A clients’ perspective on external management consulting
Acknowledgements

First of all, we would like to thank all of our participant for taking the time to meet with us and give valuable insights and suggestions for our thesis. Our thesis would not have been achievable without their contributions.

Further, we would like to express our biggest gratitude to our supervisor Mikael Lundgren for valuable insights and helpful advice during these weeks.

Additionally, we would like to thank our examiner Lars Lindkvist for helpful comments and advise during our seminaries. We would also like thank our opponents for interesting discussions and opinions that help us improve our master thesis.

Kalmar, 2019-05-20

_________________________________________  ______________________________________
Malin Nylund                               Tilda Zerat
Abstract

Title: A Clients’ perspective on Management Consulting

Supervisor: Mikael Lundgren

Course: 19VT-4FE445 Methodology and Degree Project Management

Keywords: Management Consulting, Client perspective, Motives behind utilizing management consulting, Consulting services.

Purpose: This paper aims to explore if organizational affiliation as a private and public organization influences the motives behind utilizing management consulting. Our topic, management consulting, has been widely discussed both in academic and non-academic settings and the client perspective in management consulting have to some extent received academic attention. We found it interesting to explore the client perspective through a lens about the effect organizational affiliation has on organization's motives on utilizing management consulting.

Methodology: This study has a qualitative research method with an inductive research approach. Our data collection was conducted through interviews with participants from both the public and the private sector that was involved in purchasing management consultants in their organizations. We analyzed our empirical material with a qualitative content analysis that help us code and develop categories in our material.

Findings: The findings in our study implicates that motives behind utilizing management consultants differ between public and private sector in how they perceive management consulting and what their expectations on the consultant are. Through our empirical material and data analysis we have been able to detect differences in how the private and public sector perceives management consulting and influencing factors, which in turn affects the motives for purchasing management consulting services in the organization.
# Table of content

1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 Problem Discussion ......................................................................................... 4
   1.2 Research question and the purpose of this paper ........................................... 7

2 Literature Review .......................................................................................................... 8
   2.1 Definitions on management consulting ............................................................ 8
   2.2 Perspectives on management consulting ......................................................... 9
   2.3 Client perspective on management consulting ................................................ 11
   2.4 The difference between private and public procurement ............................. 13

3 The Methodological Design ......................................................................................... 15
   3.1 Research purpose and approach ...................................................................... 15
   3.2 Interviews ......................................................................................................... 17
   3.3 Interview Guide ................................................................................................ 19
   3.4 Our sampling process ...................................................................................... 20
   3.5 Data analysis approach ................................................................................... 23
      3.5.1 Critical approach ...................................................................................... 25
      3.5.2 Credibility .................................................................................................. 25
      3.5.3 Dependability ............................................................................................. 26
      3.5.4 Transferability .......................................................................................... 26
   3.6 Ethical Aspects .................................................................................................. 27
   3.7 This study’s process outline and individual contributions ............................. 28

4 Empirical material and our interpretations – What did we find out? ....................... 30
   4.1 Characteristics of management consulting ...................................................... 31
      4.1.1 The private sector ...................................................................................... 31
      4.1.2 The public sector ...................................................................................... 35
   4.2 Quality of contract ............................................................................................ 39
      4.2.1 The private sector ...................................................................................... 39
      4.2.2 The public sector ...................................................................................... 42
   4.3 Development of skill and experience ................................................................ 45
      4.3.1 The private sector ...................................................................................... 45
      4.3.2 The public sector ...................................................................................... 46
   4.4 The value of management consulting ............................................................... 47
      4.4.1 The private sector ...................................................................................... 47
      4.4.2 The public sector ...................................................................................... 50

5 Discussion and Analysis .............................................................................................. 53
   5.1 Clients’ perspective on management consultants’ effect on the organization ... 53
   5.2 Quality of contract ............................................................................................ 55
   5.3 Development of skill and experience ............................................................... 58
   5.4 The value of management consulting for the client ........................................... 62

6 Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 64
   6.1 The meaning of the illustration ......................................................................... 64
1 Introduction

“Our all the businesses, by far, Consultancy’s the most bizarre. For the penetrating eye, there’s no apparent reason why, With no more assets than a pen, this group of personable men Can sell to clients more than twice the same ridiculous advice, Or find, in such a rich profusion, problems to fit their own solution.”


This skeptical view on consultancy that Bernie Ramsbottom in the 1980s gives in his satire does not provide a particularly uplifting or diverse perspective of management consulting. The perspective may not be representative of how science today understands management consulting, and today's science has different opinions on reasons, and why consultants are being used to the extent it does within organizations today. Though, the quote captures much of the essence what academic research has tried to clarify, understand and conceptualize for decades. One part of the academic research suggests that management consulting is a tool to increase the organizational performance (Kubr, 2002; Wickham, 2004; Armbrüster & Glückler 2007) and mainly are utilized for economic development (Sturdy & O'Mahoney, 2018; Armbrüster, 2004).

While one other part, the critical part of the academic research suggests that management consulting is for the political and symbolic value it represents (Alvesson, 2001; Fincham, 2002), and therefore should also take under critical consideration for why organizations are utilizing management consulting (Fincham, 2002). The industry of management consulting has been one of the most significant techniques developed since the 1950s for managers because management consulting has rapidly added new frameworks, skills, and tools for management in large companies (Canback, 1998). On the one hand, Canback (1998) argues that despite the broad market for management consulting and even though they have added a lot to the industry, it does not explain why management consultants exist. It is unclear why managers are willing to give away so much of their power and secrets to an outsider as consultants (Canback, 1998). On the other hand, science question why the management consulting industry is still expanding (ibid). For example, Kurb (2002), argues that management consultants often do not add real value to their clients and that organizations only use management consultants for appearance. This kind of reasoning is similar to Sorge and van Witteloostuijn's (2004) argument that the usage of management consulting is mainly about management fashion and hypes. Other researchers claim that people live in a free and open economy, and if customers did not see a value with consulting services, they would
stop using them (Canback, 1999; Armbrüster & Glückler, 2007). As management consultancy industry is a flourishing and an expanding academic research area, it is a reason for continuing finding new dimensions and perspectives of the phenomenon.

The extensive literature on management consulting often portrays as a global phenomenon. The reason for this portrayal, is because of the success of a few international consulting firm's and their involvement in national and transnational businesses and government centers. This usage of management consulting makes up for the majority of all the consulting activity and therefore, describing management consulting as a global phenomenon can be a misleading argument. A more useful indicator, but not a perfect one, is looking at fee income of the consulting firms because it shows that management consulting is far from universal. The highest concentration of usage of all management consulting revenues comes from the United States and Europe. These two take up 78 percent of all consultancy revenues. This research indicates that management consultancy is probably not a global phenomenon, but instead included in the Western economy. Management consulting services does naturally exists on other continents, but the services has a more difficulty to establish a broad network due to cultural differences. For example, in Japan, the employees are fiercely loyal to their employer which results in that management consultants have issues selling their services (Sturdy & O'Mahoney, 2018).

Even though consultancy revenues concentrates to a few countries, these revenues still affect the global economy and organization's who is not part of this concentration. Non-consulting organizations want to take part in their expertise to be able to create different organizational advantages, and therefore, we argue that there is no slowing down in this field. One aspect strengthening this argument is, for example, a report from FEACO (2018) showing that the management consultancy industry has grown substantially over 2017, both in term of turnover and employment. The encouraging management consultancy trend is contributing to the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for countries around Europe (ibid). This economic growth and the interest for management consulting might have an impact on why scholars are also showing interest in management consulting due to its practical relevance.

Consequently to that interest, many researchers focus on the perspectives of the consultant (e.g., Appelbaum & Steed, 2005; Armbrüster & Glückler, 2007; Belkhodja et al, 2012; Bronnenmayer et al, 2016) and not the client perspective. One other aspect confirming the
relevance of management consulting and its growth of interest is, for example, a survey done in Sweden by Nova 100. The company, Nova 100, is a global top talent network and are annually conducting surveys for their members regarding which company they find most attractive to work for. The members are mostly business- and engineer students and they rank which company they want to work for and the result for the report from 2016 are showing that 78 percent of their members want to start their professional career in the management consulting industry (AllaStudier, 2016). The students are interested in consulting for professions flexibility and money (Wylie, 2016).

There is an increased demand for consultants with business-oriented knowledge within both the public and private sector (Hansson, 2016). Hansson (2016) argues that it is difficult for any organization, private or public, to know when to bring in management consultants, to what projects, for how long and how much they should cost. During the year 2012 to 2015, Stockholm County purchased consulting services for over 1 billion SEK. The most considerable amount went to buying management consultants, with a total amount of 850 million SEK (Gagliano & Bunerfeldt, 2016). The public sector in Sweden is spending a lot of money on consulting services and has been a hot topic within investigative journalism, but surprisingly, the academic research interest has been limited (Pemer et al, 2016). Pemer et al (2016) argue that the public sector in Sweden is the fastest growing customer segment for management consultants. Both the private and the public sector in Sweden chose to purchase external competence, such as management consultants, to a larger extent than before, instead of carrying out the work with their internal skills (Furusten, 2015). There can be a need to purchase external expertise of different varieties, but management consulting services are diffuse and elusive. For example, it is not indisputable that an organization's administration should recieve the help of external management experts to lead their organizations. Instead, the management consultants assignments mainly considers the leaders tasks and their responsibilities within the organization in both private and public organizations (ibid).

Researchers have increasingly stressed the importance of focusing on the client-consultant relationship and implementing a client perspective on management consulting (Alvesson & Johansson, 2002; Sturdy et al, 2009; Alvesson et al, 2009; Chalutz & Tzafrir 2011; Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012). For example, Chalutz and Tzafrir (2011) explain that it is crucial for the success of an organizational change that the client-consultant relationship
include trust and commitment. One reason this is crucial is that management consulting is a knowledge-intensive business service that demands to share critical information exchange and dialogic communication (ibid). The acknowledgment of client commitment and participation enriches the understanding of the importance of clients' participation. Moreover, the client perspective has become more critical to management consulting, because clients have gained more experience by previous purchase of the management consulting services. Consequently, the client organizations have started to develop and professionalize their purchasing function in terms of management consulting (Alvesson et al, 2009). This view on the client perspective challenges the predominantly supplier-create-value-for-customer perspective and thus need to be further studied. As Hansson (2016) states, both the public and the private sector have an increased demand for consulting services, but it is difficult for any client organization to estimate what the value of the service is worth in money and time.

1.1 Problem Discussion

In research, management consulting firms are often assumed to be a primary source of external knowledge (Alvesson & Johansson, 2002; Sturdy & O'Mahoney, 2018). Fincham and Clark (2002) noted that few people would be able to avoid the effects of some consulting advice. It would be fruitful to conceptualize management consulting. At a conceptual level, consulting services are regularly presented as a critical part in management knowledge systems (Canback, 1999; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2001; Engwall et al, 2016). Mohe (2008) argued that there are two main variants of literature published about management consulting. First, there is a substantial body of literature published by consultants-for-consultants which is focusing on becoming a successful consultant (Alvesson & Johansson, 2002; Wickham, 2004; Armbrüster & Glückler 2007) and thus have no or little scientific validity (Bronnenmayer et al, 2016). Although this type of literature is often not rooted in the academic theoretical discourse, it is of value regarding the insights it provides to the management consulting industry because the profession is often described as learning-by-doing (Alvesson & Johansson, 2002; Mohe, 2008). We find this mentioned body of literature having practical relevance for organizations, but due to the majority of authors are themselves consultants, we think it has limitations in providing a new dimension for the clients perspective on management consulting. Instead, more knowledge from researchers with no experience of working as consultants might be insightful to expand the scientific validity considering the client perspective on management consulting. One reason is that the
empirical material is not sufficient regarding the perspective of management consulting which is not from a consultant (Bronnenmayer et al, 2016).

Secondly, the body of literature has become more and more interested in management consulting (Mohe, 2008), which we argues gives not enough focus on the client. Previous academic research focuses primarily on changes in the consulting market, mechanisms of selection processes and the problem of being able to evaluate the work of management consultants. The theoretical literature has focused on transactional cost perspectives which focus on consulting and the computational choices that customer managers make between internal and external sources of knowledge. While social embedded methods mark the importance of networks (Sturdy & O'Mahoney, 2018). Despite the growing literature on management consulting, the variation clients purchasing management consulting has not yet been sufficiently investigated (Alvesson & Johansson, 2002; Czerniawska, 2002; Mohe, 2008; Sturdy & O'Mahoney, 2018).

The question, which source of external knowledge is used, and why external sources are used by organizations today, have historically impacted the institutional and structural emergence of management consulting in different environments (Engwall et al, 2016). Even though there is research trying to conclude the motives behind utilizing management consulting, there is still a fragmented area of reasons. Too few scientific researchers considers the client as more than a homogenous group (Mattila et al, 2018). Previous studies state that consulting services within management are purchased as a tool to increase the organization's performance through a planned collaboration between the consultant and the client (Kubr, 2002; Wickham, 2004; Armbrüster & Glückler 2007). This presentation demonstrates a rational perspective which we think are widely accepted, but it gives a too narrow and inadequate view on the consultant-client relationship. Both positive and critical studies have created a varied understanding of the reasons why client organizations use management consulting and the metaphorical list of reasons only gets longer (Mattila et al, 2018). This expanding list only creates fragmentation of the subject and does not generate a more in-depth insight into how different client organizations can explain why they utilize consulting services (ibid). We think this fragmentation creates unexplored gaps between the client and their motives.
In many organizations, management consulting services have become part of the daily organizational life (Werr & Pemer, 2007; Bronnenmayer et al, 2016). Buying consulting services in general but also management consultants in particular, represent a complicated task because the purchase of these services demands high financially and strategically efforts. Management consulting services are generally purchased to find a solution to a crisis or similar, which means that organizations are in a high-risk situation and the consequences of failure are significant (Werr & Pemer, 2007; Bronnenmayer et al, 2016). As the risks can be significant at the procurement process and the purchase of the consulting services, we argue that it would be beneficial to examine the acquisition of consultant services from a client perspective to generate new findings in this complex process of utilizing these services. Which in the long term may lead to understanding the risks associated with the purchases and the use of management consulting.

Furusten (2015) means that client organizations need to develop their purchasing and competence development processes to manage the specific nature of consulting services in a more skilled way. The value in consulting service is created collectively between the consultant and the client, but a positive result cannot be achieved unless the client knows why the organization requires external consulting services (Furusten, 2015; Hansson, 2016). Therefore, the client organization's motives for acquiring external management consultants becomes interesting. To produce an alternative dimension, which aims to differ from previous studies on the client perspective on management consulting, we are interested in private and public sector in Sweden. According to Furusten (2015), the understanding of the purchasing of consulting services can be the basis for understanding how beneficial the results of the consulting effort can be. There might emerge new findings for the client perspective regarding if organizations affiliation as public and private sector affects the reasons behind their decision to utilize management consulting. Therefore, we think it can be interesting in comparing whether there are similarities and differences between the private and the public sector. If it is possible to understand the motives behind the purchases, it may later be possible to determine which reasons are the basis for good outcomes or not.

There exists academic literature acknowledging the client perspective, but the majority of the body of literature treats the client as a homogenous group. It lacks the consideration of different organizational affiliation, such as the public or private sector, and may effect the motives behind utilizing management consulting. For example, an earlier conducted study
by Mattila et al (2018) has a more heterogeneous focus on the client. They examined the hierarchical levels in client groups regarding utilizing management consulting and conclude that they are different motives in client groups in organizations (Mattila et al, 2018). However, they do not discuss if the organizational affiliation plays a role regarding the reasons behind the client’s decision to purchase the services. Therefore, it might be valuable to focus on how motives may vary between the public and private sector. Clients have different views of the use of management consultants (Pemer & Werr, 2013) and therefore we think the motives behind the use of management consultants can be interesting to explore if the motives can vary between client organizations.

1.2 Research question and the purpose of this paper

Based on the discussion, the thesis will strive to answer the following question:

*In what way can the organization's affiliation affect the motives to purchase management consulting services in the public and private sector?*

The purpose of this paper is to explore if and how organizational affiliation as private and public organization influence the motives behind utilizing management consulting in Sweden. By exploring the organization’s affiliation, it might generate new understandings about the reasons behind purchasing management consultants. These new understandings may lead to a more focused distinction on the motives behind purchasing management consultancy services and how it affects the purchase.
2 Literature Review

In this chapter, the literature review will provide relevant theoretical background for the purpose of this study. It focuses on four major perspectives: a theoretical analysis of the definition of management consulting, the academic perspective of management consulting as a profession and the client perspective of management consulting. The last perspective contains a theoretical explanation of the difference between public and private sector in Sweden.

2.1 Definitions on management consulting

To understand management consulting as a phenomenon, a definition which can be considered is Canback's (1998) definition: "Those who provide general management advice within strategic, organizational, or operational context, and who are institutionally organized in firms" (1998, p. 1). Even though Canback (1998) points out some key points about management consulting, it is not a definition that is sufficient to understand management consulting as a phenomenon (Appelbaum & Steed, 2005). Therefore, it can be beneficial to include further definitions of the phenomenon. A different and a more thorough definition of management consulting, for example, is: "Management consulting is an advisory service contracted for and provided to organizations by specially trained and qualified persons who assist, in an objective and independent manner, the client organization to identify management problems, analyze such problems, and help when requested, in implementation of solutions" (Greiner & Metzger, 1983, p. 31).

Greiner and Metzger's (1983) definition is an elaboration in its description of management consulting as a profession, which Canback's (1998) definition lacks. For example, Greiner and Metzger (1983) emphasize the importance of perceiving management consultant as an external resource to organizations. They consider consulting services to be purchased for projects and the consultant are not considered as a member of the organization. Instead, the consultant acts with their motives and interests. Another definition of management consulting highlights management consulting services not to be an individual performance, but instead it is viewed as processes and tactical decisions. The definition is: "Management consulting is a set of interrelated procedures aimed at providing professional support to the company management in strategic development for achievement of competitive advantages and in solving managerial and production issues in conditions of limited resources and uncertainty of economic situations" (Ibatova et al, 2018, p. 476). Ibatova et al's (2018)
definition take a different perspective than the organizational and the individual perspective. Instead, they mark management consulting as a tactical external resource which is not an achievement from an individual. We would argue that these three definitions together provide a broad understanding of management consulting both as a profession and as an academic subject.

2.2 Perspectives on management consulting

Management consulting is one of the earliest professions in outsourcing (Srinivasan, 2014). Companies and managers seek external advice or support for critical problems within organizational development and strategy (Alvesson & Johansson, 2002; Srinivasan, 2014). Kubr (2002) argues that management consulting can be interpreted both as a method for providing practical advice and tools for organizations, but it can also be seen as a professional service. Management consulting, as a profession, in some academic literature (Alvesson & Johansson 2002; Appelbaum & Steed, 2005; Alvesson et al 2009), contains several standards. Management consultants are assumed to have a suitable academic education in management, but also have the capacity to be able to understand and develop management strategies and processes. A consultant should also know how to communicate with clients, handle resistance, understand organizations’ needs and be able to recommend and give objective advice to their clients (Canback 1999; Alvesson & Johansson, 2002). If these standards are what the profession management consulting should contain, then Kubr (2002) argues that management consultants have not yet been able to reach or meet these criteria.

Fincham et al (2013) identified three different characteristics of management consulting and the first characteristics is about offering support on how to manage and diagnose problems within management. Secondly, management consulting is about an external view of management problems which does not persist in pursuing an implementation process. Third and lastly, the consulting services and support are offered temporarily. Based on these characteristics, the authors define management consulting as an inclusive activity which has justification for providing a kind of support, which in turn identifies and manages management problems (ibid). These services are offered to individuals, groups or companies and are external to the particular organization and they are purchased by management temporarily (Fincham et al, 2013; Srinivasan, 2014).
The management consulting industry needs to handle several challenges because of the client's reduced engagement. This reduced engagement has shortened project life cycles and where clients begin to demand real, measurable returns for their investments (Fincham et al, 2013; Christensen et al, 2013). The development of the industry, consulting firms are no longer only able to offer strategic advice, but they also need to take responsibility for the implementation phase (Srinivasan, 2014). The significant challenges the management consulting industry are facing is within three broad categories (Christensen et al, 2013; Srinivasan, 2014). One of the difficulties is competition and differentiation. As competition intensifies with the emergence of heterogeneous players in the market, there is a significant need for consulting companies to define their unique identities and to differ from the others in an increasingly fragmented industry (Christensen et al, 2013).

Secondly, another challenge is the organizational design of the management consulting company. The traditional organizational design, considering professional partnerships, is threatened by the globalization of consulting companies and their customers. Consequently, this threat requires the consulting firms to adopt new organizational ways to best suit their context and identities. The third category contains challenges considering how knowledge flows within the organization internally to meet the clients' needs. Management consulting firms with high knowledge ensures that organizations proactively manage their convergence flows of information within the company (ibid). Effective utilization of organizational knowledge is essential for creating and maintaining the balance between utilizing existing knowledge and creating new knowledge (Christensen et al, 2013; Fincham et al, 2013; Srinivasan, 2014).

The existing general image of management consultants is a summary of different individuals' impressions, understandings, knowledge, expectations, and ideas about management consulting as a profession. The external actors' impressions are important for consultants, particularly when these perceptions are held by paying clients (Bouwmeester & Stiekema, 2015). Consultants provide services which clients cannot perform by themselves, but management consultants' services are characterized by intangible and abstract features (Glückler & Armbrüster, 2003). This perspective is further reinforced by the fact that professional standards or contracts cannot fully guarantee the quality of the services provided. On the one hand, a positive image can reduce uncertainty and give management consultants higher legitimacy. On the other hand, an incomplete image has the opposite
effect (Bouwmeester & Stiekema, 2015). Alvesson and Johansson (2002) explain that the debate regarding management consultants involves extreme opinions which are either very positive or very critical. One the one hand, a very positive opinion is for example: "For many people, consultancy signals interesting, significant, dynamic and prestigious work" (Alvesson & Johansson, 2002, p. 229). On the other hand, a very critical opinion is for example: "Consultancy means the absence of deeper knowledge, shallowness partly associated with fashions and fads as well as overpayment and an almost immoral attitude" (Alvesson & Johansson, 2002, p. 229).

2.3 Client perspective on management consulting

Considering clients who continue to hire consultants are likely to have a favorable opinion on the consultants' skills despite any critical views (Bouwmeester & Stiekema, 2015). Sturdy (2011) reports that clients are more positive about the management consultants' impact compared to, for example, external project managers in a client organization. Of all the interest groups, the clients are in a unique position to assess the consultants' expertise because they can first-hand-observe how the consultant do their job (Bouwmeester & Stiekema, 2015). Clients can also experience first-hand how consultants exercise their skills to analyze and solve, for example, organizational problems. This close interaction between the client and consultant can result in a more personal relationship but also increase clients confidence considering the consultants have shown their capacity and competence to get the job done (ibid). If the consulting assignment is not developed in the right direction, the client as a buyer has sufficient control to terminate or redistribute the job (Werr & Styhre, 2002).

Many clients have spent a lot of money on questionable advice from consultants (Höner & Mohe, 2009; Belkhodja et al, 2012). The clients' need for professionalizing their contacts with consultants stems from frustration which arises from an invisible and fragmented internal consulting landscape. The consultant receives approval without any type of evaluation which increases the likelihood that projects may go wrong at a later stage. The reason it fails is because no structure or strict selection process exists to validate the choice when recruiting the consulting company (Höner & Mohe, 2009). Belkhodja et al (2012) explain there is a need to professionalize the transaction between consultants and client organizations which begins with the employment and then the collaboration process will become more useful and efficient.
The academic literature in the consulting field points to two different types of clients: the clients who know what they want in advance and the clients who do not (Alvesson et al, 2009; Belkhodja et al, 2012; Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012). Clients who know what they want, if these people represent established structures or are individual agents who work for their benefits, tend to legitimize their actions by recruiting reliable and loyal consultants with whom they have previously interacted (Belkhodja et al, 2012). For clients who do not know what they want, the consulting process is seen as a process where they will exchange knowledge with consultants and together make sense of data and information in ways of direct involvement, common ground and with dialogue (ibid).

Value creation through collaboration between consultant and client is a crucial factor in a successful business relationship (Chalutz & Tzafrir 2011). The client's perceived value is considered central to the company's competitive advantage and value creation of client-consulting relationships (Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012). Other academic research highlights the client-consultant value is reflected in the mutual interaction processes between them and not solely through the usage of the service (Sturdy et al, 2009; Alvesson et al, 2009; Chalutz & Tzafrir 2011). An interaction process through knowledge intensity, specialization, and technological complexity are also growing in many businesses. This growth makes the consultant and the client overtime more dependent on each other's resources and knowledge (Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012). The clients have become more experienced and well-informed in using consulting services (Sturdy et al, 2009; Alvesson et al, 2009). They have also become more familiar with projects and change management as well as formal general management knowledge (Alvesson et al, 2009; Chalutz & Tzafrir 2011). One reason for this increased knowledge is because clients often can be ex-consultants themselves and have insight into what happens in the consulting services process. Therefore, can the client organizations make progress in developing and professionalizing their procurement process function (Sturdy et al, 2009). The clients' requirements also reflect their increased expectation on the consultant to be more specialized, which means more pressure on how the consultant interacts and helps the client (ibid).

Mattila et al (2018) conducted a study which examined the heterogeneity of client's reasons for utilizing consulting management. In their study, they described two co-existing factors, "impact" and "significance", as key factors for utilizing management consulting. These key
factors can be seen in earlier research as well (Alvesson et al, 2009). The first label is based on the positive literature in management consulting and on its central perception of the direct and measurable impact of consultation on organizational performance. The second label is based on the critical studies and on the idea where consultation can have subjective significance because of its symbolic, political and image value (Mattila et al, 2018). Mattila et al (2018) concluded that management level and hierarchical position affects how different motives client groups have for acquiring and utilizing management advice.

The examined client groups emphasize the motives within the factor "impact" for the purchase of management consulting services. The result from Mattila et al (2018) shows that consulting services are purchased and used for guidance and assistance in decision making and for gaining knowledge in organizational development. Their findings also indicate the client groups vary in emphasizing the motives behind the factor "significance". The client groups in lower hierarchical positions believe management consulting services are useful for communicating difficult or controversial problems and decisions. Management consulting services can also be acquired and used for the image-value it creates (ibid).

2.4 The difference between private and public procurement

All purchases of consulting services in the public sector in Sweden are governed by the Public Procurement Act (LOU) and is a law which regulates purchases done by the public sector financed by public funds (Gertéll, 2011). The main difference between the public sector procurement processes and the private sectors, is the private sector are exposed to competition and competes with other companies and organizations on the market (Lindahl-Toftegaard, 2018). The private sector actors should generate money for their organization and its stakeholders and usually should be profit-driven. While organizations in the public sector do not face this competitiveness and do not have these requirements, however, the public sector operates based on assignments that come from different principals, such as the municipal council (Gertéll, 2011; Lindahl-Toftegaard, 2018). Another important difference is that the private sector mostly uses its own money from the county district when purchasing consulting services, while in the public sector the whole organization has a budget to follow each year (Lindahl-Toftegaard, 2018). One other difference is that the public sector's activities should usually provide a public service to all citizens in Sweden. Therefore must the public purchasers ensure they meet these requirements before the procurement process.
are realized (Gertéll, 2011). This type of requirement is usually not in the private sector where they instead have to meet stakeholders’ expectations (Lindahl-Toftegaard, 2018).

Riksrevisionen is a part of the parliaments’ control department and their mission is to provide the Swedish Parliament with independent audits of state activities. The purpose of the reports regarding the purchase of consulting services from Riksrevisionen is to investigate whether the state's use and purchase of consulting services are characterized by controlled and thought-out decisions considering the state's money and resource utilization (Riksrevisionen, 2018). The public sector is annually using a large amount of resources to purchase consulting services. The use of consultants places high demands on the public sector as the client of the services that the consultants deliver. One reason for this high demand is because the outcome of a wrong decision or failing project can be costly and lead to consequences for the state that is difficult to review (ibid). Riksrevisionen’s (2018) annual report shows the use of consulting services in general is not well-founded and that the authorities lack to some extent in their control of the usage of consulting services. One consequence for this lack of control is a risk that the public sector's purchasing of consulting services is not sufficiently efficient, and the authorities do not adequately manage the state's resources (ibid).

Furthermore, the report shows that most departments in the public sector can do better at taking a strategic approach to the procurement process and purchasing of consulting services by analyzing and planning their need for competence more efficiently. The public sector's presentment of their utilization of consulting services' is not sufficiently transparent and there is a lack of possibility of following up the state's consulting costs (Riksrevisionen, 2018). In order to achieve the best results, both the private and the public sector should work strategically with the procurement process and purchasing of management consulting services (Lindahl-Toftegaard, 2018). The public sector's purchasing work often lacks a clear structure and a holistic perspective (ibid). Even though the lack of structure in the public sector, the problems do not seem to arise through corruption which can be seen in other countries. Sweden is in the top five countries in the world with the least corruption (Transparency International, 2018).
3 The Methodological Design

In this chapter, we will outline our methodological choices and approaches. Further, we will describe how we conducted our study and how our sampling method, data collection and analysis were carried out. We will also discuss and outline the credibility, dependability, transferability and ethical aspects of our study.

3.1 Research purpose and approach

This paper aims to explore if organizational affiliation as private and public organization influence the motives behind utilizing management consulting. Our topic, management consulting from a client perspective, has been widely discussed both in academic and non-academic settings and the client perspective in management consulting have received attention to some extent. Therefore, we found it interesting to explore the client perspective through a lens, which has not received so much attention thus far. According to Neuman (2014), the exploratory purpose has its goals on becoming familiar with a relatively unknown topic. The author further explains that it also means generating new ideas for formulating questions to future research. Our study has an exploratory character and therefore, we strive to provide more insight, generating new ideas and formulating new ideas for future research. We used a qualitative research design to fit our purpose because the design provides an opportunity to collect a small sample of detailed and nuanced information. Which helped us answering our research question.

We found the qualitative research approach most suitable for our study and to the chosen topic. It exists various descriptions of what qualitative research and empirical material within social research is (Kjær Jensen, 1995; Hansson, 2004; David & Sutton, 2016; Bansal, 2018). A simplified distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is, for example, that qualitative research collects and analyzes words. While in contrasts, quantitative research gathers and analyses numbers using statistical techniques (Starrin, 1994; Braun & Clarke, 2013; Bansal, 2018). Other descriptions of what qualitative research is, focus more on the researcher who collects and interprets the empirical material. This focus on interpretation makes the researcher as much part of the research process as the participants and the material they provide (Creswell, 2013; Neuman, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; David & Sutton, 2016). The concept of the client perspective, as both public and private actors, can both be a complex and social phenomenon which needs a more profound understanding to comprehend the influence it has on the chosen phenomenon. The ambition in our qualitative
study is to receive a broader understanding of the phenomenon and try to interpret it from the perspective and experience of the respondents, which can be seen as the aim of a qualitative research method (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017).

With qualitative research, we refer to the gathering of non-numeric empirical material through interviews and observations. Interviews and observations are common tools within qualitative research (Kjær Jensen, 1995; Bryman, 1997; Hansson, 2004; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). After collecting our empirical material, we interpreted the material by building categories, themes and analyzing patterns until we established a comprehensive set of material. When conducting qualitative research, there is a risk that the inquiry is not being transparent enough. The research needs to be documented and described because other people must be able to review and understand the process to determine for themselves if the research is valid and transparent (Yin, 2015). To be able to meet this demand, we have documented the different choices in the form of notes in a notebook.

Qualitative research relies on interpreting the non-numerical text and inductive theorizing (Bansal, 2018) to recognize patterns and to create conceptual frameworks (Saunders et al, 2016). Therefore, our study is inspired by an inductive approach. We refer our study only to be inspired by an inductive approach because it is not possible for us to be purely inductive. We conducted some of the theoretical frameworks before we collected the empirical material because it was necessary to have a pre-understanding of the topic. Even though we had a theoretical pre-understanding, our research is based and controlled by our empirical findings. One reason we chose to have an inductive approach is that previous research often have a deductive approach (Fullerton & West, 1996; Mattila et al, 2018; Alamri, 2018), and therefore we think it is beneficial to have an inductive approach with interviews as a strategy to collect relevant empirical material. One other reason considering the inductive approach is, in our study, we are exploring if the organization's affiliation as a private or public organization affect the reason why managers in client organizations are using management consulting. It exists a broad framework on why management consulting services are being utilized, but relatively little prior studies have focused on if the organization's affiliation as a private or public organization.
3.2 Interviews

The number of interviews is significant to increase the chance to identify new findings in the analysis, but also to gain the opportunity of gathering multiple perspectives on the chosen topic (Neuman, 2014; Brinkmann, 2017). We chose eight participants who meet our criteria and they were both from the private sector and the public sector. We conducted two requirements because we needed to reduce the risk of the participants not knowing how their organization utilized management consultants. Our requirements on the participants were that (1) they needed to have experience in purchasing external management consulting services before. (2) They needed to be a part of the organization's decision-making process where they have, and still are, purchasing the consulting services. One issue to consider was the possible issue of accessing participants who were relevant to the chosen topic. The participants need to qualify because the likelihood of their opinion is influencing the reason why they are utilizing management consulting is more likely to have an impact.

In one of the interviews in the public sector, one participant invited her colleague to participate in the interview. We agreed to interview them both during the same interview after we assured she also met the criteria we had on our participants and therefore, she became our ninth participant. The nature of this interview became different than the other interviews conducted because we interviewed two participants at the same time and their responses were often intertwined with each other. Saunders et al (2016) use the term group interview in a general way to describe semi-structured interviews conducted with two or more participants. However, they point out that it is more typical that the range for group interviews involve four to twelve participants. During this interview, we tried to ensure both participants had the opportunity to state their opinion or reflection in each question and discussion. Saunders et al (2016) explain the possibility to conduct a more one-to-one interview-based strategy in group interviews and can generate a larger representative sample, mainly when the research is conducted in a certain organization. Considering the circumstances of this particular interview, we are aware that it might be interpreted as a group interview, but in our empirical material we have separated the participants because we were able to find some difference in the material from this interview. We also think that the unequal number of participants did not affect the findings negatively because the majority of their response was monolithic. After our ninth interview, we experienced a saturation of our material and chose not to carry out more interviews.
According to David and Sutton (2016), interviews in qualitative research is often conducted face-to-face and are the most desirable approach to do compared to online video interviews. One reason online video interviews are not beneficial is due to its lack of observable body language and non-verbal cues (Seitz, 2016; Weller, 2017). However, qualitative researchers increasingly have been accepted online video interviews as a reliable method and argue it does not affect the quality of the empirical material. For example, in a study from Jenner and Myers (2018), online video interview (e.g., Skype) do not produce an inferior on the quality in the material. Instead, it is the level of privacy that matters more than the mediation of internet context (ibid). Based on this assurance, we conducted our interviews face-to-face and by Skype because it will enable us to follow our timetable and both alternatives are valid methods. This decision allowed us to search for participants from other parts of Sweden, which in return gave us a geographical spread of the participants. All of our participants have Swedish as native language as, well as we, and therefore we decided to speak Swedish during the interviews. We are aware that it is possible that some content from the interviews could have changed, lost its intent when translating it into English. However, to our best abilities we tried to be as truthful as we could to the collected material when we translated it and aimed to find a balance between not losing the materials original meaning and the need to change the sentences into comprehensible English.

The limitation of time and monetary resources restricted how many interviews we conducted. It always exists a wish to gather an even more extensive sampling of the empirical material. The saturation of the empirical material depends on to what extent the researcher wants to analyze and generalize the material (Thomsson, 2010; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). The semi-structured interviews provided us the flexibility to ask follow-up questions which is important when gathering as much material as possible. The qualitative empirical material provided by the interviews was beneficial for our study. It was beneficial because it enabled us to explore if the organization's affiliation as the private and public organization may influence the motives. The quantitative methods are more common in social research than qualitative ones (Doz, 2011), and therefore we think the qualitative material produced a valuable perspective on the chosen topic. If we were to implement a deductive approach, which Saunders et al (2016), explains as the most common data gathering technique is questionnaires, on the one hand, it would provide us with more participant. On the other hand, the answers will be in the form of pre-chosen answering alternatives (ibid), and therefore will not satisfy our need for a longer explanation.
One issue we needed to be aware of was the issue of the credibility of the empirical material. When gathering our material, there is always a risk that the participant either answers what he/she thinks the interviewer wants to hear or answers from a pre-written manuscript (Saunders et al, 2016). Therefore, we tried not to use words that could be interpreted and lead to 'the right answer'. Instead, we tried to use words which the participant was familiar with. This choice was particularly important when we interviewed participants in the public sector because we got the sense they often wanted to give the 'correct answer' due to the political environment they operate in. Saunders et al (2016) explain that if the participant has a pre-written manuscript, it is important the interviewer asks additional questions to get a complete answer from the participants' opinions, which we did.

We think our choice to conduct semi-structured interviews worked well due to the open questions and discussions we could have with the participants. Even then, one cannot be entirely sure that one has collected 'truthful' empirical material (Saunders et al, 2016). We addressed this risk but ensured it did not determine if the empirical material were valuable or not. The interpreted material can despite the lack of an absolute 'truth' have fruitful insights (Saunders et al, 2016), which we considered when we conducted our analysis. One other risk we needed to consider, where the risk of different biases the participants have on management consulting. For example, Maister (2018), explains that clients often have prejudice on how clients are being perceived by management consulting and how they neglect the client's opinions and do not listen to their suggestions. Thus, the interviewer needs to consider this biases and make sure the participant fully exhausts their attitude and perspective on the matter (Saunders et al, 2016).

3.3 Interview Guide

To help us focus on the topic during the interviews, we used a semi-structured interview guide which guided us to ask relevant questions and to engage the participants in the discussion. By using an interview guide, it is possible to adjust the level of language so the participants fully understand the questions (Berg & Lune, 2014). A semi-structured interview guide consists of two different levels of questions, the main themes questions and the follow-up questions (Kallio et al, 2016). We constructed the main theme questions to cover the main topic of the research. The interview guide started with questions for the participants to talk about their position and involvement in the organization to establish how
involved the participant had been in purchasing management consulting services. After we chose to construct broad questions that could provide us with the participant's perception of the phenomenon management consulting and their view on why organizations utilize consulting services.

Further, some of our questions were more specific, for example, how the participants perceived their organization's usage of management consultants. During these questions, we encouraged the participants to speak more freely about their observations and experiences. These questions were used to break the ice and create a relaxed environment, which should according to Kallio et al (2016) be concerning known issues for the participant but is central to the topic. The follow-up questions were used to simplify the main theme for the participants and lead the conversation towards the research topic. The purpose for that was to keep the flow in the interview and get accurate and optimal information as possible. Follow-up questions can be preconstructed or spontaneous based on the participant's response (Kallio et al, 2016). An unwritten follow-up question we asked was, for example, if the participant could elaborate more to get more information or an example. When the participants went out of track or focused on non-relevant details to our study, we used our follow-up questions to go back to our topic and phenomenon.

3.4 Our sampling process

Sampling, is an essential part of a research method because it affects the entire research and ultimately even the result (Maxwell, 2012). To answer our research question, we had to find the best possible technique for sampling information. Since we conducted the research regarding the motives behind utilizing management consulting and the differences between the public and private sector, we found it necessary to get credible information from the participants about these motives. We started our process of sampling by constructing our requirement which for us were essential to be able to decide whom to choose as our participants. Merriam (1998) classifies this process as purposive sampling which can be seen as a form of nonprobability sampling strategy. In our study, we used the purposive sampling strategy, because we think it was the most suitable method to be able to answer our qualitative research question.
In qualitative research, probability sampling or convenience sampling is not typically used. Instead, one commonly used sampling method is as Maxwell (2016) explains as purposeful selection, also named as purposive sampling. Within this strategy, the researchers consciously choose which persons to be the participants, organizations or activities that fit into the study. It is about conscious choices that can provide valuable information to the research (Suen et al, 2014; Maxwell, 2016; Ames et al, 2019). There are several goals with purposeful selection (Creswell, 2011; Maxwell, 2016) and one goal that are in line with our study is the goal to achieve representativeness of individuals amongst the participants. One reason for choosing purposeful selection instead of random sampling is that random sampling is most likely used to produce a larger sample size. Purposeful selection is more suitable to smaller sample size where every participant must contribute with useful information (Creswell, 2011).

In order to find participants for our study, we used snowball sampling. This sampling method refers to the sample that comes from a process of references from one person to the next (Denscombe, 2018), which our sampling did. We found some of our participants by involving two persons from our network who could then refer us to participants who could be suitable for our study. The process continued with us contacting organizations and departments in both the private and public sectors by email. In the emails, we briefly described our study and what type of participants we sought, The people who received our inquiry could then refer us to potential participants who in turn also recommend colleagues. Snowball sampling is an effective way of finding participants for a study because it is based on a reference system. The result of using a reference system is that the individuals who are reached out to, are likely to participate. Snowball sampling is also effective to quickly achieve a reasonable number of participants for a study (Denscombe, 2018). When we contacted possible participants, we explained our study in general to let the participants create their opinion about us and our study. We did not want to give the participants too much information about the topic because we did not want to influence their views on the topic. Instead, we provided a broad sense of our expectation of the study. We identified potential participants that met our criteria and asked if they were willing to be a part of our research and they willingly agreed to participate.

Our approach of using purposive sampling helped us ensuring we included participants representing both the private and the public sector in Sweden. It is possible we overlooked
participants that did not meet our sampling criteria but could have contributed with valuable insight into our study. For example, we chose not to move forward with two participants working in the public sector in two different departments because they did not meet the sampling criteria, considering influencing the decision-making process, but otherwise they were involved. They might have contributed to the study with useful insights, but we made an active decision not to interview them.

Another goal with purposeful selection is capturing the heterogeneity of the population. The reason is to ensure the range of variation amongst the participants, and not only the typical member of the sampling population (Maxwell, 2016). In our case, it would probably have been easier for us to collect participants who are working as management consultants, which perhaps would have led to an only male population, because the majority of consultants are male (Ollevik, 2008; Loxi, 2018). However, we chose not to conduct our study from that perspective for two reasons. Firstly, we wanted to study our research topic from a client’s perspective. Secondly, we think this alternative would not have gained us enough heterogeneity in the empirical material. Therefore, with purposeful selection helped us ensure that we had a wide range of different participants as possible, without losing the other essential criteria. Our participants had an age range of between 30 and 65 years. The participants come from five different cities in Sweden and work in the private or the public sector. All the participants have been a part of the decision-making processes in purchasing management consultants for their departments or organizations. We have chosen to present the participants with pseudo names to keep their anonymity because of the change projects that management consulting are involved in, can maintain sensitive information about companies secretive strategic choices. We present our participants as follows:
As Saunders et al (2016) write, the purpose selection can be challenging to conduct in a trustworthy way because the researcher needs to use his/her judgment when selecting participants. The researcher also needs to know if they can provide what is necessary for the research and to meet the objectives (ibid). Therefore, it was essential for us to think carefully about which participants we included or excluded in the study. In this case, the pre-set criteria were useful support for us and the semi-structured interviews gave us the flexibility to adapt the interviews to maximize the quality of the empirical material.

3.5 Data analysis approach

Qualitative data is characterized by richness and fullness due to the social constructionism, meaning and realities that influence the participants' interpretation of activities around them, in which can supply variation and complexity to qualitative data (Saunders et al, 2016). To analyze our empirical material, we selected to conduct a qualitative content analysis which according to Hsieh and Shannon (2005) offers flexibility in the analysis of text data and includes a variety of different analytical approaches to be most suitable. The different approaches in the qualitative content analysis are for example interpretative, systematic or textual analysis and are mainly used to interpreting empirical text data with a predominantly realistic pattern (ibid). Due to our choice to collect our empirical material with semi-structured interviews, and wanting to get an understanding of the phenomenon, we focused
on language as communication and to the content of what the participants said but we also paid attention to the contextual meaning. These aspects qualify as characteristics of qualitative content analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

There are three approaches in qualitative content analysis: directed, conventional and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The most suitable approach for our study was the conventional approach because, as Hsieh and Shannon (2005) explain, it focuses on describing a phenomenon. To avoid a biased pre-understanding of the topic, we did not use predetermined categories before we collected the empirical data. This decision helped us, to some extent, to remain bias-free and not influencing the participants to give us answers that would fit into the already predetermined categories. Without a predetermined category, we were able to collect a more substantial amount of empirical data to analyze.

Further, we chose to record all the interviews because it allowed us to go back and listen to the participants' response which decreased the risk of misunderstandings or miss any information, including the contextual meaning from the participants. After every interview, we wrote a summary of the interview to get an overview of the content. We went back and listened to the interviews after we wrote the summaries to ensure we understood the material correctly and transcribed the most relevant sections. This strategy is in line with one of Saunders et al's (2016) explanation of a strategy when conducting an analysis. Further, we noticed patterns between the interviews and these patterns led to the developing of labels of codes and a summary of key patterns. Through these codes, different categories emerged which we noticed a link or relationship between the different labels of codes, as Graneheim and Lundman (2004) describes as an important part of the process in a content analysis. In our coding process, we subjectively chose the most important quotes from our interviews and from these quotes, we found common keywords. These keywords became the foundation of our categories. We illustrate this process in a figure under chapter 4 to give the reader an overall understanding of the background to our categories. We found four categories that we think are representative of our collected data, and the categories are:

- Characteristics of management consulting
- Quality of contract
- Development of skill/competence
- The value of management consulting
The purpose of research who are using qualitative content analysis is to try to extract knowledge and an understanding of the chosen phenomenon (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In our study, we were studying the phenomenon of different motives behind utilizing management consulting services. We wanted to offer an understanding of how these motives may vary between the public and private sector in Sweden. To be able to show these motives successfully, we needed to interpret our textual data by using a systematic classification procedure of coding and try to identify different patterns and themes.

3.5.1 Critical approach
To further analyze our empirical material, we chose a critical approach because we aimed to have a reflexive thought process so the study does not present an over exaggerated conclusion. The analysis will be inspired by Alvesson and Deetz (2000) suggestion of using a more critical approach where personal insight, critic and transformative revaluation is to be considered. This approach has similarities with reflexivity. We chose to be inspired by this approach because according to Alvesson and Deetz (2000), to critical reviewing on the deficiency, issues and its evaluation is an essential part of social research. The critical approach is beneficial for a researcher to be influenced by because it helps to prevent the researcher from performing too 'grand' analysis, overgeneralization, selective observation, premature conclusions and allowing the halo effect (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Neuman, 2014). The first aspect, personal insight, implies the importance to be aware of the process of knowledge and how objective that knowledge is. The second aspect, function of critic, is to resist obvious goals, ideas, and results. The last aspect, transformative revaluation, implies the process of developing a critical understanding and its ability to rethink one's conclusion through increasing understanding (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). To be inspired by the critical approach was helpful for us in the process of analyzing the empirical material because it challenged us to try to notice interesting findings that were not explicitly said.

3.5.2 Credibility
To increase the credibility of our research, we chose participants who met the criteria and with various experiences on the selected topic. These criteria increased the credibility because their various experiences gave the opportunity of shedding light on the research question from a variety of aspects. Further, we chose to analyze with a reflexive view on the empirical material and the qualitative content analysis as Graneheim and Lundman (2004) explains it as a fruitful tool which the empirical material can be judged regarding its
credibility, dependability, and transferability for the research to achieve trustworthiness. Research findings should be as trustworthy as possible and should be evaluated. Within the tradition of qualitative content analysis, which are related to quantitative analysis tradition, the concepts validity, reliability, and generalisability are often used. The following three concepts have the same intention for describing trustworthiness as the traditional concepts, and both alternatives have the same essential meaning (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The concept credibility concerns the confidence in how well the empirical material and process of analysis address the intended focus of the study (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). When collecting the empirical material and during the analysis process, we focused on the intended phenomenon and our participants, to be able to present credible empirical findings.

3.5.3 Dependability
One other aspect regarding trustworthiness is dependability. It refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions (Elo et al, 2014). To preserve the dependability of the study, we considered the consistency when collecting the empirical material and the analysis. During the gathering of the material, we were careful not to leave out any predetermined question to risk inconsistency of the quality of the material. There were differences in the material, because of the follow-up questions in our semi-structured interviews allowed us to expand from the questions and aided us in not to receive an adequate sampling of the material. It is essential to avoid inconsistencies while collecting the empirical material, but it is significant to register if there are any differences and take them under consideration during the analysis. Therefore, it is essential to clarify the used criteria for selecting the participants and describe the main characteristics of the participants, so it can be tested to other contexts and be assessed (Neuendorf, 2002; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Elo et al, 2014).

3.5.4 Transferability
Trustworthiness also includes the aspect of transferability which refers to the potential on how generalizable the findings can be transferred to other contexts (Neuendorf, 2002). To enhance our research transferability, we presented a rich presentation of the findings with appropriate quotes to highlight interesting findings from the interviews. However, all of the participants are anonymous, but the important characteristics of the participants, such as their position, are presented. We think the anonymity of the participants will not interfere with the study's trustworthiness as long as we give a clear presentation of its context and the
characteristics of the participants. It is the readers’ decision whether or not the findings are transferable and it is vital to give a clear description of the context and characteristics of the participants to be able to facilitate transferability (Neuendorf, 2002; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Elo et al, 2014).

Furthermore, transferability can be increased by detecting and preventing faults in the data collection process (Elo et al, 2014). Therefore, we have worked with the empirical material in the most objective way possible. However, we were aware that both the critical approach and the qualitative content analysis emphasize that the analysis cannot only be conducted from a purely objective perspective. The objectivity should not be neglected or forgotten, but one should not ignore that research reality can be interpreted in various ways and therefore the understanding of a topic is dependent on subjective interpretation (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Further, Alvesson and Deetz (2000) explain that one crucial aspect is not to limit oneself to labels and categorization of methodological choices. One reason for that is when categorizing, one can, intentionally or unintentionally, create a too narrow procedure for the research (ibid).

It is possible to ensure certain transferability by providing a multifaceted description of the study. The description will allow the reader to make their judgment if there is a high enough transferability in the findings of the study (Bryman, 2016). We are aware that some of the patterns we found, can to some extent be transferred into other contexts and we have therefore strived to provide a high level of transferability as possible. We presented as much material as possible about the process of data collection and analysis for the reader. We have also tried to be as transparent as possible by providing as much material as possible. Lastly, we present our empirical material with some integrated analysis to avoid repetition and to manage our material in the best way possible. The challenge of presenting qualitative data is to present an extensive amount of material in an abbreviated and understandable way (Denscombe, 2018).

3.6 Ethical Aspects

Research ethics is a fundamental part of any scientific research and researchers are expected to consider specific ethical issues when conducting research. One reason why researchers are expected to consider some ethical aspects is to ensure the researcher does not influence or damage the research (Harrison & Rooney, 2012; Denscombe, 2018). It exists four main
ethical principles which produce a foundation which a researcher expects to consider. The principles are (1) protect the interests of the participants, (2) have evidence that the participants are participating freely, (3) The researcher should also avoid false and romanced conclusions and (4) one must follow the rule of law (Denscombe, 2018). In our thesis, there were several ethical aspects to consider and one significant ethical were protecting the participants' interests. It is possible our research question and purpose are in close relation with company secrets and strategies and therefore, we decided to have all the participants anonymous.

Flick (2014) means that readers should not be able to recognize or identify a person or the company, in a study with anonymous participants. Therefore, it is important to encrypt specific details such as name, company, age and address (ibid). However, anonymity should not affect the trustworthiness of the study because we presented the main characteristics of the participants, without specific details about the person or company. One reason why we chose anonymity is because we think it increased the participants' willingness to answer the questions truthfully. We present our participants under pesoudo to minimize the possibility to identify or recognize the participant. Even though the participants are anonymous in the thesis, it is still possible that the participants will recognize themselves in the study and therefore, it is important we do not make any judgments. One other significant ethical consideration were we sought active consent from the participants. Berg and Lune (2014) describes active consent as formal written permission to take part in the research and we have written approval in the form of emails or text messages from the participants to confirm they are participating freely.

3.7 This study’s process outline and individual contributions

Before we chose to work together, we discussed how we thought work processes with a thesis should be conducted. The discussion also included what our personal strengths and weaknesses are, for example, one of us are good at focusing on details and the other person are good at seeing the broad picture and making sure the process always moved forward. This discussion resulted in that we felt confident to work together, because our differences complemented each other. During the entire writing process, we have chosen to sit together and write and have had the opportunity to discuss all kinds of matters directly. Our way of work has been to distribute areas between us in order to streamline the work, but throughout the process we have readjusted each other's work and switched the parts. We started
discussing the outline of the introduction together and then divided it equally. After we were done with our parts, we read each others and this pattern has continued throughout the entire work process.

After the introduction was almost done, one of us focused on the thesis literature review meanwhile the other focused on our methodological design and choices. When we were done with reading each other's parts, we summarized the interviews we conducted. We summarized four interviews each and then one focused on writing the empirical material while the other one focused on readjustments. The writing process continued with analyzing the empirical material and we discussed together which themes we could deduce from the material. Other parts of the writing process such as coding, discussing the most interesting findings and connect the findings with the literature review we did that together. We chose to always sit together when working for two reasons. First, it is easier to avoid misunderstandings which could result in, for example, conflicted arguments. Second, it is important for us to be equally invested in the thesis and are familiar with all of the chapters because both of us need to support the whole thesis, not only the parts one has written in person. In the end, we both are very satisfied with the whole writing process and our choice of working methods.
The following chapter presents the empirical material from the interviews. We have interpreted the material and made a collaborated analysis. The empirical material are divided in four themes and the material from private and public sectors will also be presented separately. First we present our process to find our categories, in form of a figure, to give the reader an understanding about the categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Our themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Characteristics of management consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill the gap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Our themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulated in demands</td>
<td>Quality of contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know what you want</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled purchaser</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Our themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adding competence</td>
<td>Development of skill and experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of personnel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easing the workload</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quickly implementing skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The consultants do not have the resources to become a symbol for the organization even if the person is a part of a change process”
“It is common for organizations to have a false sense of guarantee when using management consultants”
“An impartial voice is important”
“The symbolic value is primarily the creation of legitimacy for the organization”
“The external consultants can function as an objective party and give substance for arguments when defending decisions”
“It is comforting to have had a second opinion on the decisions”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbolic value</th>
<th>Impartial voice</th>
<th>Objectivity</th>
<th>Second opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The value of management consulting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figur 2. Our illustration of the coding process to conduct our categories

4.1 Characteristics of management consulting

The first presented theme considers the participants perspective on how management consultants are being utilized and integrated by their organization. Firstly, the participants opinion from the private sector be presented, secondly, will the view of the participants from the public sector be introduced.

4.1.1 The private sector
Bengt Wikingsson, CEO, thinks "management consultants are mainly purchased to help broaden and increase the knowledge of those in the organization who are middle managers, site managers and supervisors". He explains that it is "primarily about the managers becoming more businesslike and better at seeing the whole picture". The management consultants can help building teams and which can give the middle managers the tools to further build teams for the rest of the organization. Linda Adamsson, Program manager, thinks the purchase of management consultants is about "acquiring cutting-edge expertise within the organization or freeing time for projects". The times Adamsson purchased consulting services has been because the organization does not have time or a need to increase the work tempo. She points out that "management consultants should also have the skills to work with organizational changes". Wikingsson thinks similar to Adamsson, but he adds that, in some cases, purchasing management consulting services can be seen as an education for the organization and organizational processes. Fredric Hansson's, Head of Department, point of view is that management consultants are also bought to "refine the organizational processes and to help the business be more profitable". His personal experience with purchasing management consulting services is primary because he experiences the feeling of lack of time to add another project in his schedule.
Based on the findings above, we noticed the participants from the private sector understands and utilizes management consulting differently. Wikingsson and Hansson have a similar line of thought and uses management consulting to release more time for themselves to be able to help primarily managers, but also other personnel. One reason for their similarities could be because both have vast experience as a highly positioned manager, such as members of executive boards and CEO positions. As a result of these positions, it creates an extensive experience of having responsibility for personnel. Their experience might also influence how they view, for example, organizational change and processes. Adamsson's have experience of being in charge of personnel but not as much as Wikingsson and Hansson. This difference might be one reason why Adamsson utilizes management consultants differently from Wikingsson and Hansson. Her perspective is that purchasing cutting-edge expertise could be a result of the telecommunication she works in.

From Hansson's experience with management consultants, "the process of developing new strategies and way of work usually takes much longer time than predicted, which results in when it is time for implementing the change, no one has the energy to implement it". Instead, everyone who is involved in the decision-making process is longing to get back to their "real work". To prevent failure in the phase of implementation and avert the feeling of wanting to get back to the 'real work', Hansson works with small everyday changes and processes. He explains that the entire organization does not keep up with bigger changes if the organization contains more than three employees. The small changes can only be effective if the organization have a clear vision and people with a leading position who can show the way to the vision. Hansson thinks the larger significant organizational changes should only be made if the industry demands it and the organization's survival are depending on making a bigger change.

Considering Hansson's opinion of management consulting projects as not a part of the 'real work', we think it can be interpreted as the projects not being part of the daily routine work tasks. The need for prioritizing daily work is essential for the organization, but it might implicate, intentional or unintentional, resistance from the personnel to start projects that include management consulting services. One other interpretation could be that he thinks management consulting projects are overestimated because the personnel rarely have the time and energy to implement the ideas and changes in the long-term. He also emphasized the importance of everyday changes to be the key to success for the organization. This
opinion might be interpreted as viewing projects with management consulting services as extra work which deprives resources of the business.

According to Hansson, one difficulty with management consultants is "they are often not present in the process of implementation". It does not matter how much time and energy the organization spends on hiring consultants who try diagnosing the problems and comes up with new ideas if the changes fail to be implemented correctly. Paul Petersson, Specialist Manager, and Adamsson also think management consulting projects often fail in the phase of implementation due to the absence of the consultant. Hansson further explains that he does not think management consultants should be involved in implementing the changes for two reasons. First, it is the manager's responsibility in the organization to make sure the implementation is successful. "The consultants would have too much power over the organization if they are also in charge of the implementation". Second, the management in the organization should know what they want and vision it clearly so that the description to the consultants should minimize the gap between describing the change and suggesting possible procedures to succeed the change.

This paradox of not wanting the consultant there for the implementation phase and often failing with the implementation was, explicitly or implicitly, expressed in the answers from the participants. It might be a financial issue as a reason why the consultant is not present in the implementation phase because the project without the implementation can be several years. Consequently, the cost for the consultant might not be profitable considering the result, particularly when the implementation phase fails to begin at all. One other thinkable reason for this paradox can be a result of an unsuccessful phase of transferring the consultant's responsibility to the members of the organization. It might be a common issue that the consultant fails to communicate and show the personnel how practical changes affect them and how they should work differently. Instead, the personnel works the same way as always when the consultant is finished and resulting in no change.

Wikingsson thinks that "purchasing of management consultants can offer great competitive advantages". He continues with it is an absolute necessity, in some situations, to use management consultants to "lift and move forward in the organization". He emphasizes the importance to hire someone externally to "see what the organization needs". It gives the organization a boost in different contexts and the management consultants can help to make
necessary structural changes. Petersson and Adamsson resonate similar to Wikingsson regarding management consulting services, and explains it can give competitive advantages because it gives the organization resources quickly and consequently can make agile changes. Petersson thinks "the main reasons for buying in consultants is because it is difficult to have enough expertise in all areas of the organization", therefore management consultants are an "effective tool to use to acquire cutting-edge expertise". He also points out that the organization must identify the areas where there is a lack of competence for some time, but if the skills shortage is so great that skills are needed over a long period of time, one should consider hiring permanently.

Considering Wikingsson's, Petersson's and Adamsson's opinion about the reasons and competitive advantages management consulting can deliver, it can be interpreted as the utilization of management consulting is done because of the accessibility of quick changes and resources. Petersson and Adamsson often used words as 'consulting specialists' or 'expertise consultants' when talking about management consulting. They implicitly associated the word management consultant with a temporarily hired manager with involvement in the organizational change process. The stigma of not wanting to use the word management consulting could have several explanations. One explanation might be the perceived authoritative role which the consultant could represent when arriving in the organization and take charge of the change. The project members might feel as they do not have the same power as the consultant and therefore register the consultant as a leased manager. Another explanation could be the management consultant are comprehended as a specialist and therefore not directly connected with the word for the participants.

Further, the participants associated the need for more resources to the reason why they are purchasing management consulting service. The market in the private sector demands quick changes and we think it is a reason for organizations in the sector for purchasing the services. We also think it is significant to understand how the specific organization work and how the business processes operate for all business sectors. However, this importance is emphasized in the private sector due to the demand for projects being as profitable as possible might be more essential than in the public sector. In the public sector it is important not to miss-use the budget containing tax-money, but the budget is larger for a public organization than the average sized organization in the private sector.
4.1.2 The public sector
Johanna Blomgren, HR-Strategist, thinks the public sector buys management consulting services because it “is primarily about filling a gap when ordinary staff does not have the time or the capacity to perform a particular project”. She thinks, in many cases, it is a matter of needing competence which is internally lacking. The need is often temporary thus, it is better for them to buy management consultants rather than hire someone full-time. Both Linnea Engström, Plan Manager, and Susanne Nilsson, Coordinator, have similar arguments and explains that it is usually the competence that is “internally lacking” when they need to buy consulting services. She points out they might have the competence within the organization but it is “more comfortable purchasing consulting services and having the expertise when the organization needs to cope in stressful periods with a high workload”. Engström's opinion is it has been more “pressure on her department to produce and perform more in recent years, and therefore purchasing of management consulting services has also increased”. She thinks it would be useful to discuss the rising demand in order to find out if the skills that they purchase might need to be in the organization more permanently. Hannah Carlsson’s, Head of HR, opinion is that the main reasons why the public sector buys management consulting services are because “there is a lack of capacity and sometimes lack of competence”. According to her, the former is the most crucial factor because sometimes there is no time to carry on essential projects.

Based on the participant's opinions, we noticed that there are some main reasons which are the same as in the private sector. Both the private and the public sector have a need for more skills and knowledge to solve specific projects. We think the need for more skills and knowledge is due to the complexity of certain projects. The complexity might include the demand for in-depth expertise which the organization, especially in the public sector, cannot contain in every department or areas there are working in. This complexity could also consider several departments collaborating, which requires more experience. Our interpretation considering the request of external knowledge is the reasons differ from each other depending on what the organizations' affiliation is. For example, in the public sector the general answer on why they purchased management consulting is because they need more affirmation and documentation than the present demands the organizations have in the private sector.
Another aspect why the public sector perceives demanding more external competence might depend on the size of the organizations. The public organizations are generally significantly larger in the number of employees and areas of responsibilities comparing to private businesses. We think this large number of employees and areas of responsibilities have some impact on the participants in the public sector to purchase management consulting services, either as a supporting function or as a source of new ideas and procedures. However, we noticed during the interviews there existed some implicit insecurity among the participants when they considered purchasing management consulting services. For example, Carlsson expressed the fear of making "the wrong decision" because the budget they have consisted of tax money, which could lead to “journalists poking around and give them bad publicity” which then creates upset feelings from the citizens. This insecurity could be affecting the decision about purchasing consultants because the participant is not alone deciding what change they are going to make.

Carlsson thinks one advantage of using consulting services is that “work tasks are actually managed and completed”, which results in the employees does not have to work overtime. Consequently, the organization does not risk having to terminate employment. Niclas Berg, Head of Finance, has to some extent similar point of view with Carlsson but he strongly argues management consultants are "too often purchased and utilized in the public sector". He thinks the competence should be withheld internally continues with "the price for purchasing consulting services usually exceeds what was initially intended and organizations should reconsider the question whether if it is worth buying the services or not". Blomgren's point of view is that the biggest advantage of purchasing management consulting services is “it can be a source of input in analysis and mapping processes since it can give new perspectives”. Carlsson thinks that one benefit of buying management consulting services is that the organization can "develop and gain new experience from the consultant". If the consultant has been hired in several other municipalities before, it can both be an advantage and disadvantage. One advantage is the consultant's experience with the complex system the public sector consists of and thus possibly have suitable solutions for the organization. Her opinion is the solutions for a change process is more complicated for organizations in the public sector than the private sector because their work is basically to run a society and have more aspects to consider. They have an entire population within the county to and political decision from the government consider.
Considering the mentioned advantages, we noticed that the majority of the participants' opinions were positive regarding purchasing management consulting services. The opportunity to receive new ideas and analysis were the most common response and we think this is one main reason why organizations utilize management consulting. However, these obtained advantages are not specific to the public sector, but we think it is universal for all organizations utilizing the services. No matter what affiliation, every organization always wants to improve and refine the quality of the performance. On the one hand, this need for improvement could influence people's perception about management consulting to consider the services be mostly positive. The body of knowledge concerning the topic is originated from experience and therefore valid for managers to consider when conducting a change project. On the other hand, the vast body of literature regarding management consulting are written by consultants and we think this results in a more favorable perspective on its abilities. It has shown some economic and performance improvements, but we feel organizations need to be more aware of a possible halo effect.

One disadvantage from Carlsson's experience is the consultant's previous experience with changes in municipalities are still not a guarantee for the success of the change. The consultants often try to implement the same idea into her organization without sufficiently consider the specific organization. Blomgren thinks disadvantages with the purchase of management consulting services in the public sector occurs when "the consultants lack of in-depth knowledge about the specific organization". This shortage of knowledge can result in issues in the implementation phase when the consultants are not usually there. Therefore, Blomgren explains that during the implementation phase, it is important the consultant collaborates with the internal representatives. Further, Berg and Carlsson expressed the same opinion of one disadvantage of using consulting services. The expressed disadvantage with the management consulting services is there is no guarantee the end-product are useful. However, they did not share the same opinion behind the source of this disadvantage. Carlsson points out it usually not the consultants fault, "The consultants might come up with brilliant ideas but the reason why the end-product is not valuable is because the organization does not manage to operationalize the ideas to a permanent change". Berg thinks the reason why the end-product might not be of use is because "the end-result might discover the fact the organization could have done the work better than the consultant".
Carlsson's opinion is "the management usually has not analyzed the internal competence sufficiently enough before purchasing management consultants because the management believes they know their employees and the organization well". She thinks it is a subjective assessment of the management when they decide the competence does not exist and they need to take in external consultants. The reason for making the subjective assessment is due to the lack of time and the management group does not want to make an analysis of the employees' competence. One reason they do not want to analyze their competences is because an employee can be qualified with experience and competence on paper, but in the day-to-day operations the competence is not reached or the person has difficulties working in teams. Berg thinks "the public sector should avoid purchasing management consulting services and instead have the capacity and competence to manage the workload on their own". However, he acknowledges that it is not possible to strictly live by this philosophy due to the lack of capacity and competence. When this lack of capacity occurs, they need to bring in management consultants.

Considering these mentioned disadvantages and this critical perspective, we think it affects the participants' choice when purchasing the services to some extent. For example, Carlsson explained that it is a subjective choice and judgment of character when she and the other board of executives decide which consultant to hire. This subjective judgment can be perceived as both positive and negative for the organization. On the one hand, the process of deciding takes significantly less time when one of the involved executives know a consultant to use. The subjective assessment might result in a positive match between expectation and result. On the other hand, as all of the participants expressed the common occurring failure of the implementation phase, we think the participants needs a more critical perspective before deciding to purchase management consulting services. We think it is necessary to have a reflecting discussion between the decision-makers to evaluate the organization's capacity to handle the new implementation of change. As expressed in some of the interviews, sometimes the participants want to change because of the high workload but do not reflect on how much resources and time the implementation phase entails. However, this lack of reflection should not imply to completely dismiss purchasing management consulting services. We think Berg’s critical perspective is interesting because he dismisses purchasing management consulting so forcefully. He does not want to purchase management consulting services unless it is an emergency. To some extent, we understand
his critical view as a result of the political context he is part of because in recent years, there have occurred various scandals within the public sector.

4.2 Quality of contract

The second theme will be presented below and the theme includes the participants thoughts and experience regarding the quality of the procurement process contract. The participants answers are divided into private and public sector to make it easier to register a possible difference between them.

4.2.1 The private sector

Wikingsson explains one disadvantage of management consulting services is "it can be difficult to find a consultant who has expert knowledge in the areas you look for. Usually, consultants have a broad but shallow knowledge about the area". The consultants especially can have superficial knowledge regarding organizations core values. Hopefully, Wikingsson thinks "the organization itself contain the competence to be able to support the consultant with knowledge of the organization's core values". Further, he points out it is consequently essential "to be a skilled purchaser and to know what type of consultant you want and what the consultant can add to the organization". Hansson has the same argument about the purchasers “need to know what they want from a consultant”. The persons in the decision-making position also needs to be able to articulate visions and ideas in the contract. He strongly thinks that "if the purchaser does not certainly know what the organization wants and needs from a management consultant, then the person should stay away from purchasing their services". Adamsson and Hansson both express that their organizations have some written guidelines on how to conduct a distinct procurement process agreement and Adamsson express “there are some guidelines for us to follow, but it is up to us to make it work”.

Petersson thinks "misunderstandings are common between the client and the consultant because of poorly executed procurement process contracts". In the poorly executed contract, it is not obvious what the client's expectations are on the consultant's work and result. According to Petersson, "it is required from the client to be a skilled purchaser for there to be a value in hiring management consultants". When a person has little experience in conducting the contracts with the consultants, he thinks "it can show in the end-result and it is common for experienced personnel to conduct the contracts". Petersson's observation on
why inexperienced personnel is conducting the contracts is because "the people in charge of the projects often do not have the time to refine the details for the contract. Instead, they give their notes to someone else, with no or lesser knowledge about the concerning project to write the agreement". Wikingsson adds to the issue explaining that "it does not matter how detailed the contract is if the client does not support the consultants with all the information and tools the project demands. If the client does not integrate the consultant into the organization, work processes and give the right conditions, the result will not be good".

Based on what is mentioned above, we noticed the participants from the private sector were more explicit than the public sector in explaining the importance to articulate their wants and needs from the consultant in the form of a written procurement process contract. It might depend on the participants having the ultimate responsibility when a project has failed and from experience, they have learned the importance of a distinct agreement. For example, Hanssson explained he have had several projects with consultants which the end-result were not successful or how he had imagined it. He continued as he confronted them, they all referred to the written agreement and said: "they had done their part and the rest did not concern them". We interpret the participants view on consulting services as an external service, even if the consultant work with them during a longer period of time, the participants does not view the consultant as a member of the organization. The participants only viewed the consultants as an external service that they paid a lot of money for and therefore also can they demand results from them. Therefore, the contract are essentially the only commitment between the client and the consultants. However, we think there exists client-consultant relationships that goes beyond the contract but two crucial factors for it that is trust and time.

Further, Wikingsson explains "it is very important to have a good procurement process", usually he has purchased all kinds of consulting services based on experience and contacts. In other cases, he has turned directly to the consulting companies to find a skilled and experienced consultant, but he thinks the latter is usually more difficult. For example, Wikingsson has turned to consulting firms and asked, "Do you have someone who fits?". This direct approach has varied in its success and he emphasizes "the importance to find recommendations and references to get the appropriate consultant for the project". Adamsson expresses the difficulty "to find qualified management consultants thus it is important to take references to find qualified consultants". She continues emphasizing the
need "to detect where in the organization the help of a consultant is required before a contract is made". An alternative approach, to find a suitable agreement, is to use the organization's network to find a consultant. In her experience, she often uses consultants she has previously worked with because she “knows I will get the desired quality”. However, Adamsson points out that in order to gain new experiences and skills, one should “vary and sometimes bring in new consultants”.

Petersson explains that over time organizations, especially in the telecommunication industry, develop relationships with consulting firms. These relationships in the telecommunication industry, "enables the consultant to customize their services to the specific organization because they have insight and knowledge in their operation". For the relationship to be as successful as possible, it takes time to establish a foundation where the consultant knows the organization strengths and weaknesses. Petersson continues explaining in a procurement process, he "always start by reviewing previous contacts to increase the chances of obtaining a more quicker and more quality-assured". Wikingsson has a similar argument where he "cannot emphasize enough the importance it is to take references to secure the quality of a procurement process". He continues explaining it is also essential for the client and the consultant to "click with each other" and ensure the rest of the management team and the consultants are synchronized with each other for the task. Wikingsson thinks "it is important for the client to have patience considering the time it takes for a new consultant to get to know the organization. If the client expects a quick success, it will only create tension" in the client-consultant relationship.

Considering what the participants mentioned about the importance of gathering references, we think it is a significant part of the decision-making process regarding the choice of purchasing management consulting services. One reason could be it functions as a source of quality assurance for the managers and because the profession as management consulting is highly dependent on experience, it is essential to be able to validate these experiences. We think one other reason is, it is 'common sense' to take references to be able to expurgate unserious consultants or significantly inexperienced consultants. The chance of project failing is significantly higher if the managers do not do a thorough background check of the consultants and then it is a waste of time and resources. Therefore, taking references are a part of the decision-making process. However, it is possible to find common grounds for a definition of what ‘common sense’ considers because it is a subjective assessment. Our
definition on this, is the ‘happy medium’ whereas one seeks references but not too many so the life cycle of a project is not unrealistically high.

4.2.2 The public sector
Engström, Nilsson, Berg and Carlsson have the same explanation that all organizations in the public sector must always comply to LOU in any sort of procurement process. Engström continues explaining she “first start writing a requirement specification which the procurement-unit formulated a contract”. After finishing drafting the contract, it is being sent out as a request of consulting services which consulting companies can report their interest in the specific assignment. “The choice of management consultant are depending on how much the services costs and how well the match is between the requirements and the consultants qualities”. Nilsson and Carlsson adds that they always faces issues regarding lack of skills when developing contracts and other procurement documents. Carlsson thinks “there is a value in using the same consultant repeatedly because the organization already knows the consultant and it is convenient”. One reason the consultants are being used repeatedly, is because it gives a sense of security to the client. However, Carlsson points out that the public sector must always take LOU into consideration, and an individual cannot decide which consultant to buy.

Nilsson points out that “it is not their responsibility as an employee in the public sector to be experts. Their responsibility is to be a project manager who should try to be analytic as possible and be able to consider all possible influencing aspects”. Carlsson have similar opinion as Nilsson and explains “it is nothing wrong with buying consulting services because it is impossible to possess all the required skills to manage all activities in the public sectors”. Nilsson’s opinion is “the department should not have any cutting-edge expertise, they should rather purchase cutting-edge expertise from consultants when needed”. She thinks it can be of an organizational issue with this line of thought and it is certainly possible to find shortages in this way of work. However, she explains this approach considering the way of work is an illustration on how it is today in the public sector. Engström points out that “since the public sector is governed by LOU, they cannot choose themselves which management consultant or company they want to take in if they have already negotiated a contract with an consulting firm”.

42
Considering the mentioned thoughts from the participants, we notice the majority are mentioning and referring to LOU without any further reflection about the quality of the contract. Engström is the only one who explicitly express the importance of conducting a thorough and distinct contract. We think this lack of acknowledgement is remarkable and one possible reason for this lack of reflection is because some participants only follow the laws and regulations. One connecting reason, to this lack of reflection, may be a lack of creativity when conducting the procurements. Instead of regarding oneself as a source of inspiration and knowledge, they only comply to the legal framework. We think it is common to only follow the legal framework because of the indications from the interviews. The public sector is complex and this complexity results in doubt amongst the individual involved in the creation of the contract. The outcome of this doubt is not thinking about creativity when conducting the contract and having the pressure of finding the lowest prize-offer as possible.

One other determined aspect why the participants mostly referred to LOU might be because the organizations are too big with too many employees and responsibilities. It might be possible the legal framework are the only working support for them. The lack of reflecting upon the process of conducting contracts from LOU could also be a result from the tradition in the public sector. The tradition might imply not to question the way of work and only to encourage the existing work processes. This mentality of tradition were not explicitly being expressed, but for example, it was implicitly clear in the interview with Berg. His experience in the public sector was not to use consultants in any ways and that could be an outcome of the tradition in the organizations he has been employed in. The combination of a complex operation and the size of organizations in the public sector are recognized, and it affects the decision in how they purchase consulting services.

Both Nilsson and Engström acknowledge a disadvantage with LOU because it can be very focused only on the lowest price. In Nilssons experience, “it has occured that the cheapest consulting firm have secured a contract with them only because of the prize”. As a result, “the consulting firm have sent inexperieenced consultant without proper knowledge”, such as newly graduates without an mentor. If an inexperienced newly graduate would be in charge of one of her project, her point of view is that the project would perceive not as a serious one. Therefore, Nilsson explains “it is essential to formulate the contract of the procurement process based on quality, considering both requirements and reference systems, and not only the prize”. According to Berg, “it is always a cost issue if the organization are considering
to buy in consultants or not”. He continues explaining “all departments in the public sector must show legit reasons for why they should purchase consulting services, then it is of course completely controlled by LOU”.

Carlsson’s experience is consultants are often purchased, despite the LOU agreement, “through contacts or recommendations”. The board of directors will ask amongst each other if they know anyone that would fit completing the task and usually the consultant was familiar for the managers. Further, Carlsson thinks that “it is both advantages and disadvantages to employ consultants via personal networks”. One beneficial aspect purchasing the services is because it is time-saving for the personnel because “they do not have to support the consultant as much with information as a new consultant would have required”. She thinks one disadvantage with using personal networks is, the choice of consultants “are not being reviewed as much as it would have been if it was a consultant no one knew from before”.

From the empirical material, we noticed the importance to take references to legitimize and to assure the quality of the projects. It might be the fear of not knowing if the changes will exceed the expectations and, because it is within the public sector, therefore the request for quality assurance is great. The participants in the private sector took also references to ensure the quality but one other main reason where to get to know the consultants and to decide if there were an personality match as well. It was important for them to be able to work efficiently together with the consultants and it was not explicitly expressed from the participants in the public sector. One possible reason for this difference could be because the liberty to take the working relationship under consideration when deciding which consultants to make the agreement with. The politics affect the decision-making process for the public organization decides what individual question to focus on. It could also be a result of the participants not taking the working relationship under consideration as much as the participants from the private sector does. We interpret this difference between the sectors to be small and not to be the main difference that determines the choice of purchasing consulting services differently. However, we think it is more significant for the public sector to gather more references and more material than the private sector because of the principle of public access to official records. This principle allows, for example, the media to easier inspect the procurement process and report it to the community. The possible bad publicity gives public organizations more work to do and therefore are being avoided.
4.3 Development of skill and experience

The third presented theme involves the choice and the affect management consulting services has on organizations and what development of knowledge/skill/competence the consultants might represent. The presentation of the participants will have the same order as before.

4.3.1 The private sector

Wikingsson's opinion is that "the motives behind purchasing consulting services is mostly to add competence in a fast line of action which can be difficult to recruit to full-time positions". He continues with "in most cases, it is about temporary services which are not needed full-time but can add competence quickly". Peterson has a similar opinion but adds that the consultant "can resourcefully integrate his skills into the organization".

Hansson, Wikingsson, Petersson and Adamsson talked about the organization's need for specialists and often referred management consultants as specialists. For example, Adamsson explained, "it depends on how you see management consulting as is it a hired manager or is it a specialist?". We noticed this reflection from Hansson, Petersson and Berg from the public sector as well. The reflection might depend on how they are not certain about a clear definition of what management consulting is, and therefore interpret the service as a specialist or a hired manager without any influence in the change process. It could also depend on the consultants are marketing his/her services as a specialist or a manager. We think it is likely consultants wants to appear as a 'the one and only' specialist with unique competence and skills to increase the chance of receiving as many jobs as possible. There might be a risk that organizations are purchasing the consultant with the best marketing capabilities and fail to focus on what skills and development opportunities that are possible to obtain.

Wikingsson thinks that "one main benefit of buying management consulting is that a skilled consultant can provide a broad experience regarding organizational change processes". Therefore, the consultant might have a different idea for the organization considering their culture and the business. Adamsson thinks that "one advantage considering management consultants are, as an employer, it is possible to terminate the employment at any given moment if the cooperation does not meet the agreed expectations". Petersson thinks the benefits of buying management consulting services is "consultants are usually efficient and
focused on the assigned task. The reason they are efficient is that they are not disturbed by other sudden important work tasks or side projects". Another advantage Petersson has registered is "projects can be implemented much faster with the help of management consultants".

From the mentioned findings above, we notice the participant's perception and experiences in management consulting services is that it can generate in developing new experiences and skills for themselves. The organization's employees own development and skill might be improved because of the shared experience with the consultant. The possible value of the outcome depends on the commitment the parties have regarding the shared project. If the two parties have high commitment to the project, the chance to develop fruitful experiences and skills are more likely than with low engagement would result in. We think both the commitment level from the organization and the consultants are equally important for a fruitful result.

The organization's commitment considers for example, the ability to liberate the suitable manpower and information to optimize the consultants chance to produce the most suitable solution. The consultant's commitment level depends on, for example, of the level of engagement he/she has for the joined project. Therefore, we think organizations could benefit from reflecting more on how much and how important the commitment level is from the consultants. On the one hand, if the requirement is to be done with the project quickly as possible with no particular importance of commitment or to be thorough, then it would not gain the client to engage as much. On the other hand, the need for a commitment should always be required and demanded at all times from both parties. Even in small quickly achieved projects can knowledge, experiences and skills be drawn and should not be forgotten or neglected. We think the decision-making process would be positively affected by this reflection over the level of commitment.

4.3.2 The public sector
Nilsson and Blomgren have a similar experience of purchasing management consultants and Blomgren explains "it is not because we need the expertise is rather that the consultants are hired due to liberating the resources to start another project". The purchase of management consultants sometimes depends on the need for staffing only for a short time because they need "more hands on deck". Further, Nilsson and Engström thinks there are certain areas where the public sector purchases consulting services more often than the private
sector because they require more support regarding competence. They think one reason they have a higher need is because the public sector is highly complex with many different areas of responsibilities. Carlsson describes her public organization's job as "operate an entire village where you have to think about everything". This complexity results in "the different departments do not have the competence to help each other and therefore they need to utilize consulting services".

We noticed the participants from the public sector mostly resonated, as mentioned before, the need for consultants because of the lack of competence. They did not, explicitly or implicitly, expressed the opportunity it could bring for them to learn new experiences or skills. One interpretation is that the participants perceive the need for consultants at an organizational level where the lack of competence and skills are not situated on themselves. Instead, the lack of competence and skills lies within the organization and its workforce and therefore does not reflect on how they personally could develop their skills and competencies. This distance from themselves and the organization might influence the choice of management consulting services by overlook important criterion they need to achieve a successful working relationship with the consultant. A possible result for not considering their own criterion enough and only review the consultant's references could increase the risk of tension in the relationship. If the two parties have different approaches regarding the change process, the process could be unnecessarily time and resource consuming.

4.4 The value of management consulting

The fourth and last presented theme is about the value of management consulting from the empirical material. The theme is about how the participants perceive management consulting and what value that perception represent to the organization.

4.4.1 The private sector

Adamsson thinks "organizations can use management consultants to develop core business, but it can be difficult to buy a consultant who genuinely engages in the organization's core business". She thinks the lack of commitment from the consultant "often leads to failure during the implementation phase". In addition, Adamsson concludes "because the consultants are not genuinely engaged in the organization's core value, the person has no symbolic value to the organization. The consultants do not have the resources to become a
symbol for the organization even if the person is a part of a change process”. Hansson thinks management consultants can have some symbolic value to the organization by "representing a change in a larger project which changes the core business in some way. Other than that, the consultant does not have symbolic value to the organization". Petersson thinks one disadvantage considering management consultants is "that the decisions they make can affect the entire organization negatively”. Therefore, the concerned personnel from the organization need to have skills to cooperate with the consultant successfully. He continues explaining "a risk of losing skilled employees if the organization over-use consulting services".

Considering the symbolic value of the management consultants for the organization was not broadly accepted by the participants. The participants could sympathize with the idea of consultants representing change and therefore have some symbolic value, but they personally did not agree with the perception. It could be a result of the participants not having any or little experience with management consultants being explicit about the meaning of the change. Instead, the consultants have done a great job diagnosing and suggesting new ideas of suitable changes, but as mentioned before, the consultants are rarely present in the implementation phase. Therefore, the participants did not perceive the consultants having any symbolic value. The symbolic value might not be a priority for the organization's managers in the change project due to lack of knowledge what it can contribute to the change process.

We think if the managers had a better understanding of how the symbolic value of a consultant can help the employee's to comprehend the need for the suggested change. It might be a reason why the implementation phase fails due to the lack of understanding of the symbolic value. For example, Hansson experienced many failure during the implementation phases regarding change projects and he also did not believe in the symbolic value of the consultants and the change he/she could represent. On the one hand, there might be a connection between lack of belief in the symbolic value and the failing implementations of change, but there are too many other influencing aspects to be certain of this connection. On the other hand, Hansson was pro-making-small-changes for themselves and therefore there was no significant need for the possible symbolic value consultants may represent. In other words, he believed in his own symbolic value for the employees by being present and showing the way by express the small changes and the result of it.
Wikingsson, Petersson, Hansson and Adamsson are unanimous expressing the objective value which external consultants represent. Hansson thinks "it is common for organizations to have a false sense of guarantee when using management consultants". On the one hand, Hansson thinks that the consultants can function as an impartial voice in the decision-making process and generate new ideas can be positive. On the other hand, he says that "it does not matter if the consultants are impartial because the bottom line is the end result is completely depending on how detailed you are in describing what you want in the contract". Hansson continues explaining "it is more usual for organizations in the public sector to want an objective view or a second opinion about the work than the private sector". The reason why it is more common to desire a second opinion is "because you receive validation that are requested differently in the public sector". However, he thinks "this desire for validation does not differ from any organization". In the private sector, he thinks it is more common to be more restraint towards purchasing management consultant because "they are in general more careful with spending money if it is not in the budget. In the public sector consists some part of the budget from taxes and people have a different attitude spending money when they feel it is not their money".

Considering the unison between the participants in regard to the impartial value the consultants implicates, we think this is one main strength with management consulting. We noticed there existed a need from the participants to have a second opinion decision considering more significant changes. This need for confirmation could be due to the insecurity of not wanting to make mistakes and not knowing the end result. It might be common to feel insecure and therefore managers in organizations purchase consultants to be part of the blame if the project fails or results in being damaging for others. However, as Hansson pointed out, "it is a false sense of guarantee" because there may be a vast risk the consultant's sense of responsibility disappears when the projects begin to fail and not go as planned. We think it is common for projects to fail because of this insecurity and a false sense of guarantee and trusting too much in the consultants genuinely concern for the organization.

One other aspect why the participants expressed this value of objectivity is because change processes are expensive and time-consuming which may result in the managers only focus on keeping the cost down and be time efficient. This focus on saving time and money could
result with a false impression of what needs to be done in the change process and therefore a consultant is prosperous for the organization. The consultants can help the organization presenting a 'reality check' on what needs to be done. However, the dilemma with uncritically approve all the aspects the consultants want to change is not what should be pursued. One reason it should not be pursued is because the consultants only have information about the organizations which have been provided for him/her. The risk of, consciously or unconsciously, presenting not enough or not relevant information are too high to only consider the consultants suggestions. It is also not desirable because it it not the purpose with external consultants to serve as a all-powerful voice, it is only a supporting function to ones who want it.

However, the subjective evaluation from the consultant has some value for organizations (otherwise the profession would not exist) and we think it should be viewed as one of several essential perspectives which need to be interpreted before a final decision. The managers might benefit if more professional evaluations from each individual would be considered. In other words, several 'small' perspectives could collectively make up a more broad perspective for the managers to establish any decisions. This thorough evaluation is time-consuming and contradicts the participants need for quicker implemented projects but we think this approach has a value from a long-term perspective. The quick implemented projects are short-term solutions on unexpected problems but we think it might not be suitable for all situations and the chance of making the wrong decision can be substantial. We think it is crucial to be able to conduct both quickly conducted project and more thoroughly slow-moving conducted projects. We interpret the participants mostly focus on and recognize the value in the fast-moving projects. One reason for this value might depend on the quick-tempo in today's society and the participant perceives this need onto the organization's need.

4.4.2 The public sector
Blomgren thinks that "there can be a symbolic value in when a management consultant representing change by joining projects and comes with input and analysis of the current situation. The organization can receive a different perspective from the consultants who have a fresh lens looking at the matter". She continues with the symbolic value exists when they for example says "this is how we interpret your organization from outside". Carlsson agrees with Blomgren thinking management consultants can have a certain symbolic value for the organization. "The symbolic value is primarily the creation of legitimacy for the
organization. The legitimacy emerges from quality assurance and the assurance of competence from the consultant to the client. Carlsson also points out, in some situations, "it might as well be the opposite where the management takes in consultants for the wrong reasons". For example, it is the wrong reason "if the management consultants are only hired because the management does not have a vision of their own and think an impartial party would have the answers". Berg was the only participant that thought "purchasing a management consultant does not have a symbolic value at all". The reason is the consultant is and should only comply to the managers' tasks.

Blomgren explains "there have been occasions when they have purchased management consultants to make internal investigations, which has had a very important symbolic value". The symbolic value for the existing staff is showing them "there is an objective party who is leading the investigation". The reason why it is important is because the staff accepts "the ugly truth" easier if an impartial person has delivered it. Carlssons argument is similar to Blomgrens where she feels "the external consultants can function as an objective party and give substance for arguments when defending decisions". In her experience, "there can sometimes be disbelief towards the board of directors from the employees. Therefore it is a safety to have an objective party saying the same thing". One other reason Carlsson explains is positive with the consultants being an objective part is because her organization is in the public sector and all the decisions and documents are public to all, and therefore "it is comforting to have had a second opinion on the decisions". For example, if journalists were to investigate the organization and demand documents, they must provide the demanded documents and therefore it can be comforting to know the decisions ones been made has been approved by someone else.

The participants in the private and the public sector point out that management consulting services have a value to the organization. The value reflects uncertainty in the public sector due to the Swedish law LOU but also because they always are under investigation from the government and the media. This non-stop investigation demands the public sector to act in a responsible way regarding the public funds they are purchasing all external services with. Therefore, the management consulting service can represent a value as a second opinion to make sure that the act correctly and accordingly.
One reason why the participants from the public sector might register consultants having a symbolic value might be because they are used to being inspected. Therefore, some of them appreciate the consultant being present as an objective party during a project and representing the change. In other words, the symbolic value of consultants is regarding the objectivity it represents. Berg was the only participant who did not see any symbolic value with management consulting and, on the one hand, he could be an exception with his opinion with his highly critical view of consultants. We think it is a too narrow analysis to completely dismiss the symbolic value due to the scientific findings regarding the consultants' symbolic value. On the other hand, his perspective could have some value regarding that the symbolic value should emerge within the own company. His resistance to management consulting services are completely affecting his choice not to purchase consultants at all and he is avoiding their services as much as possible.
5 Discussion and Analysis

Divided into our four categories, in this chapter we will present findings from our empirical material and the analysis of the material. Together with the literature review we will interpret, analyze and present relevant findings.

5.1 Clients’ perspective on management consultants’ effect on the organization

Considering our findings in the empirical material, the participants from both affiliations wanted the consultants to be helpful with easing their workload and provide with suggestions for improvements. These two aims are supported by Fincham et al's (2013) description of the three characteristics of management consulting which define the characteristics as (1) providing and supporting how to manage and diagnosing problems. (2) Providing an external perspective of management problems in the organization and (3) providing this service during a set period of time. These characteristics were described by all the participants when they explained what management consulting was to them. We noticed that the participants emphasized the aspect of management consultants being a temporary part of their organization. This aspect created a paradox between what the participants said how they should work with the consultant and what they wanted from them. For example, Hansson firstly explained that the consultants should only take part at the beginning of a change process and help the organizations with new ideas. Secondly, he explained the change projects often failed during the implementation phase due to the absence of the consultants.

We think this paradox indicates a challenge in the client-consultant relationship for the client to take under consideration. The paradox is that the client has more demands on the consultant, which results in more complex and lengthy processes, and at the same time the client wants to have shorter project life cycles. Christensen et al (2013) and Fincham et al (2013) have also acknowledged this challenge and Srinivasan (2014) continues explaining, due to this challenge, consulting firms must offer the opportunity to stay and take responsibility during the implementation phase as well to the client. We think the body of science has come further in the development of acknowledging this challenge than the practice from our empirical material indicated. However considering our empirical findings, the practice has not yet sufficiently acknowledged a possible need for them as a client to work longer with the consultants better results. Instead, some participants referred to the
argument that it is not possible to work for a longer time with the consultants because it would cost too much.

We think this argument prevents the clients from reflecting enough regarding other possible reasons for this paradox sufficiently. It is easy to only refer to budget restrictions considering how they utilize consultants but it could be personal reasons behind their choices. For example, the reason could be the high workload all the participants experienced and because of that, they did not want the projects to take too much of their time. Instead, they wanted to get back to their 'real work' and be finished with the projects involving the consultant. The reason for shortening the life cycle of projects could then be about individual priorities. The participants prioritize the daily work instead of developing the change process to be a part of their daily workload that could lead to them experiencing the change projects being a natural part of the processes in the organization. This gap between science and practice could create an interesting and fruitful debate on the future for management consulting and its responsibilities from a client perspective.

Our empirical findings confirm the deficiency of presented material from the consultants to the client about recommendations on how to implement the new ideas and changes. As Bouwmeester and Stiekema (2015) describe the clients' impressions, understandings, knowledge and expectations of the management consultants are affecting the perceptions regarding them. The authors emphasize that the consultant and the client must consider these aspects (ibid). We interpret the participant's perception affecting their choice of management consulting services. It might affect the decision by their perception creates a norm on how the client thinks he/she should follow when purchasing the service. Especially in the public sector which the participants only referred to the legal framework, LOU could create a norm to only follow the laws without critical analyzing the way of work in the procurement processes.

We think the norm and the economic restrictions could create pressure on the client to shorten the project life cycle to a time frame which is too narrow for the implementation phase to be successful. This norm and the strict regulations indicates a flaw regarding the system in the public sector. Even though the regulations such as LOU exists as assurance regarding the standards of transparency in the Swedish context. The regulation inhibits the employees from thinking realistically how long a change process takes and instead, they only
focus on how much a certain project are allowed to cost. This focus leads to insecurity regarding how much a project can cost without being denied or scrutinized by external entities. Therefore, the participants in the public sector shorten the life cycle of change projects to ensure it will, for the managers and other external reviewing eyes, not be perceived to be too expensive. Without any adequate reflection, this insecurity affects the possibility for the employees to find other alternatives for the procurement process that could be more suitable, both regarding saving money and purchasing less consulting services. The experienced pressure of shortening the life cycle of change projects for public organizations could also be linked to them, as a client, have a larger need for support during the implementation phase than the private sector.

5.2 Quality of contract

Considering the empirical findings, the purchase of management consulting services in the private sector are more concerning tactical decisions and organizational processes than in the public sector. Management consultant services can contribute to changes in organizational structures or skills which are essential components for an organization. The private sector acknowledged this chance to organizational change. For example, two participants from the private sector expressed the importance to write standards for procurement processes and consequently, allowed them to take more tactical decisions. However, the written standards do not guarantee the success for the procurement processes and as the empirical material indicated that they often prioritized finding consultants through a personal network. We wonder if these standards are not being used as intended, or are they only produced for a show to hinder the employees and other stakeholders from questioning the board of executives way of work? This question is interesting but needs its own research to be answered correctly and therefore we cannot answer it. One of our interpretations from the empirical findings regarding this question is that the participants expressed the need for standard did not fully oblige to them. Instead, the standards where more for other stakeholders to have a perception of them having control. We think it is common for organizations to conduct documents about there procurement processes to appear professional and in control. As the same as the consultant can give a false sense of guarantee to the client, so can the client perceive towards their stakeholders.

All the participants from the public sector pointed out on several occasions that it is important for them, as a client, to write and be clear in the descriptions when conducting the
procurement contract when purchasing management consulting services. To minimize incorrect and not suitable purchases of consulting services, Belkhodja et al (2012) explain the need for the client organizations to professionalize decision and purchasing processes. Sturdy et al (2009) explains that nowadays organizations are more experienced in their use of management consulting services and can therefore professionalize their acquisition function. The report from Riksrevisionen (2018) presents a similar conclusion as Sturdy et al (2009), but their research also indicates the public sector does not have sufficiently efficient procurement processes when purchasing consultant services. The public sector must improve regarding analyzing and identifying the needs and skills of the department command (Riksrevisionen, 2018). This gap between the empirical findings and the literature review indicates that the participants from the public sector do not live as they have learned.

On the one hand, one reason could be because they do not have the tools to identify and be more specific regarding the organization's need from the consultant. On the other hand, the work processes in the public sector may be too complex to comprehend and analyze it fully and the attempts to try doing so, would not be worth the cost.

Two of the participants from the public sector expressed the importance of writing a distinct procurement process contract to increase the chance of finding the most suitable consulting services. However, none of the participants considered the tactical choices they could make regarding which consulting services to purchase. Instead, the decision was entirely the department who attended and conducted the procurement processes contracts responsibility. Considering we could identify some acknowledgment of the possible tactical advantages from the private sector, and not the public sector, might be because participants from the private sector may feel more responsibility in their role as clients than what the participants from the public sector expressed. We think this difference in the sense of responsibility is based on the different approaches considering the procurement process between the private and the public sector. For example, a possible result of a failing procurement process in the private sector will affect the organization both economically and tactically. The failing procurement process may affect the responsible person individually by, for example, losing further influence regarding the decision-making process and further procurement processes. While in the public sector, the participants or the department might not be as affected because the procurement processes are complex with more people involved in the projects due to the size of public organizations. The participants might understand this complexity as something they cannot overcome, and therefore have a higher acceptance of failure. The acceptance
might also be a result of the participants are more detached from the idea of feeling responsible for the public organization's money than the private sector.

Furthermore, both participants from the private and the public sector express the importance to write a clearly expressed contract about what results they are expected the consultant to deliver. Several of the participants confirm there is a risk of the organization not getting what was required and desired by the consulting service. Glückler and Armbrüster (2003) explain the professional standards and contracts cannot even guarantee the quality of the purchased service and its end-result. The authors explain the significance management consulting services are for today's organizations, but the services are characterized by abstract and intangible features (ibid). We noticed the participants awareness of the importance of a clearly expressed contract, but they did not distinctly show they were aware of this false sense of guarantee. Instead, several of the participants from the private sector discussed the main reason of management consulting services is to advise on competence, experience, knowledge before and during the change processes to be able to change organizational structures. We interpret these reasons, both from the private and the public sector, to be a result of the uncertainty of not knowing if the consulting services will provide a beneficial outcome. Even though the uncertainty is high, we think it can be questionable why organizations continue to purchase consulting services if the clients experience a sense of false guarantee. Höner and Mohe (2009) states that many clients spend a lot of money on advice which can be questionable and therefore there is a need for the client to professionalize their contracts. These reasons might also correlate with how the organization act as a client when purchasing management consulting services.

The clients' perceived value of the management consulting services is considered central to the client-consultant relationship and the organizations' competitive advantage (Aarikka-Stenroos & Jaakkola, 2012). Both the private and the public sector work with some kind of system when collecting references before deciding and purchasing management consulting services. However, the public sector in Sweden is strictly bounded to follow the set of regulations, such as LOU, and therefore can public organizations only put in requests in the procurement process. We think one effect of the Swedish laws regarding procurement processes is an increasing lack of commitment from the employees who are responsible for conducting the contracts. This lack of commitment could be a contributing factor to our indication that the public sector does not have a sufficiently successful interaction process.
between the consultant and the employees. One reason is that the purchase of consulting services in the public sector must obey these regulations and thus, can lessen the employee's personal commitment. Therefore, the procurement process becomes more of a strict process than an opportunity to create project-by-project customized procurement processes.

We think the private sector is similar to the general description of a client that has a higher interaction with management consultants. One reason is that they have the opportunity to purchase consultant services from personal recommendations and they tend to recruit consultants that they previously worked with. This opportunity allows the projects to involve people who know each other's strengths and weaknesses more profoundly. Consequently, the level of commitment may increase from the client because they understand the consultants as someone who knows them and therefore can come with valuable feedback. However, in contradiction, we think that the private sector, as a client, can with the increased commitment become more biased when purchasing management consulting services. This increase of biases occurs because of their use of the same consultant or because they only purchase consulting services based on recommendations from their personal network. We also think this can lead to the procurement process and the purchased consulting services becomes more and more homogeneous. The procurement process becomes homogeneous by only consisting of the participants calling the same familiar consultant without reflecting if the consultants have the required and suitable competencies. Which consequently, leads to the consultant repeatedly are giving the same recommendations and ideas that in the end results in no change at all.

5.3 Development of skill and experience

All the participants from the private sector understand the use of management consultants as an approach to gain experience. They explained the purchase of consulting services to mainly be a source for obtaining skills which are lacking in the organization. The goal for the participants in the private sector is to develop skills and experiences from the consultant for them to use in future change processes. All of the participants, except one from the public sector, thought that the consultant's main task was to fill gaps between reality and vision regarding, for example organizational performance. They did not consider that the consultant could add any new value or educate the organization. Instead, the participants from the public sector repeatedly pointed out the competence already existed in the organization and they purchased consulting services due to the lack of time they experienced. We question whether
it is the consultants' responsibility to fill this gap. It is convenient to transfer the responsibility over to the management consultant because one may feel not qualified or having enough experience to be in charge of a noticeable change project. Perhaps the participant would gain viewing the consultants as an alternative to a tool instead of directly utilize the consulting services.

The empirical findings showed that many of the participants thought they knew all of the employee's strengths and weaknesses when conducting projects, but they never thoroughly investigate their competences. We think this lack of investigations indicates the participants could have a false sense of lacking competence. In the public sector it indicates the poor distribution of the workforce if they know they have the competence but purchase management consultants anyway. We think it can be questioned if the public sector should buy expensive consulting services instead of recruiting new employees if their departments do not have time to follow through on projects. As the report from Riksrevisionen (2018) states, the public sectors purchase of consulting services is generally not well-founded and therefore, there is a risk that the public sector does not manage the state's resources properly. The experienced quick tempo in the organizations may be a reason why the participants are reluctant to fully investigate the competence of their employees and the poor distribution of the workforce.

As Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola (2012) conclude, the importance of viewing the client-consulting relationship as value-creating, this is not reflecting in our empirical findings from the public sector. One reason it might not be reflecting is that there is a lack of mutual interaction between client and consultant in the public sector. For example, Bergs' experience from the public sector has not been satisfied with the results of the usage of management consulting. However, his response indicates he is not involved much with the consultants during the projects which according to Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola (2012) affects the result. We find it interesting that he is not aware of his level of involvement influences the end-result. Considering these findings, we interpret a purpose for purchasing management consulting services in the public sector, is not to gain new skills or perspectives. In the Swedish context, we find these findings peculiar due to the public organization is a part of the governance and therefore should strive to learn and develop as many skills as possible to manage the complex system the public sector is.
One possible reason why they do not consider it as a learning opportunity is that they do not recognize the consultant as someone who can add new skills. Both the private and the public sectors use consulting services and the different skill requirements as a project-by-project setup for temporary projects or investigations. However, it is the value of the service that separates the private and public sectors. Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola (2012) concluded it exists a growing need for interaction between client and consultant due to the need for knowledge intensity, technical complexity and special competence in organizations today. We think this increased need might result in clients and consultants becoming more and more dependent on each other. From our empirical material, we notice this increase of interdependence in both sectors, but the motives of using management consulting services differ. As Mattila et al (2018) states, it is difficult to measure the actual impact management consulting services have on the organization because, for example, the difficulty to determine which measures to use when evaluating the outcome of management consulting. Therefore, this difficulty could be a reason why participants from the public sector do not consider management consulting bringing any learning opportunities.

Even though some participants perceive management consultants as someone who can influence and educate them, there were several of the participants who were reluctant to associate the consultant as a management consultant. Instead, they rather used words as a specialist consultant or an expert consultant in organizational change. We interpret this reluctant of using management consultant because the organization or the manager retains some power when referring them as a specialist. We find it interesting that some participants from the private sector wanted the consultant’s expertise and experience, but they did not refer to them as a leader or a part of the management in their organization. They only related the consultant as a temporary advisor or educator and it needed to be obvious that they still had the power over making the decisions. It correlates with Greiner and Metzgers (1983) definition of management consulting, where they point out that the consultant should never become part of the organization and only act as an external resource when the organization requests it. We did not notice any indications from the participants from the public sector that they considered the consultants the same way as they did in the private sector. The participants expressed that the consultant could be a leading figure or having some kind of informal power in the organization, what we consider to be questionable is why they can see the consultants as a possible leader when they express that the consultant is seen as an external resource.
We consider the participants' perspective, especially from the public sector, thinking the consultants cannot deliver any real value to the organization for two reasons. First, we think their distinct view of the consultant as a temporary external resource may enhance their thoughts of not needing to control the consultant because he/she will soon be gone. Therefore, if the consultants title themselves as a part of the management, they do not care. However, in the private sector, they value more in the titles than in the public sector and consequently, they feel more reluctant to use them on the consultant. Second, the other reason is that the public sector does not believe the consultant can add any expertise or new value to the organization. It is interesting that the participants have this understanding because the reason why they purchase consultants is due to the lack of competence. Later they express it is because they need the consultants to help them with the workload. We think this paradox is interesting because it may indicate all the participants wants to distance themselves from the consultant and are trying to legitimize their need of more knowledge with only needing them as an extra set of hands. We think it is also fruitful to consider a connection between the participants' perspective on consultants as specialists and the theoretical framework in distinguishing management consulting as a concept.

Further, we think the participant's view of the consultants can be related to how the clients define management consultants and the participants from the public sector have a distinct differentiation between what consultant and organization represents. This distinction enhances the participants' opinion that the consultant is not a part of the organization which cannot be ignored. Therefore, they do not perceive the consultant as a threat to the balance of power within the department. This perception can, to some extent, be compared to Ibatova et al's (2018) definition of management consulting as a tactical decision because the public sector only perceives the consultant as an external resource. While the perception from the private sector could be correlated to Canback's (1998) and Greiner and Metzger's (1983) definitions regarding that the management consultant can give a more considerable influence in the organization as a strategic advisor. The private sector is purchasing the service to be able to develop the organizational structures and processes, and therefore gain skills from the strategic advisors to develop the organization further.
5.4 The value of management consulting for the client

Based on the empirical findings, we think the participants from the private sector consider management consulting not having any significant symbolic value. The consultants are getting the symbolic value by being the objective party in the decision-making process. However, we noticed that the participants did not experience any symbolic value from the consultants by representing the change. Several of the participants expressed the importance of having an impartial party who can evaluate and register the needs of the organization. The public sector may seem to be similar, but there is a distinct difference between the two sectors because the public sector is aiming to receive a second opinion in order to achieve transparency while the private sector seeks new perspectives on the organization's processes and structures.

The participants from the public sector connected the consultants with having a symbolic value more clearly than the private sector. Considering the value management consulting services contains for the participants in the public sector, the main values were the impartial value and the second opinion in the projects. One main reason was because of the need of making carefully considered choices. The occurrence for this cautiousness is due to the existing principle of public access to official documents. We find this perception of symbolic value from the public sector interesting because it indicates that the participants might utilize management consultants for rationalization of their decisions, and not use them from a rational decision. This post-rationalization of their decisions creates a paradox were the participants in the public sector are explaining the importance of knowing what is needed and clarify it in a distinct procurement process contract, but do not know for sure what it is when conducting the contract. Therefore, they register the consultant creating a symbolic value for them, representing change and adapting the argument for their decisions.

Considering Sweden being in the top five least corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, 2018), it is a fundamental part of the Swedish democracy to be transparent in the public sector and allowing all documentation to be reviewed by others. We think the participant's unison response are reflecting the low corruption perception index and are valuable for the public sector in Sweden. These high standards of transparency are likely affecting the choice when purchasing management consultants because there could be an autonomous part of the change process to utilize external services, such as management consultants, to secure the transparency. Therefore, it might indicate why the participants
from the public sector perceived that consultants are having more of a symbolic value than the participants from the private sector. This view of management consulting as a symbolic value correlates with what Mattila et al (2018) explain as a key factor for utilizing management consulting. The idea is that consultation can have a subjective significance because of the symbolic, image and political value its represent (Mattila et al, 2018).

The public sector perceives management consulting to have a symbolic value because the consultant represents an objective voice in decision making, which means that the public sector receives an objective second opinion on projects and processes which may be examined by the public. The private sector does not perceive the symbolic value of management consulting services because the organization is not being inspected in the same way as the public sector. However, the private sector perceives a value in that the management consulting services can give an impartial view of the organization's structures and processes. Connected to our earlier discussion about the private sectors loyalty to specific consultants and their use of personal network references, we think it can be questioned if the consultant really can provide an impartial voice. Even though the private sector does not receive the impartial voice from the consultant, it indicates that their intentions are still to seek the impartial voice as our participants describe. It is also questionable if the participants in the private sector fully examined the idea of the consultants having a symbolic value due to their reluctant of not title the management consultant as a part of the management team.
6 Conclusion

This chapter will include an answer to our research question and we are also presenting the most important findings from our empirical material. To demonstrate the findings and our reflections, we present an illustration as a part of our conclusion. The purpose with the illustration is for the reader to better understand the similarities and the differences between the private and the public sector.

In our literature review, we presented and defined management consulting and presented a client perspective on management consulting. We also reviewed the literature on how the public and private sector in Sweden differ regarding procurement processes due to organizational structure and laws. In the empirical material, we found how participants from both the public and the private sector perceive and experience the utilization of management consulting services in their organizations. Through our empirical material, we identified patterns in the participant's experience and perceptions that lead us to four categories. The categories are characteristics of management consulting, quality of contract, development of skill and experience, and lastly, the value of management consulting for the client. When discussing our categories and literature review, we were able to detect interesting similarities and differences connected to the organization's affiliation. Based on our empirical findings we present an illustration, conclusions and answer to our research question:

In what way can the organization's affiliation affect the motives to purchase management consulting services in the public and private sector?

6.1 The meaning of the illustration

We conclude that the choice of purchasing management consulting services have both similarities and differences when comparing the motives behind the purchase in relations to organizational affiliation. The most interesting findings in our study implicate that the motives behind utilizing management consulting services differ between the public and the private sector in how they perceive management consulting and their expectations on the consultant. This differentiation means that through our empirical material and analysis, we have been able to interpret clear differences in how the private and public sector perceives management consulting and how the organizations use the service. Which in turn affects the reasons for purchasing management consulting services in the organization. The private sector perceives management consulting services to be useful for strategic purposes as in the
development of organizational processes and structures. They perceive management consultants as a tool for improving and developing the organization. While the public sector perceives management consulting services as a tool for solving temporary problems, such as workload. For the public sector, the management consultant is an extension of their workforce.

To clarify the similarities and differences and in what way they affect the choice when purchasing management consulting, we want to present an illustration. The illustration explains a flow from the perception of management consulting that affects the influential factors which in turn becomes the motives behind utilizing management consulting services. Although some of the titles in the influential factors are the same, there are clear differences within each part, which we will explain in more detail below.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 3. Our illustration regarding in what way organization’s affiliation effect the decision when purchasing management consulting*
6.2 Procurement process as an influencing factor

The illustration aims to show the similarity of both sectors wants to develop distinct procurement processes when purchasing management consultants. The public sector has LOU to secure some standards and the private sector have, in some cases, documented instructions regarding the procurement processes. Mostly, the private sector relies on personal experiences when conducting the procurement process contract. We conclude that the different ways of regulating the procurement processes and the contract, influences the choice of a management consultant. The public sector, for example, needs to utilize the same consultants if it is written in the contract, even though the organization is not satisfied with the results the consultants are providing. On the one hand, this regulation is influencing the choice of consultants because the public organization wants the searching for the most suitable consultant to be as thorough as possible. On the other hand, as Riksrevisionen (2018) concludes, the public sector does not have enough efficient procurement processes and from this, we conclude the public sector needs to do more than only to rely on LOU.

Whereas the private sector relies heavily on personal contacts and recommendations and if not satisfied with the results, can change consultants for upcoming projects. We conclude that personal contacts and recommendations allow a quicker start and a more in-depth understanding of the projects. One reason is because of the already developed relationship between the client and consultant which allows the consultant to have an advantage of knowing the client’s general expectations of results. The already established relationship could lead to the client be more open-minded to receive the project as a learning experience because they do not question the consultant’s decisions as much as they would with a consultant which they do not personally know. Therefore, we conclude that the personal contacts and recommendations are influencing the private sector in their choice of management consultant more than in the public sector.

6.3 Client’s perception as an influencing factor

We conclude that it exists significant differences between the private and public sector regarding their perception of what the consultant should add to the organization. Both the private and the public sectors use consulting services in project-by-project setup for temporary projects or investigations. However, it is the perception of the service which separates the private and public sectors. One factor influencing the purchase of management consultants is the perception of what the consultant can provide to the organization. The
private sector has a more positive perception of the management consultant's expertise where they perceive the purchase of management consultants as an opportunity to add competence and experience to the organization. They also perceive the utilization of the consultant as an opportunity to train employees or run processes that they themselves cannot handle. This positive perception differs from the perception of the participants from the public sector has on management consulting.

The perception from the public sector where to purchase management consultants to rationalize their decisions for utilizing the service. This rationalization indicates that the participants want the consultants only to solve a problem. It also indicates that they perceive the use of management consultants is not about adding new skills or developing the organization. Instead, they consider that the consultant is an extension of the existing competence and are purchased to be able to handle the workload of certain projects. This rationalization and their perception could imply a much bigger invisible flaw with the public system rather than just perceptions over the procurement processes concerning management consulting services. To fully answer that implication, it demands further research and cannot be completely discovered in this paper. We can conclude that these two perceptions of what a management consultant can add to an organization are a factor that influences the choice of purchasing management consulting services. Even if the participants are not aware of how their perception influences the motives behind the purchase, it is one main factor that affects the motives when purchasing management consulting services. This factor also reinforces the characterization of which affiliation the organization has to one specific sector.

6.4 The perceived value of management consulting as an influencing factor

Another influencing factor of the choice when purchasing management consulting service, is the value the consulting service represents to the organization. The private sector value the management consultant as an impartial voice to the organization, while the public sector finds a symbolic value in management consulting services. We think an impartial voice is a part of the symbolic value for an organisation, by representing another perspective which has not been influenced the same way as the manager’s views might be. The participants from private sector did not recognize the symbolic value in the impartial voice when we asked them. Instead, the participants preceivced the impartial voice as a ‘bonus’ for the project and receiving an ‘outside’ perspective. Therefore, we could interpret the impartial
voice be slightly different from the symbolic value and there is a difference between how the two sectors are influenced by the value the consulting service represents to them. The public sector is aiming to receive a second opinion in order to achieve transparency while the private sector seeks new perspectives on the organization's processes and structures. They want the consultant to have the symbolic value representing change, objectivity and a representant that mediates the change is rational to do. This aim also indicates that the public sector, to some extent, purchases management consulting services to avoid investigations, both internal investigations but also from the media. The investigations are a risk for the involved employees because they could be scrutinized as incompetent and have severe outcomes for them in the future. Especially when being investigated by media, the risk of the entire organization losing the trust from the public has severe consequences. Therefore, we conclude that the public sector heavily relies on and values the opinion of the consultants to decrease that risk.

While the private sector values the impartial opinion of their organization they can receive from management consultants as a bonus. We conclude the consultants' opinion as a bonus because the organization in the private sector have the freedom to choose when to utilize the consulting services. This freedom emerges from not needing to be transparent in every process as the public organizations must be. They do not need to show or defend the amount of money they spend on consulting services if they do not want to display it. In addition, this freedom also originates from that they are not controlled by politics and laws as much as the public sector is. Which results in the consultants’ impartial opinion as valuable but optional, and therefore the private sector do not recognize the symbolic value. However, we question the opinions from the private sector if it is valuable for them to separate the objective perspective and the symbolic value. The objective perspective have, as mentioned, a symbolic value and we think that the opinions from the participants orgins from reluctance in giving the consultants more influence and power than necessary. Instead, we think the symbolic values should include the impartial voice and be utilized more by the private sector to gain more understanding regarding the work process of a consultant. We conclude that the public sector is influenced by the view of the consultants as a symbolic value when purchasing the services, while the private sector's perception is influenced by the impartial value the consultant represents.
6.5 Summary of the conclusion

Our conclusions show that organizational affiliation can affect the motives behind purchasing management consulting services because of how the organization perceives management consulting as a profession. It is clear that the public sector is bound to follow LOU and therefore, their motives are influenced by the standards and processes that follow with LOU. Based on that influencing force, the public sector perceives management consultants to be of value when the consultant can fill the gap between reality and vision regarding organizational performance. This means that the public sector may not achieve the organizational performance that they want without using management consultants. The value of using management consulting services is then about extending the existing workforce to achieve set departmental goals.

Therefore, we conclude that the public sector rationalizes their motives more when purchasing management consulting services than the private sector. The private sector has a more positive perception of utilizing management consulting services because they perceive the services as an opportunity to enhance change processes and organizational structures. At the same time, the motives are to gain personal skills and experiences from the management consultant in order to develop the organization further. We think there is a difference between the sectors behind their perceptions of management consulting services which separate their motives for utilizing the services. This difference indicates that the usage of management consulting differs due to organizational affiliation.

6.6 The study’s contribution and future research

This thesis has contributed with a perspective to the client perspective regarding management consulting by acknowledging the two different affiliations of organizations in the Swedish context. We are contributing to the research fields of management consulting, client perspective on management consulting and motives behind utilizing consulting services. A qualitative study with the aim to research if motives behind utilizing management consulting services differ due to the organizational affiliation between the public and the private sector in Sweden could not be found during our process of literature review. Although our study is of a smaller size, the study has contributed with indications of differences and similarities between the public and private sectors in Sweden within the research area management consulting and the client perspective.
With our thesis, we have provided insights into the motives behind using management consulting services by presenting the factors we believe influences the public and the private sector when purchasing consulting services. Therefore, we believe that our study can be used to gain insight into how the private and the public sector in Sweden uses and manages management consulting services. However, it is of value to carry out a more extensive study in order to be able to determine and generalize these indications.

To take our presented ideas further, future studies could separate the two mentioned affiliations and take an even more in-depth approach regarding the procurement processes when purchasing management consulting services. For example, by examining the existing paradox between failing the change process in the implementation phase and not wanting the consultant to be present during the phase. This would be fruitful for the client perspective to develop the understanding of this paradox because it may reveal the motives behind utilizing management consulting more clearly. Another fruitful future study could focus on a broader perspective considering the clients' perceptions of management consulting services which influences the motives for purchasing the services. By conducting a larger study with more participants, it could reveal patterns and structures which might occur, collectively or separately, for the two different sectors. Finally, it could be rewarding for future studies to examining this topic in another context of nationalities. The Swedish laws and regulations highly influence the Swedish context and there could be other motives that are connected to an organization's affiliation which is not exposed by this study. Exploring all these alternatives would increase the understanding of the motives for utilizing management consulting services from a client perspective.

6.7 Our learning journey

The work process regarding this thesis have allowed us to gain an deeper understanding about management consulting, especially considering management consulting through the lens of client perspective. Our pre-understandings of management consulting was limited to the theoretical perspective we have learned during the course *consulting and leading in change* and during other courses throughout our year in the university. From the course, our pre-understandings of management consulting was that there is a complexity in working as a external consultant, such as management consulting, and that made us interested in the topic. We didn’t expected that there is also a complexity regarding being the client who purchases management consulting services and therefore, we wanted to understand
management consulting through the clients perspective. During our literature review, we learned that the client perspective was complex and had not got as much attention as the consultants perspective, and though what we have noticed is that the majority of existing literature, was written for-consultants-by-consultants. Therefore, we gained the knowledge that the academic attention of management consulting is not overall objective which we first thought. Further, during our data collection, we noticed that management consulting is a sensitive topic due to many scandals in the public sector in the Swedish context. Which also made us more interested, but at the same time, there was a need for us to work with the empirical material with respect. There were more differences between the public and private sector than we thought it would be, which was very interesting. With this gained knowledge, it will be beneficial for us because, we are soon entering the labor market and getting new jobs which will surely utilize management consultants. Therefore, we can provide with this new insight.
References


Appendix

Appendix A Interview Guide

**Organization**
What is your department's main task within the organization?
How would you describe your role in the organization?
How long have you had your current role?

**Consulting services**
What do you think is the main reason why your organization uses consulting services today?
What do you see for the advantages and disadvantages of using consulting services?
In which areas or projects in your organization do you employ external management consultants?
What are the organization core business/core processes? Are consulting services used for development within the "core"? Are there situations where consultants are used more frequently than others?
What competencies do you think that your organization can cover with management consultants within the organization?
Who within the organization are involved in the decision to purchase external consulting services?
How does the decision-making process lead to the decision to purchase external consulting services? What strengths and weaknesses do you think you have in your decision-making process?
How does the organization choose which consultant or consulting firm to use for a particular assignment?
How common is it for the organization to buy previously used consultants or consulting firms for new assignments?
What are the most common problems that you need external competence to solve?
Are there special skills in the organization that you need to buy consulting services to cover?
Can the use of consulting services give your organization competitive advantage?
What do you consider are the benefits of using external consulting services instead of internal expertise?
Is there a plan / vision for the use of consulting services in the organization in the future, eg the next 2 years?