitors of the client. Another uncertainty that the use of management consultants brings with it is how the client employees will react to the use of external parties. The use of external parties to solve internal problems may lead to anxiety and skepticism on the part of employees (Pemer & Werr, 2013).

2.3 Success Factors for Management Consulting

Engagements

There are a number of success factors that have been identified for successful engagements with management consultants. These factors will be identified in more detail below. These factors include but are not limited to a clear engagement scope, management consultant technical competence, management consultant and client working together, and regular and open communication between the two parties.

2.3.1 Clear Engagement Scope

The setting of clear engagement goals was identified by Appelbaum and Steed (2005), where they found that this has a direct relationship to successful engagement outcomes.

The requirement is for the expected engagement outcomes to be stated clearly for both the client and the management consultant to agree to the said scope. This finding is further supported by McLachlin (1999), who has stated that in order for there to be a successful engagement outcome, there must be consensus between the two parties on the requirements and expectations of the engagement. The importance of a clear engagement scope is further emphasised by Sulloway et al. (2015), who state that at the start of any consulting engagement it is important for there to be a clear plan in order to ensure a successful engagement outcome.

2.3.2 Technical Competence

According to Bronnenmayer et al. (2016), clients usually seek out management consultants to assist them with a problem with which they are faced. Therefore it is important for the management consultant to demonstrate competence in doing this. The importance of the competence of the management consultants is further emphasised by McLachlin (1999), who states that important for a successful engagement outcome is for the management consultant to demonstrate technical competence. Further to this, Kakabadse, Louchart and Kakabadse (2009) states that the amount of technical skills that the management consultant possesses is directly related to the amount of value that they can provide to their clients. The importance of the technical competence of the Management Consultant is further emphasised by Branko et al. (2014), where they state that for a successful engagement outcome, the management consultant has to be competent, and has to possess an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the client, how they operate, as well as obtain an understanding of their culture.

2.3.3 Client and Management Consultant Collaboration

Bronnenmayer et al. (2016) recommend that management consultants ought to pursue collaboration with their clients. This is because collaboration will reduce any existing information asymmetry as well as any conflicts of interest that may arise. These will be brought to light through their collaboration. The contribution to the success of the engagement is made through collaboration, where the client gives their input towards the formulation of the solution to their problem, thus reducing the likelihood of any conflict and information asymmetry arising, and bringing about successful engagement. Further to this, Appelbaum and Steed (2005) found that for a successful engagement to occur, it is important for the client and management consultant to build a close working relationship, so much so that it becomes a partnership between the two parties. Part of the factors enabling this partnership are where the Management Consultant acts in the

best interests of the client, and where they do not act out of their own selfish desires, that could be to the detriment to the client.

2.3.4 Good understanding of the client

Branko et al. (2014) have mentioned that in order for the management consultant to demonstrate competence, they need to show a decent understanding of the client and of the client culture, as well as how the client operates. This view is further supported by Appelbaum and Steed (2005) who state that one of the factors that will contribute to a successful engagement outcome is for the management consultant to spend some time getting to know the client as well as the environment that the client operates in.

2.3.5 Regular and Open Communication

Simon, Kumar, Schoeman, Moffat and Power (2011) state that the importance of regular communication between the client and management consultant, as this enables the two parties to work closely together, as well as to collaborate with one another to work towards a common and desired outcome. According to Bronnenmayer et al. (2016), the benefit of improved communication as a result of collaboration is that there is a reduction in the level of information asymmetry that exists throughout the engagement.

2.4 Agency Theory

2.4.1 The Agency Problem

There are two problems that can arise in an principal-agent contract as identified by Eisenhardt (1989). The first problem is when the agent and the principal have differing goals and objectives, and when the principal is unable to confirm the work that is being done by the agent. The actual problem that arises is that there is no reliable and accurate way for the principal to determine whether the agent has acted in an appropriate manner that does not disadvantage the principal. The second agency problem that arises is a problem that is concerned with risk sharing. When the agent and the principal have differing risk appetites, the principal and the agent may want to take different routes (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The principal-agent relationship can be likened to that of the client-consultant relationship. This is because the client will hire the consultant as the agent for a specific purpose. The client and the consultant may have different objectives with respect to the engagement, and there is a possibility that the client may have difficulty determining whether the agent has acted in a manner that is appropriate, or may not always have sight of the work done by the consultant. In addition, there is no certainty that the consultant will act in the best interests of the client. This is because the engagement of

the consultant with the client is temporary in nature, and as such, the consultant could focus on the short-term performance of the client, as opposed to the long-term performance of the client (Bronnenmayer et al., 2016).

2.4.2 Agency Theory

Agency Theory developed from the agency problem along two streams, the positivist and principal-agent stream (Eisenhardt, 1989). The two streams do have some characteristics in common, when it comes to the contract between the principal and the agent. In addition, the two streams have certain assumptions about information, people and organisations in common (Eisenhardt, 1989). Agency Theory is built on the foundation that the agent and the principal have differing opinions and that both the agent and the principal will always try to act in a way that benefits only themselves (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

Agency theory also speaks to the delegation of actions or tasks by a principal to an agent. In the case of management consulting, the principal would be the client and the agent the management consultant. The principal gives the agent some authority to make decisions. As a result, this may give rise to the principal facing uncertainty as to how the agent will act. As such, the principal is likely to act in a manner that limits the power that the agent has, where the principal may attempt to limit the power of the agent by aligning incentives, ensuring that both parties have the same interests or other measures that would encourage the agent to not act in a manner that would be harmful to the principal (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

2.4.2.1 Principal Agent Theory

Principal-agent theory research has been focused on the general theory behind the relationship between the two. The focus with respect to this theory has been on determining what the optimal contract between the principal and the agent, in either a behavior-based contract or an outcomes-based contract (Eisenhardt, 1989). The simple model that has been described above makes the assumption that there is an extant goal conflict between the principal and the agent, and that the outcomes can be easily measured, as well as that the agent principal is less risk averse than the agent, which gives rise to a conflict of interest (Eisenhardt, 1989). The argument behind why agents are risk averse is that the agents are not able to diversify their employment and employment opportunities, giving rise to a risk-averse nature. This differs from those principals who have the opportunity and ability to vary their investments (Eisenhardt, 1989).

2.4.2.2 Positivist Agency Theory

Building on the foundation of the Agency theory, the principal and the agent are likely to have differing goals and objectives. The Positivist Agency Theory is concerned with explaining the different governance structures and mechanisms that could resolve the existing agency problem (Eisenhardt, 1989).

There are two proposed manners in which the agency problem can be dealt with in the context of the positivist agency theory thinking stream. The first is to have information systems, where information is easily available to both the agent and to the principal. The thinking behind this is that with information systems in place, the principal will always have knowledge of and access to what the agent is doing, thus reducing the likelihood of the agent deceiving the principal. The second manner to curb agent opportunism is by putting in place mechanisms to align the interests of both the principal and the agent, and having a contract between the principal and the agent that is outcomes-based. The alignment of the interests of the principal and of the agent will reduce the likelihood of opportunism taking place (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The principal-agent relationship can be characterised as a customer-supplier relationship, determined by the presence of asymmetric information. In principal-agent relationships, the client is the principal, and engages another party, who will act as the agent, to perform some services on their behalf. In some instances, decision-making authority is delegated to the agent. Thus, one of the suggestions of this theory is that the hidden intentions, actions or characteristics that the agent possesses. These would be to the detriment of the principal (Bronnenmayer et al., 2016).

Eisenhardt (1989) brings to mind the possibility of making the principal-agent theory practical, and somewhat enables the applicability of this theory by likening it to relationships in business and society. Examples of such relationships are borrower-lender, patient-doctor, and tenant-landlord relationships.

In situations where a principal hires an agent to create value, the agency problem arises. The agency problem is characterised by the fact that the interests of the principal and the interests of the agent are different, and sometimes opposite to one another (Bosse & Phillips, 2016). Another feature of the agency problem is that the agent and the principal can have little information about each other and the work that they are doing, and thus, there may be information asymmetry between the two parties that may lead to both the agent and the principal to act an opportunistic manner that could be harmful for the other party (Bronnenmayer et al., 2016).

There is also a possibility of double information asymmetry existing between the principal and the agent. In this case, the first type of asymmetry is where the principal does not have an adequate amount of knowledge with respect to the costs incurred by the agent to complete the task that the principal has hired them to perform. Another aspect of double information asymmetry is where the principal cannot accurately observe or determine the amount of effort exerted by the agent in performing what the principal has hired them to do. The dilemma arises where the principal may not be able to lead the agent to act as desired, limiting downside risk faced by the principal (Lalonde & Adler, 2015).

On the assumption that both the principal and the agent will act out of self-interest, there are two possible problems that may arise. The first problem will be when both the principal and the agent have differing interests, and in such case where the agent is in a position of possessing better information than the agent (Bosse & Phillips, 2016). This can also be interpreted as being the fundamental agency problem. This is because the issues mentioned above give rise to both the possibility and likelihood that the agent will not act in the best interests of the principal (Bosse & Phillips, 2016).

Bronnenmayer et al. (2016) recommend that in order to contribute to the success of consulting engagements, and to mitigate the effect of agency theory, the principal and the agent should develop a strong mutual relationship. The factors that are required to develop this type of relationship are a common vision, intensity of collaboration, and trust (Bronnenmayer et al., 2016).

2.4.2.3 Common Vision

A successful Management Consulting engagement cannot take place if the two parties (client and management consultant) have not reached agreement on the goals of the engagement, and on the desired outcome. Where engagements are undertaken with the said agreement not having been met, the result is that the two parties will have different expectations for the goals and desired outcome of the engagement. This misalignment may lead to anxiety, tension, discomfort and other potential negative feelings (Schein, 2009). Therefore it is important for the two parties to clearly establish a common vision upfront.

Considering that the future is uncertain, there is no plausible way for the clients and for the consultants to predict what the outcome of their engagement will be. Future performance also cannot be determined prior to the start of the engagement between the client and the consultant. In addition to the above-stated, the consulting sector has a

reputation of non-transparency. As such, there is increased risk that consultants may not act in the best interests of the client (Bronnenmayer et al., 2016).

Developing a common vision between the consultants and the clients is a manner in which the consultant can understand the client expectations, and in order for this to happen, it is important for the consultant to possess an ability to listen to the client and to be able to comprehend their requirements (Simon & Kumar, 2001). In order to enable this process to successfully take place, the client has to be able to articulate and communicate their common objectives in a measurable manner that enables both the client and the consultant to formulate a common vision (Appelbaum & Steed, 2005). The successful development and execution of this vision will only take place where there is good communication (Bronnenmayer et al., 2016).

The clear communication of the expectations and outcomes of the engagement between the client and the consultant is one of the factors identified by Appelbaum & Steed (2005) that contributes to the successful outcome of engagements between clients and consultants. Clients have been found to expect consultants to spend time with their clients working together with them and gaining an in-depth understanding of the client organisation and the problem with which they are faced. The client found that this would enable the consultant to produce a solution that is best suited for the challenges faced by the client (Fullerton & West, 1996).

In a study performed by Solomonson (2012) about trust and the influence that it has on the client consultant relationship, it was found that when consultants work towards increasing the view of shared values between the client and the consultant, the result is an increase in trust levels as well as a deepened commitment by the client to their relationship with the management consultant. This contributes to the success of the overall engagement.

2.4.2.4 Collaboration

The relationship between the management consultants and their clients is crucial for the success of the consulting engagements (Fullerton & West, 1996). The collaboration between a management consultant and their clients will contribute to the success of their engagement. This is because the client contribution and participation is an important factor for the enablement and accomplishment of an appropriate solution for the problem that both parties are looking to resolve (Bronnenmayer et al., 2016). For this reason, as noted above, communication is important and will go a long way in building the

collaboration required for the success of the engagement between the client and the consultant.

One of the best ways to achieve collaboration is by the consultants integrating themselves into the client organisation, and by obtaining the information about the organisation and the problem at hand by speaking to and interacting with people from different parts of the organisation, as this will enable a detailed analysis of the internal workings of the organisation. Where this is not done, it is unlikely that the consulting engagement and project will be successful (Bronnenmayer et al., 2016). One of the characteristics of Management Consultants, as defined by Kubr (2002), is that of independence. It is important that the consultant remains independent, because that enables them to make unbiased assessments and decisions not influenced by their own interests and by the impact that the decisions made will have on them (Kubr, 2002). As consultants integrate themselves in the organisation during an engagement they may lose independence, as they interact more and more with their clients. However, independence is an important characteristic for Management Consulting engagements, as it enables the consultant to give impartial advice to the client.

Clients hire consultants to come in to their organisation for a specific purpose. The consultants that are hired are expected to operate under a specific operating model. The nature of that model does not allow them to work in a fully collaborative manner with their clients. The result of that is that the consultants are usually expected to create solutions and the clients are then expected to use these solutions and tools in their organisation as a solution to the problem that the clients had initially identified (Schaffer, 2002).

According to Appelbaum and Steed (2005) the nature of relationships in management consulting is evolving, and moving towards a model where there is a partnership that exists between the consultant and their clients, and as such, mutual respect is built in these relationships.

The level of management commitment to their engagement with management consultants as well as a deep level of collaboration between the client and the consultant will be crucial to the outcome of the engagement between the client and the management consultant (Chitakornkijasil, 2011).

In the Management Consulting process, it is important for the client to collaborate with the consultant throughout the engagement. In addition to that, all of the solutions recommended by the consultants ought to be owned by both parties throughout the engagement. The result of such an interaction is that, instead of the consultant coming

up with the solution themselves, this type of interaction will empower the client to discover the solution by themselves (Lalonde & Adler, 2013).

2.4.2.5 Trust

Trust is reified in the expectations that arise when there is honest and benevolence in any kind of relationship, and involves interaction between parties, where one party trusts another. Trust is born, lost and developed under the auspices of human relationships and is an integral part of human relationships, as in the case of the relationship between clients and consultants. Trust is indeed a core construct of any relationship (Solomonson, 2012).

Bronnenmayer et al. (2016) state that the manner in which trust will contribute to the success of the engagement between a management consultant and their client is by contributing as one of the factors reducing the presence of asymmetric information between the client and the consultant. Trust will also contribute to the success of these engagements, by reducing agency costs and uncertainty.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, knowledge transfer is a key characteristic of management consulting. Trust is one of the significant factors that enable the effective and successful transfer of knowledge in a consulting engagement. Trusting relationships have been shown to lead to an increase in the amount of knowledge transferred in management consulting engagements (Ko, 2010).

In a study performed by Ko (2010), it was found that benevolent trust has a positive relationship with the transfer of knowledge between clients and consultants. Benevolence is defined by Solomonson (2012) as “the extent to which an individual is genuinely interested in a partners welfare and is motivated to seek maximum joint gain” (p. 58). Ko (2010) found that trust that comes about as a result of competence does not have a significant relationship with the transfer of knowledge in client-consultant engagements. One of the possible reasons the author surmised for this is that clients and consultants will interact with one another on a continuous basis, and over a period of time, thus developing a meaningful relationship. The developed and deepened relationship comes about as a result of increased interaction levels, cooperation and communication. The relationship puts both the client and the consultant at risk. Thus, benevolent trust that was developed was found to be more important than competence trust, because there may be more at stake, and because the management consultants have a greater desire to see the goals of the engagement achieved (Ko, 2010). Thus,

benevolent trust was found to be more important for the successful transfer of knowledge, given that knowledge transfer is a key component of management consulting. Improved knowledge transfer will contribute to the success of these engagements.

Solomonson (2012) found that when consultants focused on increasing shared values between themselves and their clients by working together, the result is that the trust in the client-consultant relationship is increased. In the same study, it was also found that shared values directly influence the commitment between the consultant and their clients. It was also found that when the level of trust within a client consultant relationship increases, there is an increased likelihood that clients will be more committed to the maintenance of a professional relationship with the consultants. Lastly, in the same study, it was discovered that when consultants share meaningful information with their clients, this will lead to increased trust in the relationship. Meaningful information is information that is valued, timely and quality-driven (Solomonson, 2012).

2.5 Conclusion

The literature review highlights the factors driving the use of Management Consultants, the factors necessary for a successful engagement outcome, as well as how agency theory is applicable to the engagements between management consultants and their clients. The main thoughts that arise from the literature review concern the role that trust, common vision and collaboration play in ensuring a successful engagement outcome. These factors contribute towards reducing the effects of the Agency Problem through the reduction of information asymmetry between the client and the Management Consultant as described in this chapter.

Despite the literature covered in this section, there is still a need to uncover from a client perspective more details as to why trust, common vision and collaboration contribute to a successful engagement outcome.

Chapter 3: Research Questions

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this chapter is to set out the research questions as identified by the researcher. The study aims to describe and analyse the findings obtained into meaningful data relevant to the questions posed herein, thus providing a framework for understanding the factors driving clients to use the services of management consultants, as well as understanding from a client perspective, the role that trust, a common vision and collaboration have on the outcome of the engagement. This chapter follows from the insights gained in the literature review performed in Chapter 2 as well as from the key Management Consulting concepts mentioned in Chapter 1.

Research Question 1:

What are the key driving reasons that lead organisations to engage management consultants?

This research question sought to identify the different factors driving clients to utilise the services of management consultants, as perceived by the clients themselves. The client perspective is sought to be obtained from individuals who are in a management position and upwards in an organisation, who have utilised the services of management consultants.

Research Question 2:

From the client's perspective, what are the factors considered to be the most important that characterise their engagement with management consultants as successful?

This research question sought to obtain a client perspective on what they consider to be most important for a successful outcome of their engagement with the management consultants. More specifically, because the purpose of this research is to gain a client perspective.

Research Question 3:

Why is the establishment of a shared common vision between the management consultant and client important for the success of an engagement between management consultants and their clients?

This question sought to understand the client perspective of a common vision, as well as what the client perceived the impact to be of that common vision on the outcome of the

engagement. It also sought to establish whether or not they think it contributes to a successful engagement outcome.

Research Question 4:

Why and how does collaboration between the employees of a firm and management consultants contribute to the success of the engagement with a management consultant?

This question sought to understand the client perspective of collaboration between the client and management consultant, as well as what the client perceived the impact to be of that collaboration is on the outcome of the engagement. It also sought to understand whether the client thought it contributed to a successful engagement outcome.

Research Question 5:

Why and how does the client trusting the management consultants contribute to the success of the engagement with a management consultant?

This question sought to understand the client's understanding of trust between the client and management consultant, as well as what the client perceived the impact to be of that trust on the outcome of the engagement. It also sought to understand whether the client thinks it contributes to a successful engagement outcome.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology that has been used to conduct the study. Research can be defined as a process whereby the researcher obtains specific knowledge through the use of different methods and procedures (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005). The procedures performed are required to be objective, and as such, the procedures performed during the research cannot be informed by feelings or personal opinions.

The literature review includes the views of different authors, who have identified the factors driving clients to engage management consultants. The literature review also includes a review of the principal agent theory, and how it is applicable to management consulting, and also how it is relevant to this study. Lastly, the literature review explores the role that trust, the intensity of collaboration, and sharing a common vision, and the impact those factors have on the outcome of the engagement between management consultants and their clients. This study specifically investigated, from a client perspective, the reasons why and how trust, having a shared vision and collaboration, contribute to the outcome of the engagement between the consultants and their clients.

This study is of an exploratory design. The research methods, research design, population, the data analysis methods and the sampling technique provide further evidence of the exploratory and qualitative nature of this study. This research paper consists of a qualitative study that explores factors driving the use of management consultants by clients, as well as the impact that trust, a shared vision and collaboration have on the outcome of the engagement.

4.2. Research Method

The quantitative study performed by Bronnenmayer et al. (2016) found that the intensity of collaboration and a common vision are have a significant impact on the outcome and success of the engagement between consultants and their client, they also found that trust did not have a significant impact. The reasons identified for this were that trust was found to be more important and relevant for the outcome and success of longer-term engagements and other business relationships, and not so much with the management consulting engagements. The results found by Bronnenmayer et al. (2016) were from the perspective of the management consultant.

As such, the objective of this research was for the researcher to delve deeper into the reasons why collaboration and a common vision might contribute to the outcome and

success of the engagement. In addition to that, it was necessary to understand what role trust plays in this type of engagement. This research was conducted specifically from a client perspective.

An exploratory research approach is recommended when the subject of the research is not clearly understood by the researcher. Exploratory research may provide some answers as to the questions that the researcher has, however, more detailed research may have to follow in order to gain an even deeper understanding of research subject (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The purpose of exploratory research is to gain new insight, as well as to provide some clarity on subjects or matters that are ambiguous. With this type of research, the goal of the researcher is not to reach definitive answers, but rather to gain some insight and evidence that will could be researched in detail in the future by another researcher (Mayer, 2015).

4.3. Proposed Research Process and data collection method

Jacob & Furgerson (2012) state that “researchers may use many different techniques, but at the heart of qualitative research is the desire to expose the human part of a story” (p. 1). People possess the ability to tell stories as well as the urge to tell stories, as such the nurturing of that impulse may bring about some unexpected and pleasant results and revelations (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Thus, the researcher had a keen interest to uncover the client’s story behind the use of management consultants from their perspective, as well as understanding how trust, a common vision and collaboration contribute to the outcome of the engagement.

Therefore, the research was conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews with participants. This was because this type of interview would give the client and interviewee the opportunity to share their story. Interviews are discussions between two or more people, which are held with a purpose. When conducting research, the interviews can be semi-structured, or unstructured. Semi-structured interviews are a method of collecting data where the interviewer has a set of themes that they would like to explore with the interviewee. Some of the questions that are used are predetermined, however, the order in which the questions are asked and the themes covered does vary. In these types of interviews, the researcher also has the freedom to omit or add some topics or questions where they deem it to be appropriate (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews require the interviewee to be prepared, and to follow a questioning approach guided by specific themes in order to obtain elaborate responses

from the interviewees. The focus of the interviewer should be to cover broad themes in the interview with the intention of steering interview in the direction of the issues that the researcher is trying to learn more about (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

Saunders and Lewis (2012) also state that the use of semi-structured interviews is most useful and meaningful for the researcher when the researcher is not sure of the responses that will be given by the interviewee, when the researcher has complicated questions, and when the researcher may have to vary the order in which certain questions are asked, or the actual questions being asked. This type of data collection method is appropriate for the research that the researcher is performing.

Interviews are an important and useful way for the researcher to gain an understanding about a world other than their own. Interviews and communication come with their complications, where the researcher and the interviewee may appear, however due to different backgrounds and cultures, there could be a different interpretation of what is being communicated. It is natural that when different people come together that they will have different views. However, of relevance to this research paper in that regard is that when research interviews are conducted in a careful and well-planned manner, this could lead to the production of a meaningful and insightful data set (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

The researcher held semi-structured interviews with individuals within organisations who have worked directly with management consultants. The individuals that were interviewed were sought through the researchers own network of colleagues, who have worked with consultants within different organisations.

Some of the advantages of holding semi-structured interviews as identified by Qu & Dumay (2005) are described briefly below:

- Semi-structured interviews provide some flexibility as the interviews will be held with respondents at a time that is convenient for both parties;
- The basis of these types of interviews is human conversation. As such, the interviewer has the ability to guide the interview in the direction that will yield the most meaningful results; and
- This approach also allows the interviewees to respond and to provide information in their own way of thinking, and in their own language. This as opposed to the interviewee having to follow a specific questionnaire.

The data obtained from the interviews held with the interviewees was recorded. This was done with the permission and consent (refer to Appendix 1 for consent form) of the interviewee. In addition to recording the interview, the researcher also took notes during the interview as a means of documenting key insights obtained from the interviews with the different participants. The audio data obtained in the interviews was then listened to multiple times by the researcher, in order to correctly interpret and understand what the participants were expressing in them.

4.4. Interview Protocol

The researcher took time to develop an interview protocol that they utilised to facilitate the interviews conducted with the interviewees. An interview protocol is a procedural guide for the interviewee that assists with conducting qualitative research. An interview protocol also includes a set of questions for the interviewee (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

The researcher utilised some of the recommendations made by Jacob & Furgerson (2012) for conducting interviews. Some of the recommendations are listed below:

- Consent was obtained from all interviewees, who signed a consent form where they agreed to the terms of the interview. The consent form contained detail about the research being performed, also informing the interviewee that the contents of the interview would remain confidential, and that they would not be named when the researcher performed a write up of the results of the research.
- The interviews were recorded on a recording device, so as to enable the researcher to retrospectively listen to the recordings and draw meaningful analysis and conclusions from the research.
- The researcher ensured that the interviews were scheduled in advance and that the interviews were conducted in semi-private spaces. So as to ensure that there were minimal interruptions, as well as to enable the researcher to make quality recordings.
- The interviews remained focused, so as to ensure that the objectives of the research were met. At times the interviewer would be required to steer the interviewee when deviating from topics of conversation pertinent to the research.
- Lastly, a recommendation made by Jacob & Furgerson (2012) is for the researcher to listen carefully. This is because, although the researcher is getting to know the interviewee, the point is to gain insights from the interviewee, and not for the researcher to focus on their own experiences. It was important for the researcher to

listen to the interviewee, as this was the only way that they could really gain insights from the interview.

4.5. Interview guide development

The interview guide (refer to Appendix 2) was developed from the literature as set out in Chapter Two of this research report. The interview guide consisted of eight questions. Three of the eight questions had a further three sub-questions. All questions contained in the interview guide were open-ended, so as to enable the interviewee to reach their own conclusions, as well as to encourage the interviewees to share experiences, as opposed to one word answers that sometimes arose where the question that they were asked only required a one-word answer.

The research areas that were covered by the interview guide were:

- the discipline of management consulting
- success factors for consulting engagements from a client perspective
- trust
- common vision
- collaboration and the intensity thereof

The researcher conducted trial interviews with two colleagues who had used the services of management consultants. The purpose of conducting the trial interviews was to test whether the questions in the interview guide were understandable and easy to interpret, so as to determine whether the order of the questions made sense in a way that the interviewee could follow.

The order and viability of the questions contained in the interview guide was considered to be acceptable, and no questions were retroactively removed.

4.6. Population

Saunders and Lewis (2012) define a population as a complete set of group members. The nature of management consulting is that it is highly confidential. Management consultants are used to assist clients with problems with which they are faced, as well as to gain new insights and to gain a competitive advantage. As such, with experience, the researcher has discovered that management consulting firms are not willing to provide lists of their clients. They do this so as to protect their clients, and to comply with confidentiality agreements that are set and signed when consultants enter into engagements with their clients. Therefore, it was not possible for the researcher obtain a full list of organisations utilising the services of management consultants in South

Africa. However, the population of relevance consists of employees within organisations that are confirmed to have utilised the services of management consultants, and as a result, have been the client of a management consulting firm.

4.7. Unit of analysis

Qu and Dumay (2005) state that a said population will be made up of the different units of analysis about which the researcher would like to make conclusions. The unit of analysis for the purposes of this research paper is the individuals who have utilised the services of management consultants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the individuals who formed part of organisations that utilised the services of management consultants. This study explored the influence that trust, a shared vision and collaboration have on the outcome of the engagement from a client perspective. This is considered to be appropriate because an organisation is made up of individuals, and it is individuals within the organisation that make decisions to utilise the services of management consultants.

4.8. Sample

According to Saunders & Lewis (2012), collecting data from a sample is simpler than trying to collect data from a whole population. As such, the researcher followed an approach where a sample of respondents was selected to take part in this research.

The decision as to whether or not to use probability or non-probability sampling was determined by the level of access that the researcher had to the population as defined in this chapter of this research report. Probability sampling involves a number of techniques, where random selections are made from a full population. When probability sampling is performed, each member of the population has an equal chance of selection. On the other hand, non-probability sampling involves a number of sampling techniques, where a whole list of the population is not available and as such, each member of the population does not have an equal chance of selection (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

This study thus followed a non-probability sampling approach. The result is that the conclusions that are drawn based on the sample selected cannot be applied to the entire population of organisations who utilise the services of management consultants.

The type of non-probability sampling approach that will be used is a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling involves the researcher using their judgment to actively select participants that they consider to most suitable to help with answering the research questions, as well as with meeting the said research

objectives. Purposive sampling is also used when the researcher is trying to understand what is happening (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

Purposive sampling is the most important type of non-probability sampling. This is because, in this type of research, the researcher will rely on their experience and on their skills and know how to deliberately identify units of analysis in a meaningful manner. At times, with this type of sampling approach, the sample selected purposively may be considered to be representative of the relevant population (Welman et al., 2005).

Purposive sampling was relevant for this study because the researcher utilised the networks obtained through work engagements and through interactions with influential individuals in organisations who have made the decision to utilise the services of management consultants.

Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method that is used when it is difficult to identify the members of a given population. The way that this type of sampling method works is that after the first member of the sample is identified, the other members of the population are identified by the sample members who had been previously selected (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Given the confidential nature of management consulting, it was not easy for the researcher to identify parties that could be interviewed. As such, the researcher took the opportunity to ask some interviewees if they had any knowledge of other parties who had utilised the services of management consultants. In that manner, more samples were identified and selected.

4.9. Scope

The scope of this research was limited to individuals who have worked with management consultants.

4.10. Data Analysis

This study was a qualitative study. Thus, qualitative data was obtained as part of the data collection process. Qualitative data falls into the categories of textual and non-textual data, respectively. Text data is made up of words that have been recorded and words that have undergone word processing (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The researcher collected audio data during the semi-structured interviews, and transcribed the interviews, thereby converting the audio data into textual data.

The data obtained during the interviews was recorded with the consent of the interview participants. The researcher took notes during the interviews that took place and also used that as a basis of collecting and gathering data. In order to bring the research

process together, the researcher analysed the data that was collected. The researcher utilised content analysis to understand the data that was collected during the interviews.

4.10.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

All the interviews that took place were recorded by the researcher. The recordings were subsequently transcribed and used to assist the researcher to perform an analysis of the data that had been gathered.

According to Mayer (2015), “qualitative research works with open questions, which might change during the course of research. The flexible nature of this approach is an important characteristic”. This gave the researcher the opportunity and flexibility to build insights acquired in previous interviews to latter interviews, thereby being able to continually refine the interview process.

4.10.2. Content Analysis

Similar to the definition above, content analysis is defined as a technique and method that is used for the gathering of data, a process involving coding qualitative or quantitative data. The purpose of coding the data is to identify any patterns that may exist or emerge that may be useful for the purposes of the research being conducted by the researcher. Ultimately, the purpose will be to identify any themes and patterns that may arise during the interviews with the interviewees (Guthrie, Yongvanich, & Ricceri, 2004).

Qu and Dumay (2005) recommend content analysis as one of the methods of analysing qualitative data, describing content analysis as a quantitative analysis of qualitative data. This technique involves counting the frequencies of certain words as well as sequencing certain words that come up in the interview. The purpose of doing this is to identify any keywords or themes that may arise from this exercise. During this process, certain words that are found to appear a number of times in the transcript will be identified, and then presented in the form of a frequency table. The purpose of doing this is to identify any trends that may arise from the interviews.

4.11. Data reliability and validity

In order for data to be considered to be reliable, there needs to be a demonstrated precision and consistency in the research methodology used and applied by the researcher. Thus, to demonstrate that there was reliability in the process undertaken, the researcher tried to standardise the questions asked in each interview. This enabled the researcher to consistently collect data to answer the research questions throughout the research process. For validity of the data obtained in the research process, the

researcher was required to demonstrate that the research process used was credible or trustworthy. Qualitative research conducted by means of interviews gives rise to the risk and possibility of the data interpretation process being biased to the researchers own assumptions and views in order to mitigate bias. The researcher obtained an independent perspective of the data interpretation process undertaken to analyse and interpret the data.

4.12. Research Limitations

It was important for the researcher to identify and to take note of the limitations on the intended design of the research. As such, the limitations are described below:

- Given that this study utilised non-probability sampling methods, the result is that the conclusions drawn could only be applied to the population from which the sample was drawn.
- The work performed in the area of management consulting is highly confidential in nature. The services provided to clients enable them to solve problems, and among other things, to design their strategy and gain a competitive edge and advantage. As such, there was a risk that the interviewees were not comfortable enough to provide either the quality or the in-depth information required to successfully complete this research paper.
- When data analysis takes place, there is a risk that potential bias may take place. This bias arises as a result of the perspectives that the researcher holds as well as on how they interpret the data that was obtained during the interviews. This therefore necessitated the need for the researcher to use a solid theoretical base to form the foundation of this research paper.

4.13. Conclusion

The design of this research methodology was set out so as to meet the objectives outlined in Chapter 1 of this research paper. The research conducted gathered different insights from academic literature and the insight that was gained was used to form critical conclusions on the data obtained.

Chapter 5: Results

5. Introduction

The results in this chapter are laid out in accordance with the research questions in Chapter 3. The key findings and observations are discussed in detail for each research question. The approach followed for conducting this research was to perform semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are by definition set out in a way that enables both the researcher and the interviewee to cover specific themes and to cover certain questions. However, given the flexible nature of the interviews, this allowed the researcher the opportunity to discover other findings that may be of interest and that were not initially part of the research.

The data that was collected from the twelve face-to-face interviews was analysed using the content and frequency technique. This technique is appropriate for the analysis of textual data. This technique was performed to identify any common themes that arose. Additionally, customised coding was utilised to analyse the responses received from the respondents. This process required between twenty-five to sixty minutes of interview time as undertaken as per the interview guide set out in Appendix 2. Thereafter, content analysis was performed on the interview data. Each interview required roughly one hour of content analysis.

The content analysis was performed using a template that was created on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This method allowed for each newly identified concept to be captured in a row alongside the relevant research question, thereby allowing the researcher to perform a detailed analysis of the data obtained.

Given the nature of qualitative research, as the interview process and content analysis process developed, the researcher was able to gain a more detailed understanding of the topic at hand. As such, the researcher was able to identify new concepts related to the client's perceived success factors of the engagement between a management consultant and their clients, as well as the role that trust, collaboration and a shared vision plays on the engagement and the outcome thereof. For each construct and concept that was identified, the importance of each was ranked according to frequency analysis, and thereafter rank ordered from highest to lowest based on the frequencies.

5.1. Results for Research Question One

What are the key driving reasons that lead organisations to engage management consultants?

Research question one considered the factors driving clients to utilise the services of management consultants. The researcher identified a number of factors driving clients to utilise the services of management consultants. The respondents each raised certain factors, and each factor was ranked (as per Table 1) based on how many times the specific factor was mentioned by the respondents throughout the interviews conducted by the researcher.

Table 1: Ranking of factors driving the use of Management Consultants from a client perspective

Ranking	Factors driving the use of Management Consultants	Total Counts
1	Independent Opinion. An independent opinion carries more credibility than an opinion from management as it comes from an impartial and independent party. Therefore the opinions and findings from the management consultants are objective and more credible.	13
2	Lack of internal expertise. Management did not have the knowledge, expertise and experience required to solve the problem at hand. The management consultants possessed these characteristics and as such were able to assist the client with solving their problem.	12
3	Thought leadership. Management consultants have the benefit of working with a number of different clients. Thus obtaining and developing up to date expert knowledge in certain disciplines. Thereafter applying the knowledge and expertise to their clients.	9
4	Risk and responsibility transfer. Where internal management was afraid of the risk associated with making certain decisions. Management consultants were hired, thus transferring the risk associated with decision-making to the management consultant.	7
5	Capacity constraints. Management did not have the capacity within their teams and organisations to complete the tasks at hand.	5
6	Cost Benefit. In some instances company management found it cheaper to utilise the services of management consultants than to utilise their own resources.	3
7	Flexibility. The use of management consultants enabled the client staff to continue with their day jobs, whilst the management consultants worked on the problem or project that they were hired for.	2

Only the factors that were mentioned five or more times were deemed to be significant, and are discussed in more detail below.

5.1.1. Independent Opinion

In total, the independence of the opinion provided by management consultants was mentioned thirteen times. The importance of an independent opinion as stressed by the respondents is demonstrated below:

- *“I have found that it is. I think actually it depends, sometimes it is a lot easier to get ‘buy-in’ and for people to except the results if it’s from an external party and if management went and did it or we did it in-house. It’s easier for people to accept that it if someone else is saying it.”*
- *“You do what you do and you go. But they experience issues where the people become entrenched in the problem, so they become too much a part of the organisation and the fore they can’t be objective and unbiased...”*
- *“... especially if I’m trying to tell you this is the positive impact I’ve had in your life. It’s more credible if someone else tells you. You know, so to get that objective view.”*
- *“I think we had to do that in order to ensure that it was with a level of independence, so that you don’t have us assessing ourselves: whether we were fit for purpose. So you have independence, we are removed from the process.”*
- *“Independence is important, because if we then have to report back to the board, they need to now that we didn’t put our finger in there and influence the results to achieve a certain direct that we wanted.”*

5.1.2. Lack of Expertise

The lack of internal expertise as a reason for utilising the services of management consultants was mentioned twelve times by the respondents. It was highlighted that often, organisations do not have the expertise that is required to solve the problem with which management may be faced. The views of the respondents were as follows:

- *“... because management did not have the expertise to do it or the skills and we also needed an external service provider to tell us. Basically in terms of you reaching your strategic objectives, these are the kind of people that you need...”*

- *“...we have a shortage in that from the management team, so we needed a party to bring those expertise into the organisation.”*
- *“...essentially, there wasn’t anyone within our current team who’d have the expertise to do this.”*
- *“I think the issue was around internally, there wasn’t anyone with the skill enough to do that kind of work, so that skill could only be obtained from the outside.”*
- *“It allows me to bring in very skilled resources that I don’t necessarily have. It allows me to utilise some of my very skilled people or anyone it could be that I’m teaching grads or we are teaching grads to really get up to speed on a particular technology, so while they are learning you back for with additional support.”*

5.1.3. Thought Leadership

Thought leadership was mentioned a total of nine times during the interviews with the respondents. The belief from the respondents was that management consultants gained experience and obtained knowledge through their interactions with their different clients. As such, the information obtained from each of the clients could be used to provide thought leadership to the said client. The views of some of the respondents are reinforced below:

- *“The second reason why you would potentially get a consultancy in is for thought leadership. Obviously, they have a lot of insight into what happens at different clients. And what’s the trends in the market etc. So they can provide you with that though leadership.”*
- *“...it was purely that they were the subject matter experts of this area...”*
- *“...so I would bring in a consultant, because of the extreme knowledge gained on various other engagements, something that I might not have here all right in the building.”*
- *“...we didn’t go through the thinking from scratch when someone else had already done it, so that was part of getting them in, was to assist us in the thinking process of how you formulate a decision around this, knowing that they had done it before*

with multiple banks, that we could learn from what they had learnt over those times rather than we do it ourselves.”

5.1.4. Transfer of Risk and Responsibility

The transfer of risk and responsibility from the client to the consultant was mentioned seven times. The respondents believed that if management consultants were brought in for a particular reason, the risk associated with a particular task or decision would be transferred from management to the management consultant. The views of the respondents are as cited below:

- *“...70 to 80 percent of the time consultants have come in, they’ve come in in my perspective for the wrong reasons, its managers abdicating their responsibility, making decisions and then they farm it out to consultant.”*
- *“...they are big in terms of outsourcing tasks where they don’t want to take the risk; so part of that was realised through using management consultants, they extensively use consultants...”*

5.1.5. Capacity Constraints

Capacity constraints were mentioned five times by the respondents as a reason for the utilisation of the services of management consultants. Respondents stated that often, they did not have the excess capacity that was required to solve a specific problem or to perform a said task. Thus, in those circumstances, external management consultants were brought in to assist. The views of the respondents, as further stressed below:

- *“...one of the reasons why you want to use consultancy is because you don’t have the capacity and you want someone to come in to provide you with that professionalism and then to actually do the leg work for you. But you are kind of directing them in terms of what you want done...”*
- *“Yes, we do not have or at the time we did not have the capacity, we thought that we didn’t have capacity to do this thing on our own, we thought that a consulting firm that has been exposed to what the competition is doing, exposed to the world trends and there is a collection of insights and views within a management consultancy.”*

5.2. Results for Research Question 2

From the Client’s perspective, what are the factors considered to be the most important in characterising their engagement with management consultants as having been successful?

Research question two sought to obtain a client perspective regarding the factors that are considered to be the most important in order to classify an engagement as being successful. The factors identified by the respondents were then ranked according to how many times the said factor was mentioned by the respondents in the interviews. The higher-ranking factors were then deemed more likely to have a broader acceptance as a success factor for the engagement between clients and management consultants.

Seven factors were identified as contributing to a successful outcome of the engagement between a management consultant and their client. The responses are further analysed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Ranking of Client perceived success factors for their engagements with management consultants

Ranking	Client perceived success factors	Total Counts
1	Clear engagement scope. Management consultant meeting and understanding the client and engagement objectives as set out at the start of the engagement within the required time frame. Management consultant understanding key deliverables.	27
2	Humility, willingness to learn and respect. Management consultant having the ability and openness to learn by taking input from the client and using those learnings to contribute to success of engagement. Client openness to learning from management consultant.	19
3	Technical competence. Management consultant demonstrating relevant technical knowledge. Management consultant also taking learning from previous other engagements, and applying that to the client in a manner that is also relevant to the client.	15
4	Collaboration with client. This involved the client and the management consultant working together throughout the engagement to reach a common desired outcome.	13
5	Understanding of client and key deliverables. Proposed solutions to be tailored to specific client needs and not providing the client with generic feedback.	12
6	Regular feedback sessions and communication. Client and management consultant having regular feedback sessions and status update meetings to assess the progress of the engagement. Constant communication and engagement on progress and problems.	6

7	Quality results and feedback. The management consultant providing the client with the kind of feedback that they will be able to implement productively.	5
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Only the factors that were mentioned more than five times were deemed to be significant, and are discussed in more detail below.

5.2.1. Clear Engagement Scope

Based on the frequency analysis performed and on the ranking of the success factors as identified by the respondents, a clear engagement scope was ranked highest. It was therefore identified as the most important factor for the successful outcome of the engagement between a client and management consultant. Clarity of the engagement scope was mentioned twenty seven times by the respondent. Some of the views of the respondents are below:

- *“...what do you want as an outcome must be very clear as to outcomes that you want to try and achieve and then you need to have it right in your mind as to what are you bringing them in for is it capacity to do some leg work for you or is it thought leadership, you must be very clear as to why you want to have them on board.”*
- *“So, for me, it’s setting out my expectations, articulate them clearly to the consultant, and up-skilling them in terms of my operating environment.”*
- *“I think it is important for you know the client – which in this case was us – as well as the management consultant to be clear on the goals, and why they have they been brought in.”*

5.2.2. Humility, Willingness to learn and Respect

The importance of humility, the willingness of the management consultant and the client to learn from each other, respect and other soft skills were mentioned nineteen times by the respondents. Some of their views are documented below:

- *“So ‘the how’ are your more your softer skills so in the manner of which they engaged with the respected stakeholders. Their presentation skills, their appearance, do they and are they able to present well?”*

- *“Honesty, around whether it is quality work that is coming out of the time that they have been given and the business, so that the business does not necessarily end up paying too much for something that is worthless...”*
- *“I think one of the biggest characteristics that you need management consultants to have is humility, and I know it works both ways, we also need to be humble in our approach.”*
- *“...it’s not just for expertise, but even if it is that I think you need humility on both sides to listen.”*
- *“...the willingness of both sides, to understand you have strengths in certain areas, I don’t, and so we need each other...”*
- *“...so when people come in thinking that they are the messiahs, or the saviours, and they’re going to ‘fix it’, it doesn’t go down well. So the people that I found make the biggest difference are the ones who want to know us and understand us...”*

5.2.3. Technical Competence

Technical competence was mentioned fifteen times by the respondents. They stated that in most cases, the management consultants were brought in to the organisation to assist because of a specific competence that they possess that the client does not have. Thus, for the success of the engagement, it is important for the management Consultant to demonstrate and utilise that competence during their engagement with the client. The views of some of the respondents are detailed below:

- *“So my view is that naturally we expected consultants to be technically competent in that field of work that you’ve hired him or her to do.”*
- *“...you being technically able to do your job, I take that for granted.”*
- *“So what made it successful is the fact that the management consultants have a very strong regulatory understanding. A very strong understanding of our framework having worked extensively with the group, so they have a clear understanding of group requirements and also of our regulatory requirements.”*

- *“We were acquiring IP and that was the critical success factor, they were undisputed experts in this area.”*

5.2.4. Client Collaboration

Collaboration between the management consultant and the clients was mentioned thirteen times by the respondents. Respondents highlighted the fact that collaboration would facilitate ‘buy-in’ at the different levels that exist within an organisation. Collaboration was also said to contribute to a successful outcome, because it would enable client to have sight of the work of the management consultant as such when it came to the implementation of the suggestions of the management consultants, the client would have been involved in the development of the solutions, and as such, they would be easier to implement.

- *“I found that the more successful ones are where the consultants come in and work with us and not work ‘at’ us, if you know what I mean.”*
- *“...members of staff knew why these consultants have been brought in and to encourage the members of staff to support the consultants...”*
- *“...that in the end, actually was a critical success factor behind this, we had committed executives available at points of time to make decisions.”*
- *“So it’s very key to enhance collaboration to ensure that throughout the entire organisation, there’s a full understanding of the importance of the exercise and what exactly is being achieved.”*

5.2.5. Understanding Client and Key Deliverables

Understanding the client and the key deliverables was mentioned twelve times by the respondents. The respondents felt that when the management consultant had a better understanding of the client, they were able to better serve the client’s needs, leading to a successful engagement outcome. The views of some of the respondents are documented below:

- *“I would say that really important is for the consultant to understand us. For them to understand us and our specific circumstances, our specific situation, our specific nuances and to really get why we do what we do. I find that make a really big*

difference, because once they get that, they understand why we are trying to do this and how they fit in.”

- *“So I think for me one of the success factors would be for the consultant to understand the clients’ needs, not try and go there and say: ‘I’m the consultant I know this stuff, I’ve studied this and I’m the expert this is what you need to do’. But to actually engage with the client and understand what their needs are and bring their expertise in in that respect.”*
- *“What was important for me was the client coming in, understanding my requirements.”*
- *“...and what I particularly liked was the fact that they were not coming with a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, but understanding what was important for me, was that the management consultants were understanding my business and what my organisation wanted, they tailored that for my business and that for me was a winner.”*
- *“...their willingness to invest the time to learn, to understand; that because they didn’t come in and say: ‘no but we know your business, we know this and that’; they were willing to come in and engage at all levels to get that understanding.”*
- *“...at the end of the engagement, a success factor is about what they delivered compared to the initial scope...”*

5.2.6. Regular Feedback and Communication

Regular feedback and communication was mentioned six times by the respondents as a factor important for contributing to the success of the engagement between a management consultant and their clients. It was generally expressed that the feedback enables the management consultant and the client to continually assess whether they are still on the same page, and whether they still have the same understanding of the desired outcome of the engagement. Some of the views of the respondents are listed below:

- *“...they’re very willing to engage and meet with you weekly and produce reports.”*

- *“I think it's like any relationship. It's about the communication, about the feedback, about the understanding, and then being willing to accept that I can learn something from here.”*
- *“Communication is extremely important. So you don't come to me at the end of three months and say, ‘oh, by the way we had problems with this at the beginning of the project’. I think understanding it, working together, and having this regular feedback is very important.”*
- *“There needs to be constant and regular communication.”*

5.3. Results for Research Question 3

Why is the establishment of a shared common vision between the management consultant and client important for the success of an engagement?

When asked whether a common vision was important for the successful outcome of the engagement between a management consultant and their client, all respondents answered yes. This research question seeks to understand on a deeper level why this is the case. The responses obtained from the respondents was analysed and organised with the use of frequency analysis. Table 3 below shows the results of this analysis.

Table 3: Ranking of client perceived reasons for the importance of establishing a Common Vision

Ranking	Client-perceived reasons for importance of establishing a common vision	Total Counts
1	Ensures clear understanding of client problem by both parties. Enables management consultant to provide valuable feedback as they have a clear understanding of the client problem.	14
2	Enables collaboration. A common vision makes it easier to work together to reach the desired engagement outcome. As a result, due to combined efforts, there are reduced costs, and the quality of the output is better.	12
3	Fosters robust engagement. This enables the client and management consultant to engage deeply over the issue at hand, until they are in agreement of what the vision for the engagement is.	10
4	Incentive alignment and performance assessment. Establishing a common vision enables the alignment of incentives between the two parties as well as forms the basis for the parameters to be used for assessing the performance of the management consultant.	4

The factors ranked from 1 to 3 were considered to be the most significant factors when it came to this research question. As such they are discussed below.

5.3.1. Enables Collaboration

It was mentioned twelve times by the respondents directly and indirectly that the importance of a common vision is that it enables collaboration between the management consultant and their client. This was said to be because when two parties have established that they have the same end goal, it makes it easier for them to work together towards the desired end-point. The views of some of the respondents are below:

- *“So having that common vision makes it easier for me, for ‘you and me’ to work together.”*
- *“Because consultants don’t know your business as well as you do and you speak a different language to them. And you need to be quite certain that you know what you want to try and achieve out of the engagement. To spend time on that and then that drives your vision for what you want to see as an outcome for that.”*
- *“...if they believe in the vision, they will collaborate...”*

5.3.2. Ensures Clear Understanding of client and the problem

The respondents stated fourteen times that having a shared common vision was important as it ensured that both parties had a good understanding of what the desired outcome of the engagement was. In addition to that, respondents also mentioned that it was important for the management consultant to also have a good understanding of the client, as that would aid their acquisition of the common vision for the engagement. The views in this regard of some of the respondents are below:

- *“I would say that really important is for the consultant to understand us. For them to understand us and our specific circumstances, our specific situation, our specific nuances, and to really get why we do what we do. I find that make a really big difference, because once they get that, they understand why we are trying to do this then and how they fit into this thing.”*
- *“...it’s a case of having a similar understanding of what the problem is or the task at hand.”*

- *“It’s critical, because someone may go off and on a tangent, and ultimately, you want them to prepare a product, which is what you were looking for.”*
- *“...you don’t just want to engage with management consultants without having a clear understanding of why you want to bring them in...”*
- *“I think when you have different stakeholders thinking you trying to solve different problems, you are really setting yourself up for failure. There’s got to be a common vision and a common understanding of what you are trying to solve for.”*
- *“It’s investment in time for me, it’s an investment in just explaining to them what my pain points are, what it is that I envision the end goal to be, and so for me, it’s just making sure that we on the same page, making sure that we’ve got an alignment in terms of the end goal, we’ve got an alignment.”*

5.3.3. Enabling of meaningful engagement

It was mentioned fourteen times by the respondents that when there was a common vision between the two parties, where robust and engagement and debates took place. These enabled the management consultant and the client to reach better solutions, as they were both working towards the same end goal. A common vision was also found to encourage the parties to challenge one another and ultimately building something together. The views in this regard of some of the respondents are below:

- *“So we might not still agree on the tactics, but at least if we’ve got a common vision it makes it easier for the project to be successful, and why I say that you don’t always have to agree, is because more often than not better solutions are found when there’s robust engagement.”*
- *“I have a goal in mind and I need to extract value out of the consultant. So at times you also need to try to push to get value extraction out of the consultant by actually challenging their position or their views, either whether it’s a positive contribution or a negative. You then need to be able to challenge it, debate it.”*
- *“I think there were times when there were disagreements on the words, semantics, you know like I understood a word in a certain way and they understood it differently,*

but we clarified that. So we had a lot of clarification around scope and it comes back to like just sit down and talk about it...”

- *“...any engagement – it’s like a marriage. It’s both sides have to give their utmost, roles and responsibilities have to be very clearly defined, the plan has to be there, the outcome the success and the critical success criteria needs to be common, so we need to agree on all those types of things.”*

5.4. Results for Research Question 4

Why and how does collaboration between the employees of a firm and management consultants contribute to the success of the engagement with a management consultant?

When asked, all of respondents stated that they believed that collaboration between the management consultant and their client was important for the successful outcome of their engagement. Frequency analysis was used to evaluate the respondent’s views on the reasons how and why collaboration between the management consultant and the client will contribute to a successful outcome of the engagement. The respondent’s views were ranked based on the number of times a specific reason was mention. Below Table 4 illustrates the reasons cited by the respondents.

Table 4: Ranking of client perceived reasons why collaboration between the client and management consultant is important

Ranking	Client Perceived Reasons for importance of Collaboration	Total Counts
1	Client is part of the formulation of the solutions proposed by management consultant. The proposed solutions are then in line with the client expectations. Staff members at all relevant levels are part of the process of developing a solution that they can take forward.	18
2	Fosters frequent communication. Enables discussion of challenges, milestones and victories. Frequent communication also enables client and management consultant to identify the best possible way to move forward from the challenges being faced in the engagement. Feedback takes place more frequently.	16
3	Management consultant understanding of client culture. Management consultant able to better serve client and work with client when they understand the way that the organisation works as well when the Management Consultant gets integrated into the	14

	client team. This is best achieved when the client and the Management Consultant are located in the same space.	
4	Client takes responsibility for the outcome of the project. Collaboration enables the client to take ownership of the outcomes of the engagement. Collaboration builds a sense of client responsibility.	3

Only the reasons that were mentioned more than five times were deemed to be significant and are discussed in more detail below.

5.4.1. Client ‘buy-in’ and involvement in formulation of solution

Collaboration facilitates client buy-in and also encourages the involvement of the client in the formulation of a suitable solution for the problem with which they may be faced. The reasons stated were that collaboration enabled the client to take ownership of the engagement and of the results of the engagement. In addition to that, collaboration enabled the client to give feedback and to change the direction of the engagement where necessary. The importance of client buy-in and involvement was mentioned eighteen times by the respondents.

- *“...I find that if we work together and you keep us involved along the way, it’s a lot more successful. It’s a lot easier to understand the results, to also then communicate the results; and I feel that we owned the process a lot more, because I think one of the mistakes I think consultants then make is to own the process: ‘it’s not yours, you’re doing it for us.’”*
- *“...the collaboration part is us ‘owning the process’ as much as the consultants do, so it’s not them doing this for us, it’s not us washing our hands off it. It’s us actually working together.”*
- *“...it’s very key to enhance collaboration to ensure that throughout the entire organisation. There’s a full understanding of the importance of the exercise and what exactly is the exercise, lest you get resistance from the people.”*
- *“One of the biggest things you have to be very careful about is that when you bring in a consultancy, and you think that they are going to define the way your business is going to move forward, especially with strategy and things like that. And the reason*

why I say that is because you are the one that knows the business the best not the consultancy.”

- *“You can’t just point the consultant and just leave it to them. I think you’re going to have to walk with them and it’s a journey that you do together.”*
- *“...the consultant does not come in and engage with business, I’m still front of that discussion, I’m still front of those engagements, so when I get a consultant in, I’m still very much actively involved, because a consultant wouldn’t necessarily know the intricacies of my business, and I still need to be in the engagement, so for me collaboration is key.”*
- *“I’m not going to say I did the work, it’s still the consultant’s work. but I own the outcome of the process.”*

5.4.2. Frequent Communication

Collaboration between the client and the Management Consultant meant that they were interacting with one another more frequently, and thus communicating more frequently. The benefit of regular communication for these engagements was that problems that arose could be discussed and resolved timeously, and that the client and the management consultant could continuously check whether both parties were happy with the progress of the engagement. The views of some of the respondents are documented below:

- *“There needs to be constant and regular communication...”*
- *“...active collaboration means that frequently, myself and the consultants from [company name removed] need to talk about the project: ‘what is working; what is not working; what challenges are you facing according to the milestones and the project plan we have; how far are we tracking; are we on track; are we out of track, you know, so that active collaboration needs to happen very frequently.”*
- *“Communication is things like planning together right; sitting down and saying what we are going to do: ‘you are going to do this, I’m going to do that...”*

- *“For me, I believe you have to be hands-on, well that’s my approach, and it’s worked for me in the past, where, from the beginning, you have to be hands-on, you have to understand what it is that the consultant is doing, what their requirements are, and you have to be the face of that engagement to the business...”*

5.4.3. Understanding Client Culture

The respondents expressed an appreciation for the times in which the management consultant took the time to understand the culture of the client, as well as the way that things worked at the client. This enabled the management Consultant to connect with the client, and to really understand what their business is about, and have shown a real interest in the organisation. The benefit and link to the outcome of the engagement is that, with a better understanding of the client culture, the management consultant was able to make recommendations suitable to the client organisation. The respondents also mentioned the importance of the management consultant being located on the same premises as the client whilst performing the engagement, as that was the only way a true cultural immersion could take place. Below are the views of some of the respondents in this regard:

- *“So I find that the best ones that we’ve worked with are the ones who almost become part of us they see what drives us, what we could do better, they become almost like family, they want to help you and they’re not just doing a job.”*
- *“...it’s much better if they’re based here. I’m a strong belief of co-location, because then they start to feel the pulse of the team, of the organisation etc. they get to understand the dynamics. You know, particularly when you have a broad set of stakeholders that you need to manage.”*
- *“I’m going to be very upset with a consulting company’s account manager if that person is never here right, to be on the ground.”*
- *“I can’t emphasise enough they really have to ‘get’ us, they need to understand what markets is about, they need to understand we’ve got serious deadlines...”*

5.5. Results for Research Question 5

Why and how does the client trusting the management consultant contribute to the success of the engagement?

When asked, all of the respondents stated that they believed that trust was important for the successful outcome of the engagement with management consultants.

Table 5: Ranking of client perceived reasons why trust is important for a successful engagement outcome

Ranking	Client-perceived reasons for importance of trusting the Management Consultant	Total Counts
1	Maintaining confidentiality of client information. When a client engages with a management consultant, they trust that the management consultant will keep all of their information confidential, and that they will not use the information in a manner that could be to the detriment of the client. The client also trusts that the management consultant has their best interests at heart and that the management consultant has good intentions for the client, thereby enabling more meaningful engagement.	16
2	Information sharing. When the client trusts the management consultant, this enables an open relationship between management consultant and client. The client lowers their boundaries and then opens up about the real problems faced by the organisation and thus assisting the management consultant.	12
3	Trust is built and demonstrated through management consultant preparation for their engagement with the client. Trust is also built when the management consultant demonstrates competence. Trust is not always there initially but it can be built. The presence of trust allows differences to be discussed and resolved, leading to an improved working relationship and better outcome for the engagement.	10
4	Trust enables collaboration. Where trust is present, it enables the client the freedom to speak to the management consultant openly, even when they are making mistakes thus enabling the speed resolution of issues. Trust and an open relationship enables change of the direction of the engagement before time is over thus increasing likelihood of successful outcome.	8
5	Trust is subconscious. At times, the client was unaware that they had not extended trust to the management consultant. This hindered their engagement, in that they did not provide as much information as was required for the successful outcome of the engagement.	6

Only Factors 1 to 3 were considered to be significant for the purposes of this research question, given the frequency of how many times they were mentioned.

5.5.1. Maintaining Confidentiality of Client Information

The maintaining of the confidentiality of client information was mentioned sixteen times. The respondents felt that they shared confidential information with the management consultants that the Management Consultants required for the engagement and as such it is critical that they trust them to maintain the confidentiality of client information. The client also trusts that the management consultant will maintain confidentiality of all, information. Thus enabling the two parties to engage in a meaningful manner. The respondents also mentioned that they trusted the management consultants to act in a manner that was in the best interests for their clients, and to not use the information obtained from the clients in a manner that could be detrimental to the client. The exercising of this trust was stated by the respondents to be important, because it enabled the respondents to interact with the management consultants in a meaningful and open manner. The result was an increased likelihood for a successful outcome for the engagement, as in such circumstances the client would be more likely to share information that would help the consultants and the management consultants would not use the information in any way that could harm the respondents. The views in this regard of some of the respondents are below:

- *“Ability to respect confidentiality and confidentiality in our case was particularly important...”*
- *“As the client, being confident on their ability to deliver because we’re dealing with sensitive information that could damage the reputation of the organisation.”*
- *“...I need to trust that they’re going to use their skillsets to help empower me to be able to deal with the problem I’m dealing with and not to create an environment of constant dependency.”*
- *“The whole consultant business relationship is almost like the agency theory, as well where you have a principal-agent relationship, because you always are thinking that the consultant is only doing what they doing because they care about themselves as a consultant, and they’ve got no interest of the business at heart, they just want to make as much money as possible from you.”*

- *“We share sensitive information, you know, strategic objectives, how do we aim to achieve our objectives and so on, you know, so you kind of share sensitive information so you have to be able to trust your partners.”*
- *“To ensure that whatever is discussed will remain confidential, the information will not reach the competition if you do work for the competition as well, you know. So that and perhaps just a sense, you know, just to get a sense that the firm has the interest of the organisation.”*
- *“I found that unfortunately in society these days you can’t just go and take people’s word for it. So you have to say especially if you’re dealing with sensitive data and stuff that you don’t want to get out in public or you’re working with us dealing with our socio-economic issues.”*

5.5.2. Trust Enables Information Sharing

The respondents mentioned twelve times that when they trusted the management consultants they were working with, this enabled the respondents to lower their boundaries in order to share more with consultants. The presence of trust also enabled the respondents to share information that would assist the management consultants with the successful completion of the engagement as they shared information that was crucial for them to be able to successfully complete the engagement. The views of some of the respondents are below:

- *“...you are bringing them in to want to solve a problem for you, you are willing to engage with them, so they have the information, because if you only give them half the information, they’re only going to give you half of the success factors that you’re hoping to achieve.”*
- *“We share sensitive information, you know, strategic objectives; how do we aim to achieve our objectives and so on, you know, so you kind of share sensitive information so you have to be able to trust your partners.”*
- *“...it’s important for the consultants then to earn the trust of not just the management team but employees who actually have to be the ones to open up to them to implement the little aspects of whatever it is that they were doing.”*

- *“... as the consultant begins to embed themselves in the business, and in the processes, and actually give themselves time to fully understand your business environment, your business contacts, your business challenges; and then they begin to put themselves in your own feet, or shoes rather, you then tend to get a sense of trust or openness from staff members.”*

5.5.3. Trust is built and demonstrated by preparation for engagement

Through frequency analysis it was determined that the respondents mentioned ten times that when the management consultant demonstrated technical competence and also demonstrated that they had prepared for the engagement, this earned the trust of the respondents. As such, the respondents also mentioned that trust isn't always there from initially, but can be earned, as the management consultant demonstrates the above-mentioned traits. The views of some of the respondents are below:

- *“Preparation, if you come into a meeting, so if you come into my meeting, at least have read the document that I have put it in the public domain, understand the lexicon of the organisation you are going into.”*
- *“...trust looks something like the consultant coming in and taking the engagement and the role as though it were their full-time job and they would be there for years and years and years to account for it.”*
- *“I think for me it would so demonstrate to me that you've thought of everything you know and demonstrate to me that you've done your research and the advice that you giving me is really worth it.”*
- *“Trust for me is that, you should be able to use your competency, the delivering on time and the other tools to help me solve my problem.”*

5.5.4. Trust Enables Collaboration

It was mentioned eight times by the respondents that trust enables and encourages collaboration between the client and the management consultant. When the client trusts the consultant, they are more willing to bring them into their working space and to work together with them to reach a successful engagement outcome. This also enables the

two parties to work together and to identify issues that may arise as well as the speedy resolution of those issues. In order for this to happen, the respondents mentioned that it is important for both parties to display their human and personal side. In addition, when the two parties work together, if they discover that the engagement is not moving in the desired direction, they will be able to change the direction of the engagement together, and quicker, therefore leading to an increased likelihood of the positive outcome of the engagement. In addition to that, with trust, the respondents mentioned that they worked closer with the management consultants, and also gave them more responsibility. The views of some of the respondents are below:

- *“It’s collaborative in the sense that it is to and fro , the firms, you know, the consultants are able to say guys we think that you are moving in the wrong direction and we are also receptive to that and we engage...”*
- *“...we felt that these guys were going to do a good job and in our engagements we felt like we could trust them. We let them do a lot of stuff that maybe somebody didn’t trust we wouldn’t have.”*
- *“So trust comes from credibility or you create credibility because you work well together and you have something to show for it...”*

5.6. Conclusion

The results that have been obtained from the six research questions generated aggregated results of significance and validity. The results showed support of existing literature in the field of management consulting. In addition, the interviews revealed insight into what the client perceives the success factors of their engagement with management consultants to be. Interesting insight was also obtained regarding the role of trust, collaboration and a shared vision regarding the outcome of the engagements between these two parties.

In Chapter 6, the results from the research process are discussed in more detail, and linked back to the literature contained in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Results

6. Introduction

The research findings documented in Chapter 5 will be discussed in more detail in this Chapter. The findings are also linked back to the literature review that was performed in Chapter 2. The research was conducted by means of semi-structured interviews. The questions that were used during the research interviews were informed by the literature on management consulting, trust, collaboration and a common vision. The data that will be discussed in this chapter was gathered from 12 semi-structured interviews, in order to answer the research questions as stated in Chapter 3. The interviews were conducted with a sample of managers and senior individuals within an organisation, who had utilised the services of management consultants. The data was coded in Chapter 5, where the research findings have been documented. The analysis of the data gathered has enabled the researcher to aggregate and refine the data. This provided insights into the client perspective of the success factors for their interaction with management consultants, as well as to the client perceived role of trust, shared vision, and collaboration when it comes to the outcome of the engagement.

The client perspective the success factors for their engagements with management consultants as well as the client perceived impact of trust, a common vision and collaboration between the consultant and the client is not an entirely elusive concept. However, the results that are discussed in this chapter will contribute to an enhanced understanding against the existing literature that has been published to date in the field of management consulting. This section of this research report will explore the relevance of the results and literature in the context of this specific study.

6.1. Discussion of Results for Research Question One

Research question one sought to understand the main factors driving clients to utilise the services of management consultants. This research question sought to obtain a client perspective on those reasons. The research findings for these research questions are discussed in detail below.

6.1.1. Factors Driving the Use of the Services of Management Consultants

The factors that were identified as driving the use of the services of Management Consultants were classified according to the frequency analysis that was performed on responses received from the respondents. There was a total of seven factors that were identified, however, five of those factors were considered to be significant based on the how frequently they were mentioned by the respondents. The significant factors are listed below:

- obtaining an independent opinion
- lack of expertise
- thought leadership
- transfer of risk and responsibility
- capacity constraints

Obtaining an independent opinion from utilising the services of management consultants was identified thirteen times by the respondents as a key reason driving engagement with management consultants (see Table 1). The respondents substantiated their opinions and perspectives by stating, for example:

“... sometimes it is a lot easier to get buy-in and for people to except the results if it’s from an external party and if management went and did it or we did it in house; It’s easier for people to accept that it if someone else is saying it.”

“... especially if I’m trying to tell you this is the positive impact I’ve had in your life. It’s more credible if someone else tells you. You know, so to get that objective view.”

“Independence is important because if we then have to report back to the board, they need to now that we didn’t put our finger in there and influence the results to achieve a certain direct that we wanted.”

Kubr (2002), who, when stating the characteristics of management consulting, clearly state that this type of service is meant to be provided in an independent manner. The reasons provided for the importance of independence is that independence enables the management consultant to make objective assessments and decisions. In addition, when Greiner and Metzger (1983) defined management consulting, they stated that the service is to be provided in an independent and objective way, further supporting the findings as stated by the respondents. . Chitakornkijasil (2011) notes that management consultants are sought out because they bring in a fresh and impartial perspective that is more likely to be accepted than an opinion from internal company management.

The lack of expertise was the second significant factor that was highlighted by the respondents. The respondents identified this factor thirteen times. The respondents supported their views by stating;

“...essentially, there wasn’t anyone within our current team who’d have the expertise to do this.”

“I think the issue was around internally there wasn’t anyone with the skill enough to do that kind of work so that skill could only be obtained from the outside.”

“...we have a shortage in that from the management team, so we needed a party to bring those expertise into the organisation.”

It was found that lack of expertise motivates recourse to management consulting, which resonates with Chitakornkijasil (2011), where it is stated that management consultants bring with them a special technical knowledge that the client that may not possess. This knowledge may provide the client with a new means to identify problems and solutions. Simon and Kumar (2001) also found that one of the most significant driving factors was that client possessed insufficient in-house expertise. As such, it was considered better for the clients to obtain external assistance. This finding is further supported by the work of Branko et al. (2014), where one of the reasons found for bringing management consultants into an organisation is to assist management with resolving problems, where management does not have the required expertise, knowledge and prior experience required to solve the issue with which they are faced. This finding is also supported by Bronnenmayer et al. (2016), where they have stated that one of the reasons why clients engage management consultants is because of the expertise that they possess. This is mainly because the clients may have a problem that they are unable to resolve utilising their own resources.

Thought leadership was a key factor identified by the respondents (see Table 1). This factor was mentioned nine times by the respondents. The respondents felt that the Management Consultants had the benefit of interacting with different clients and as such, they were able to bring all acquired knowledge together and share relevant experience with the client without compromising confidentiality. The respondents supported their views by stating that:

“the second reason why you would potentially get a consultancy in is for thought leadership, they have a lot of insight into what happens at different clients. And what’s the trends in the market etc. So they can provide you with that though leadership.”

“...so I would bring in a consultant because of the extreme knowledge gained on various other engagements, something that I might not have here all right in the building.”

“...it was purely that they were the subject matter experts of this area ...”

This is consistent with the findings of Perner and Werr (2013), where they state that because of the experience and knowledge that management consultants gain from working with different clients, they are in a unique position that enables them to combine the knowledge gained in different ways, and translate it for their different clients, so as to assist with improving competitive edge.

The transfer of risk and responsibility is a key factor that was identified by the respondents, as documented in Table 1. This factor was mentioned seven times by the respondents. The views of the respondents were supported when they stated:

“...70 to 80 percent of the time consultants have come in, they’ve come in in my perspective for the wrong reasons, its managers abdicating their responsibility, making decisions and then they farm it out to the consultant.”

“...they are big in terms of outsourcing tasks where they don’t want to take the risk so part of that was realised through using management consultants, they extensively use consultants...”

The researcher was not able to find literature supporting the finding that sometimes clients hire management consultants to remove themselves from the responsibility of making decisions.

Capacity constraints were identified five times by the respondents. The respondents stated that at times they brought in management consultants to assist, because they did not have the capacity that was required. They substantiated their views by stating:

“...one of the reasons why you want to use consultancy is because you don’t have the capacity and you want someone to come in to provide you with that professionalism and then to actually do the leg-work for you.”

“Yes we do not have or at the time we did not have the capacity, we thought that we didn’t have capacity to do this thing on our own, we thought that a consulting firm that has been exposed to what the competition is doing, exposed to the world trends, and there is a collection of insights and views within a management consultancy.”

This view is consistent with the findings of Chitakornkijasil (2011), that the staff in an organisation are often tied up with their day-job, and therefore may not have capacity to get deeply involved in work that for which the management consultant has been brought in.

6.2. Discussion of results for Research Question 2

Research Question Two sought to obtain an understanding of the client perspective of the success factors for their engagements with management consultants. The factors that were identified discussed in the section below.

6.2.1. Success Factors for Engagements with Management Consultants

The factors that were identified as a requirement for a successful engagement between the management consultant and their clients were classified according to the frequency analysis that was performed on responses received from the respondents. These factors have been ranked and listed in order as set out in Table 2. Seven factors were identified as being significant for a successful outcome of the engagement between a client and management consultant. The factors are listed below:

- clear engagement scope
- humility, willingness to learn and respect
- technical competence
- collaboration between management consultant and client
- understanding client business and key deliverables

The importance of having a clear engagement scope was mentioned twenty-seven times by the respondents. This was identified as the key driving factor contributing to the success of the engagement between a client and management consultant. The respondents supported their views when they stated:

“...so for me, it’s setting out my expectations, articulate them clearly to the consultant and up skilling them in terms of my operating environment”

“...what you want as an outcome must be very clear as to outcomes that you want to try and achieve and then you need to have it right in your mind as to what are you bringing them in for is it capacity to do some leg-work for you or is it thought leadership, you must be very clear as to why you want to have them on board.”

“I think it is important for the client, which in this case was us as well as the management consultant, to be clear on the goals and why they have they been brought in.”

This is consistent with the findings of McLachlin (1999), where it is stated that for a successful engagement, it is critical for there to be clear agreement between the two parties about the expectations for the engagement. This finding is supported by the literature of Appelbaum and Steed (2005), where they state that for there to be a

successful engagement, the expectations and outcomes of the engagement have to be communicated clearly.

Humility, willingness to learn, respect and other 'soft' skills were mentioned nineteen times by the respondents as a significant factor in successful engagement with management consultants. The respondents supported their views by stating:

"I think one of the biggest characteristics that you need management consultants to have is humility, and I know it works both ways, we also need to be humble in our approach."

"...the willingness of both sides, to understand you have strengths in certain areas; I don't, and so we need each other..."

"...so when people come in thinking that they are the messiahs or the saviours and they're going to fix it, it doesn't go down well, so the people that I found make the biggest difference are the ones who want to know us and understand us..."

"...it's not just for expertise, but even if it is that, I think you need humility on both sides to listen."

Appelbaum and Steed (2005) confirm this in a study they performed was that the relationships between clients and management consultants have shifted to being more focused on building a partnership with mutual respect, and this has contributed to a more successful engagement outcome. They also found that when management consultants take on the role of being a 'messiah', or when they cause the client to become dependent on them, and when they are motivated by their own selfish goals and desires, the result is that the outcome of the engagement can be very destructive.

The technical competence of the management consultant was mentioned 15 times by the respondents as a factor significantly contributing to the success of the engagement between the client and management consultant. The respondents believe that it is important for the management consultant to have the relevant expertise required to assist the client resolve the challenges with which they are faced, as well as for them to apply knowledge gained on other engagements in a relevant manner that will be of assistance to the client. The respondents substantiated their views by stating:

"So my view is that naturally we expected consultants to be technically competent in that field of work that you've hired him or her to do."

“We were acquiring intellectual property and that was the critical success factor, they were undisputed experts in this area, us trying to go through that thinking would have been a waste of time and we’d probably come up with the wrong answer.”

In support of this result, one refers back to the work of McLachlin (1999), who states that a critical factor for the success of a consulting engagement is that the management consultant has to be competent, so as to ensure that they are able to assist the client with the problem with which they are faced. This finding is further supported by Appelbaum and Steed (2005), where emphasis is placed on the importance of management consultant competence for a successful engagement outcome.

The importance of collaboration was mentioned thirteen times by the respondents. The respondents believed that when the client and the management consultant worked together there was an increased likelihood that the engagement had a successful outcome. The views of the respondents were substantiated by saying:

“I found that the more successful ones are where the consultants come in and work with us, and not work ‘at’ us if you know what I mean.”

“...members of staff knew why these consultants have been brought in: and to encourage the members of staff to support the consultants...”

“...so it’s very key to enhance collaboration to ensure that throughout the entire organisation, there’s a full understanding of the importance of the exercise and what exactly is being achieved.”

This is consistent with the findings of Appelbaum and Steed (2005), who have noted that partnership between the management consultant and their clients is a contributor to a successful engagement outcome. This finding was further supported by Lalonde and Adler (2015), who found that collaboration in these types of engagements led to a fruitful engagement outcome.

Through frequency analysis, it was identified that the respondents mentioned the importance of the management consultant obtaining a good understanding of the client and a good understanding of the key deliverables, and a desired outcome twelve times as a significant factor contributing to the success of these engagement. The respondents substantiated their views by saying:

“I would say that really important is for the consultant to understand us. For them to understand us and our specific circumstances, our specific situation, our specific

nuances and to really get why we do what we do. I find that make a really big difference, because once they get that, they understand why we are trying to do this and how they fit in.”

“What was important for me was the client coming in, understanding my requirements.”

“...their willingness to invest the time to learn, to understand that; because they didn’t come in and say: ‘no but we know your business, we know this and that’; they were willing to come in and engage at all levels to get that understanding.”

“So I think for me, one of the success factors would be for the consultant to understand the clients’ needs, not try and go there and say: ‘I’m the consultant I know this stuff, I’ve studied this and I’m the expert, this is what you need to do.’ But to actually engage with the client and understand what their needs are and bring their expertise in in that respect.”

This finding is supported by the findings of Appelbaum and Steed (2005), where the upfront investment by the management consultant into the learning of the client environment has been identified as a critical factor for the success of these engagements. This finding is further supported by (Kakabadse et al.(2009), where it is found that the management consultant is able to gain credibility through demonstrating an understanding of the client and of the environment in which they operate.

The factors of having regular feedback sessions, as well as constant communication between the respondents and the management consultants, were mentioned six times by the respondents as being a significant factor contributing factor to a successful outcome of engagement. They substantiated their views by saying:

“There needs to be constant and regular communication.”

“I think it’s like any relationship. It’s about the communication, about the feedback, about the understanding, and then, being willing to accept that I can learn something from here.”

“Communication is extremely important. So you don’t come to me at the end of three months and say, ‘oh, by the way, we had problems with this at the beginning of the project’. I think understanding it, working together and having this regular feedback is very important.”

This finding is supported by the findings of Simon, Kumar, Schoeman, Moffat and Power (2011) ,where they argue that without communication, the likelihood of a successful engagement outcome is minimal. This is because the communication enables the

management consultant to interact with employees at different levels of the organisation, and to gain different perspectives that can assist with their engagement, as, through more frequent communication, they will be able to assess the status of the project, as well as whether it is moving in the original direction intended.

6.3. Discussion of Results for Research Question 3

Research Question Three sought to understand why a common vision is important for the successful outcome of the engagement between the client and the management consultant. The results for this research question have been laid out in Table 3. The reasons are discussed in detail in the section below.

6.3.1. Reasons for the importance of a Common Vision

Three main and significant reasons were identified by the respondents of the importance of a common vision between the management consultant and their clients. The identified reasons were ranked with the use of the frequency analysis technique. Three significant factors were identified using this technique. The identified factors are:

- A common vision ensures a clear understanding of client problem by both parties
- A common vision enables collaboration
- Having a common vision encourages robust and meaningful engagement between the two parties

Some respondents stated that one of the reasons of the importance of a shared and common vision is that its presence ensures that there is a clear understanding of the client and client problem by both parties. This was mentioned fourteen times. The respondents substantiated their views by stating:

“I would say that really important is for the consultant to understand us. For them to understand us, and our specific circumstances, our specific situation, our specific nuances and to really get why we do what we do. I find that makes a really big difference, because once they get that, they understand why we are trying to do this, then and how they fit into this thing.”

“...it’s a case of having a similar understanding of what the problem is or the task at hand.”

“I think when you have different stakeholders, thinking that you trying to solve different problems, you are really setting yourself up for failure. There’s got to be a common vision and a common understanding of what you are trying to solve for.”

“It’s critical, because someone may go off and on a tangent, and ultimately you want them to prepare a product which is what you were looking for.”

This finding is supported by McLachlin (1999), who argues that in order to contribute to a successful outcome of the engagement, there has to be clear agreement between the client and the management consultant on their requirements and expected outcomes.

It was mentioned twelve times by the respondents that common vision was important where it enabled collaboration between the client and the management consultant. The views of the respondents were substantiated by stating:

“So having that common vision makes it easier for me, for you and me to work together.”

“...if they believe in the vision they will collaborate...”

The findings of Bronnenmayer et al. (2016) support this finding, where they stated that the nature of management consulting engagements is such that it involves two different parties, who have different interests coming together to resolve a problem with which the client is faced. Thus, it is important that they work together to align their interests and to solve the client’s problem. Further supporting this finding is the results of a study performed by Fullerton and West (1996), where the authors found that clients expected management consultants to spend time with the client getting to know them, and working with them, in order to ensure that both parties have a good understanding of the problem, and reach a successful engagement outcome.

The third significant factor, as identified by the respondents, was that the presence of a common vision fosters robust engagement between the client and the management consultant. The importance of this is that in engaging in robust discussions, Management Consultants are able to refine the common vision together, and really come to grips with the desired outcome of the engagement. The views of the respondents were substantiated by stating:

“so we might not still agree on the tactics, but at least if we’ve got a common vision, it makes it easier for the project to be successful, and why I say that you don’t always have to agree, is because more often than not, better solutions are found when there’s robust engagement.”

“I have a goal in mind, and I need to extract value out of the consultant. So at times you also need to try to push to get value extraction out of the consultant by actually challenging their position or their views, either whether it’s a positive contribution or a negative. You then need to be able to challenge it, debate it.”

“I think there were times when there were disagreements on the words, semantics, you know, like I understood a word in a certain way, and they understood it differently, but we clarified that. So we had a lot of clarification around scope and it comes back to just sitting down and talking about it...”

This finding is consistent with the findings of (Simon & Kumar, 2001), who argued that the ability of the client and management consultant to negotiate with one another towards achieving expectations for the engagement, is important for a successful outcome.

6.4. Discussion of Results for Research Question 4

Research Question Four sought to understand the reasons why collaboration between the client and management consultant contributed to a successful outcome of the engagement. Four main significant reasons were identified (per Table 4) during the interviews carried out with the respondents. These reasons are discussed in the section below.

6.4.1. Reasons for the Importance of Collaboration

Three main and significant reasons were identified by the respondents of the importance of collaboration between the management consultant and their clients. The identified reasons were ranked with the use of the frequency analysis technique. Three significant factors were identified using this technique. The identified factors are:

- the client forms part of solutions formulated by management consultant
- collaboration encourages frequent communication
- management consultant gains understanding of client culture

When the client and the management consultant collaborate towards reaching the end goal, the result is that the solutions are formulated together, where the client is involved throughout the process, and as such, is more likely to be satisfied with the outcome of the engagement. This increases the likelihood of a successful engagement outcome. This was mentioned eighteen times by the respondents. In order to substantiate their views they stated:

“So I find that if we work together and you keep us involved along the way, it’s a lot more successful. It’s a lot easier to understand the results, to also then communicate the results and I feel that we owned the process a lot more because I think one of the mistakes I think consultants then make is to own the process, it’s not yours, you’re doing it for us.”

“... the collaboration part is us owning the process as much as the consultants do, so it’s not them doing this for us, it’s not us washing our hands of it. It’s us actually working together.”

“So it’s very key to enhance collaboration; to ensure that throughout the entire organisation, there’s a full understanding of the importance of the exercise and what exactly is the exercise, lest you get resistance from the people.”

“...the consultant does not come in and engage with business, I’m still front of that discussion, I’m still front of those engagements; so when I get a consultant in, I’m still very much actively involved, because a consultant wouldn’t necessarily know the intricacies of my business, and I still need to be in the engagement; so for me collaboration is key.”

This is consistent with the findings of Bronnenmayer et al. (2016), who found that the input of the client is very important in order for the management consultant to achieve a conclusion that is appropriate for the client organisation. They stated that this type of collaboration is crucial for reaching a successful engagement outcome.

When the management consultant and the client work together, they are found to be required in order to more frequently communicate. This was mentioned sixteen times by the respondents, namely that collaboration encourages more frequent communication and as a result, the actual outcome of the engagement was more likely to be in line with the expectations of the client, thus indicating successful engagement outcome. The views of the respondents were substantiated when they stated:

“There needs to be constant and regular communication...”

“...Active collaboration means that frequently myself and the consultants from [Company name removed] need to talk about the project what is working, what is not working, what challenges are you facing according to the milestones and the project plan we have how far are we tracking are we on track, are we out of track, you know so that active collaboration needs to happen very frequently.”

“Communication is things like planning together right sitting down and saying what we are going to do, you going to do this, I’m going to do that...”

“For me, I believe you have to be hands-on, well that’s my approach, and it’s worked for me in the past, where, from the beginning you have to be hands-on, you have to understand what it is that the consultant is doing, what their requirements are; and you have to be the face of that engagement to the business...”

This finding is further supported by the work of Simon et al. (2011), where it is found that constant communication between the client and the management consultant is crucial for the success of the engagement.

It was mentioned fourteen times by the respondents that when the management consultants collaborate with the client, they also embed themselves in the client culture, get to know the client better, and are able to better meet their requirements and deadlines. This increases the likelihood of recommending a solution that is in line with the requirements of the client, and a solution that will actually fit in to the organisation, thus contributing to the success of the engagement. The respondents supported their views by stating:

“So I find that the best ones that we’ve worked with are the ones who almost become part of us. They see what drives us, what we could do better, they become almost like family, they want to help you and they’re not just doing a job.”

“...It’s much better if they’re based here. I’m a strong belief of co-location because then they start to feel the pulse of the team, of the organisation etc. they get to understand the dynamics. You know particularly when you have a broad set of stakeholders that you need to manage.”

“I can’t emphasise enough they really have to get us, they need to understand what markets is about, and they need to understand we’ve got serious deadlines...”

This finding is consistent with the findings of Chitakornkijasil (2011), who states that when a management consultant engages with a client, they should do as much research as possible about the culture of the organisation, because this will enable them to engage with management in a more meaningful manner, and also enables the consultant to provide the client with feedback and solutions that are more likely to be in line with the way that the business of the client is run.

6.5. Discussion of Results for Research Question 5

Research Question Five sought to understand the reasons why trust between the client and management consultant contributed to a successful outcome of the engagement.

Five main significant reasons were identified (per Table 5) during the interviews carried out with the respondents. These reasons are discussed in the section below.

6.5.1. Reasons for the importance of trust

Five main and significant reasons were identified by the respondents of the importance of trust between the management consultant and their clients. The identified reasons were ranked with the use of the frequency analysis technique. The reasons that were identified are:

- maintaining confidentiality of client information and acting in the best interests of the client
- information sharing
- preparation and competence of management consultant builds trust
- trust enables collaboration
- trustworthiness and truthfulness

The importance of maintaining confidentiality of client information was mentioned sixteen times by the respondents throughout the interview. The feeling of respondents was that when they trusted the Management Consultant to keep information confidential and for the management consultant to act in the best interests of the client, the clients were then able to engage with the Management Consultants in a more meaningful manner, thus contributing to a potentially successful engagement outcome. The views of the respondents were substantiated where they stated:

“Ability to respect confidentiality and confidentiality in our case was particularly important...”

“As the client, being confident on their ability to deliver because we’re dealing with sensitive information that could damage the reputation of the organisation.”

“We share sensitive information, you know, strategic objectives, how do we aim to achieve our objectives and so on, you know, so you share sensitive information so you have to be able to trust your partners.”

“To ensure that whatever is discussed will remain confidential, the information will not reach the competition if you do work for the competition as well, you know. So that, and

perhaps just a sense, you know, just to get a sense that the firm has the interests of the organisation at heart.”

This is consistent with the findings of McLachlin (1999), who has argued that one of the critical success factors for this type of engagement is that the management consultant’s consistent show of integrity. They can demonstrate this by always putting the needs of the client first, and by always acting in the best interests of the client. Bronnenmayer et al. (2016) further supported the finding by stating that the establishment of trust between the client and the management consultant was not an easy task, because the client may find it hard to trust the intentions of the management consultants, where part of the reason for this was found to be that, at the start of the engagement, the management consultants tended to be more focused on the actual job and task at hand, and not on building relationships and trust with the client.

The presence of trust also enabled information sharing. When the respondents felt like they could trust the management consultants, they were able to open up to them and share confidential information with them. The respondents were able to open up about the real issues that they were facing in their organisations, in this way, increasing the likelihood of the engagement, because the respondents were willing to lower their boundaries and share important information. The views of the respondents were substantiated when they stated:

“...we share sensitive information, you know, strategic objectives: ‘how do we aim to achieve our objectives?’ and so on, you know, so you kind of share sensitive information so you have to be able to trust your partners.”

“...you are bringing them in to want to solve a problem for you, you are willing to engage with them, so they have the information because, if you only give them half the information, they’re only going to give you half of the success factors that you’re hoping to achieve.”

“... It’s important for the consultants then to earn the trust of not just the management team, but employees who actually have to be the ones to open up to them to implement the little aspects of whatever it is that the management consultants were doing.”

“... as the consultant begins to embed themselves in the business and in the processes and actually give themselves time to fully understand your business environment, your business contacts, your business challenges; and then they begin to put themselves in

your own feet, or shoes rather, you then tend to get a sense of trust or openness from staff members.”

This is substantiated by the findings of Ko (2010), who found that when trust is present in an engagement, there is an increased likelihood of there being successful information transfer between the client and management consultants. Of importance was benevolent trust, where both parties are genuinely interested in each other’s welfare, and where they both work towards joint gains.

It was mentioned by the respondents ten times that when the management consultants demonstrated technical competency, and were well prepared for the engagement, the aforementioned respondents felt they could trust them with performing whatever task at hand. These practiced competencies would further increase the likelihood of successful engagement outcomes.

Furthermore, the respondents felt that the management consultants were approachable, so as to enable prompt resolution of any differences that might have arisen in the course of executing their tasks. This led to an increased likelihood of successful engagement outcomes. The respondents substantiated their views by stating:

“...I think for me it would so demonstrate to me that you’ve thought of everything you know and demonstrate to me that you’ve done your research and the advice that you giving me is really worth it.”

“Trust for me is that, you should be able to use your competency, ensure that deliverables are made on time and utilising relevant tools to help me solve my problem.”

“Preparation, if you come into a meeting, so if you come into my meeting, at least have read the document that I have put it in the public domain, understand the lexicon of the organisation you are going into.”

In support of this result, the findings of McLachlin (1999) show that management consultants demonstrated their competence by the amount of time that they put into preparing for their engagement with the client.

Trust enables collaboration. This reason was mentioned eight times by the respondents. The views of the respondents were substantiated where they stated:

“So trust comes from credibility, or you create credibility because you work well together and you have something to show for it...”

“It’s collaborative in the sense that it is to and fro, the firms, you know, the consultants are able to say: ‘guys, we think that you are moving in the wrong direction’, and we are also receptive to that and we engage...”

“...we felt that these guys were going to do a good job and in our engagements we felt like we could trust them. We let them do a lot of stuff that maybe somebody didn’t trust we wouldn’t have.”

This finding is further supported by the work of Solomonson (2012), who found that when the management consultants worked together with their clients in order to build and develop shared values between themselves, trust was developed, thus supporting the finding that collaboration may lead to the development of trust between clients and management consultants.

6.6. Conclusion

Insights were obtained from a client perspective about the factors that they consider necessary for a successful engagement outcome. Insight was also obtained about why trust, collaboration and a common vision contribute to a successful engagement outcome. Interesting insight was also obtained on collaboration, where it was found that collaboration between the client and management consultant is a significant factor contributing to the success of the engagement. The respondents also stated that when there was a common vision, this enabled and encouraged collaboration to take place. The respondents also stated that when there was trust present, this also enable collaboration.

The outcome is that managers in organisations utilising the services of management consultants can focus on building the trust between the two parties, as well as on ensuring that there is a common vision that is in place between them. This will also contribute to the establishment of collaboration between the two parties. As such, ensuring that trust, collaboration and a common vision are present, and thus further contributing to a successful outcome of the engagement.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings presented in Chapter Five and the discussion in Chapter Six are used to synthesise the research findings. Furthermore, recommendations for Management consultants and for their clients are presented based on these findings. Lastly, recommendations for future research are discussed in this chapter.

7.1. Synthesis of Research Findings

This research paper works from the foundational literature that precedes it, integrating these with the new knowledge gained throughout the interview process. The respondents revealed deep insight that could be linked directly to the research questions, as set out in Chapter Three.

The research findings that have been presented in Chapter Six are consistent with the existing literature. However, this study contributes to the broader theory of some of the factors that are considered to be able to reduce the impact of the potential dangers that arise as a result of Agency theory, between the client and the management consultant. The first contribution made is that of a broader client perspective about the reasons why they engage Management Consultants. The respondents highlighted seven key factors driving the use of management consultants, where five of those factors were considered to be significant. These factors provide a broad spectrum of reasons. The identified factors provide useful information for the managers of an organisation, who work in organisations that utilise the services of management consultants, or who could be in a position where they may need to engage their services. The useful insight for managers is identifying instances where they can be proactive, so as to not need to engage management consultants. Examples of such instances are where the management consultant has been hired because the client is experiencing capacity constraints, or where they do not have the required internal expertise. This presents an opportunity for the client to perhaps be proactive and plan ahead for the times where they anticipate they will not have capacity, and somehow adjust their team to be able to perform certain tasks. However, this will not always be possible, for example when a consultant is brought in for the purposes of providing an independent opinion. In addition, another opportunity for management is for them to remain abreast of issues that impact their organisation and their business, so as to ensure that when they are faced with a technical difficulty, they do not always have to seek out external assistance.

The second contribution of this study is that it identifies the success factors that the client perceives to be necessary for a successful engagement outcome with the management

consultant. There were seven factors that were identified, six of which were considered to be significant. The factors identified include: having a clear scope of engagement; humility; willingness to learn and respect; technical competence; collaboration; understanding key client deliverables; and having regular feedback sessions. Where management has engaged the services of a management consultant, the success factors identified above can be used by the client as a means of constantly assessing whether the engagement is moving in a direction that will lead to successful outcomes. These findings could be used by managers to create a scorecard of sorts to rate their engagements with the consultants. Management consulting houses have internal scorecards, and performance reviews and assessments that they perform internally. These factors enable the client to create their own internal 'scorecard' towards performance review of their experience with the management consultants.

The third contribution of this study is determining the reasons of the importance of establishing a mutual common vision during a Management Consulting engagement. The respondents identified four reasons why the establishment of a common vision is important for contributing towards a successful engagement outcome. Two of the reasons identified were considered to be significant, namely: establishing a common vision provides the client with a tool that they can somewhat use to minimize the impact/effects of the Agency the problem; the fundamental agency problem is found to be self-interest. In addition to that, part of the Agency problem is a potential lack of insight into the efficacy of the consulting itself. The establishment of a common vision assists the client to minimise the downside impact of the agency problem, and maximise potential benefit of the consultancy.

The significant reasons identified for the establishment of a common vision were that it enables collaboration; fosters robust engagement between the two parties; and ensures that the management consultant has a good understanding of the client and their needs and challenges. The presence of the above factors may give the client better oversight of the work that the management consultant is doing.

The fourth contribution of this study is insight into the importance of collaboration between the client and the management consultant towards a successful engagement outcome. Three significant reasons were identified by the respondents: when the client aids in the solution of the problem for which the management consultant was brought in, then they can give input throughout the process, and increase the likelihood of a solution beneficial to their business; more frequent information ensures the client has continuous

sight of the work of the management consultants; and it enables the management consultant to embed themselves in the culture of the client and understand client culture.

Management should be proactive about collaborating with consultants for these reasons. Also, collaboration contributes to reducing the effects of the agency problem, where it provides increased ability for oversight and optimisation of client best-interest as a measure of successful engagement outcome.

The fifth and final contribution of this study relates to trust. The significant reasons identified by respondents as to the importance of trust in these types of engagements is that confidentiality of client information is maintained. Meaningful information is shared between the two parties. Management consultant preparation for the engagement builds client trust and credibility, and trust enables meaningful collaboration, when the client trusts the management consultant with confidential information, as well as to have the client's best interests at heart. There is ultimately no guarantee that the management consultant will honour this trust. However, where this trust has been earned by the management consultant demonstrating that they are competent and prepared, they are more likely to honour it. When there is trust, there is also an increased likelihood of collaboration, enabling the client to openly share information that could assist them with solving the problem. With respect to the agency problem, the presence of trust fosters a closer working relationship between the two parties. More information is shared, and, in most cases, the management consultant is bound to keep that information confidential. However, there is no guarantee that they will do so. There is also no guarantee that they will work in the best interests of the client given the presence of trust. The presence of trust will encourage collaboration, and the client may have more sight of the work being done by the management consultant, partly eliminating the effects of the agency problem.

Therefore, when engaging with management consultants, managers should assess whether it is possible to build trust between themselves. Where possible, the managers should work on building this trust together, as it can contribute positively to the outcome of the engagement, and somewhat mitigate the problems that arise with the agency problem.

Overall, the research findings are in line with the existing literature in the fields of management consulting and agency theory. Furthermore, this research finds that collaboration contributes to a successful engagement outcome. The presence of Trust and a common vision also enable collaboration. Trust, collaboration and a common vision were also found to contribute to a reduction of the risk that comes with the agency

problem. Thus, all leading to an increased likelihood of a successful engagement outcome.

7.2. Research Limitations

It was important for the researcher to identify and to take note of the limitations on the intended design of the research. As such, the limitations are described below:

- Given that this study utilised non-probability sampling methods, the result is that the conclusions drawn could only be applied to the population from which the sample was drawn.
- The work performed in management consulting is highly confidential in nature. The services provided to clients enable them to solve problems, and, among other things, design their strategy and gain competitive advantage. As such, there was a risk that the interviewees were not comfortable enough to provide quality and in-depth information required to successfully complete this research paper.
- When data analysis takes place, there is a risk that potential bias may take place. This bias arises as a result of the perspectives that the researcher holds, as well as a result of how I interpret the data that was obtained during the interviews. This therefore necessitated the use of a trusted theoretical hermeneutic.

7.3. Recommendations for Management

Given the nature of business, it is likely that managers at some point in their careers will have to make a decision as to whether or not to engage the services of management consultants. The nature of these types of relationships is that they resemble those of a principal/agent relationship. Thus, to ensure a beneficial outcome for their organisations managers should focus on ensuring that there is trust, a common vision, and collaboration throughout the engagement. The presence of those factors will reduce the impact of the agency problem, and increase the likelihood of the success of the engagement.

Management should also consider building certain capabilities within their organisations, so that they do not always have to revert externally when they are faced with certain internal challenges and problems. Management should consider building certain expertise within their organisation, by keeping up to date with the market trends as well as with the issues that could potentially affect their businesses, thus building internal expertise and competence. However, it may not always be possible to avoid the use of management consultants, as sometimes, they are brought in to provide an independent

perspective. Despite that, where possible, management should build and manage their organisation in a manner that enables them to solve problems.

Lastly, management should always take ownership of their organisation. Although they may bring in external parties to assist, ultimately their own organisation is their mandate, and external parties are only there to assist. Therefore, management should be fully invested in a solution to the problem, as well as the process of working with the management consultants towards its resolution.

7.4. Recommendations for future research

Whilst the field of management consulting is fairly established, there is not a proliferation of literature regarding the methods, particularly on the part of clients, for optimising its efficacy. Future research can be done to further validate the findings presented in this research report.

Areas for further research are suggested below:

1. This study was conducted on twelve respondents at a management level. More research can be done on a larger sample so as to gain a broader perspective on why trust, common vision and collaboration contribute to a successful engagement outcome.
2. This research found that one of the reasons why some managers engage the services of management consultants is to transfer risk and responsibility from themselves to the management consultant. Further research can be done to validate this finding among managers as well as to determine why this is the case.
3. Collaboration was found to be a recurring theme in the findings of this research as a contributor to successful engagement outcomes. Collaboration was also found to be enabled, where trust and a common vision were present. Thus, further research can be done to understand the relationship that collaboration has with trust and a common vision in management consulting engagements.

7.5. Conclusion

Managers have the difficult task of running their organisations, with running an organisation, and being held accountable for company performance and for the decisions that they make. One of the decisions that many managers are faced with is whether to utilise the services of management consultants or not. The outcome of those engagements is uncertain, and there is no certainty about whether the management consultant will act in the best interests of the client.

This research project has gathered insight into the impact that trust, collaboration and a common vision have on the outcome of the engagements. These factors were found to increase the likelihood of a successful engagement outcome. They were also found to reduce or manage the downside risk that arises as a result of the agency problem for clients when utilising the services of management consultants.

The results provide management with characteristics that they seek out in their engagement with management consultants, in order to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome, whilst reducing the negative implications of the agency problem.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Informed Consent Form

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

Common Vision, Trust, Collaboration and Successful Management Consulting engagement outcome: a client perspective.

Thank you for agreeing to take time to participate in this study. This study will be conducted from July 2016 to October 2016. This form will detail the purpose of this study, a description of the involvement required as well as your rights as a participant.

The purpose of this study is:

To find out more about the factors that influence clients to utilise the services of management consultants. I am also trying to find out more from the client perspective about how the factors below will contribute to the success of a management consulting engagement:

1. A shared vision between the management consultant and their client;
2. Collaboration between the client and the Management Consultant;
3. Trust by the client of the management consultant.

The benefits of the research will be:

The results of this research can provide practical value for understanding the factors driving the use of management consultants as well as a better understanding of some of the factors that will contribute to the success of management consulting engagements in a way that adds value for clients.

Your participation:

Your participation in this study would consist of an interview that will last approximately one hour. The interview will consist of specific questions related to the purpose of this study as detailed above. There is no requirement for you to answer every question. You may at any stage decide not answer any questions that you are uncomfortable with answering. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. While our discussion will be tape-recorded, your data will be used without identifiers. This is to enable me to accurately record your insights and responses. All data

will be kept confidential and no responses will be linked to any individuals. If at any stage during the interview you feel uncomfortable with the recording, you are free to ask for the audio recorder to be turned off. If you have any questions or concerns please contact my supervisor and myself. Our contact details are provided below:

By signing below I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information.

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Researcher name: Vuyolwethu Lusu

Phone: 072 659 6940

Email: lusu.vuyolwethu@gmail.com

Supervisor name: Morris Mthombeni

Phone: [011 771 4301](tel:0117714301)

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 – Interview Guide

1. Tell me about an instance where you used the services of a management consultant?
2. Please describe the services provided to you by the management consultants and why?
3. Describe the circumstances that have caused you to utilise the services of management consultants.
4. Tell me about the factors that you consider to be the most important for the success of your engagement with management consultants and why?
5. Tell me about the role you believe you have to play in ensuring that your engagement with the management consultant is successful?
6. In the context of your engagement with the management consultant:
 - a. Tell me about your understanding of sharing common vision?
 - b. Describe the role do you think having a common vision plays on the outcome of the engagement?
 - c. Is having a common vision important for this type of engagement? Why?
7. Does active collaboration between the employees of a firm and management consultants contribute to the success of the engagement with a management consultant?
 - a. What is your understanding of collaboration?
 - b. Describe the role you think the intensity of collaboration plays on the outcome of the engagement?
 - c. Is collaboration important for this type of engagement? Why?
8. To what extent does trust the client trusting the management consultant impact the relationships between the management consultant and their clients?
 - a. Tell me about your understanding of trust in this context?
 - b. How can trust be exercised in this type of engagement?
 - c. Is trust important for this type of engagement?

Appendix 3: List of Respondents

No	Name and Surname	Respondent Company	Designation
1	Leonard Makgamathe	South African Reserve Bank	Stakeholder Relations Manager
2	Limphe Monyamane	Nelson Mandela Foundation	Chief Financial Officer
3	Joseph Maboko	Barclays Africa	Senior Performance Improvement Consultant
4	Mongi Dlamini	Nedbank Limited (Swaziland)	Head of Credit
5	Mandy Rambharos	Eskom	Manager: Climate change and development
6	Monique Visee	Rand Merchant Bank	Chief Operating Officer – Investment Banking Division
7	Thapelo Lekwane	Royal Bafokeng Platinum	Head: Risk Management and Compliance
8	Stephen Linnell	Rand Merchant Bank	Chief Operating Officer – Global Markets
9	Girland Chibaya	Pick 'n Pay	Head of Strategic Planning: General Merchandise
10	Siyabonga Vumazonke	Nedbank Limited	Senior Strategy Consultant
11	Diane Kee	Barclays Africa Group Limited	CIO Markets – CIB Technology
12	Sello Hatang	Nelson Mandela Foundation	Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 4: Consistency Matrix

Research Questions	Literature Review	Data collection tool	Analysis
What are the key driving reasons that lead organisations to engage management consultants?	Bronenmayer & Wirtz & Gottel, 2016 Chitakornkijasil, 2011 Massey & Walker, 1999 Pemer & Werr, 2013	Semi- structured interview. Interview outline Question 1 and 2.	Content analysis. Consideration was given to how many times the terms learning opportunities, resistance to change, ongoing assistance and certainty management.
From the client's perspective, what are the factors considered to be the most important that characterise their engagements with management consultants to be regarded as successful?	Bronenmayer & Wirtz & Gottel, 2016	Semi-structured interview. Interview outline Question 2.	Content analysis. Consideration was given to what factors are mentioned by the respondents for the successful engagement outcome as well as how many times each of the factors are mentioned.
How important is a shared common vision for the success of an engaging management consultants?	Bronenmayer & Wirtz & Gottel, 2016	Semi- structured interview. Interview outline Question 3.	Content analysis. Consideration was given to the reasons mentioned by the respondents as well as how many times each of the reasons are mentioned by the respondents.
Does active collaboration between the employees of a firm and management consultants contribute to the success of the engagement with a management consultant?	Bronenmayer & Wirtz & Gottel, 2016	Semi- structured interview. Interview outline question 4.	Content analysis. Consideration was given to the reasons mentioned by the respondents as well as how many times each of the reasons are mentioned by the respondents.

<p>To what extent does trust the client trusting the management consultant impact the relationships between the management consultant and their clients.</p>	<p>Bronenmayer & Wirtz & Gottel, 2016</p>	<p>Semi- structured interview. Interview outline Question 5.</p>	<p>Content analysis. Consideration was given to the reasons mentioned by the respondents as well as how many times each of the reasons are mentioned by the respondents.</p>
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Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance Approval Letter

Dear Miss Vuyolwethu Lusu

Protocol Number: **Temp2016-01456**

Title: **Understanding the role that a common vision, intensity of collaboration and trust have on the success of the engagement between Management Consultants and their clients. A client perspective.**

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been APPROVED.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards,

Adele Bekker