Client-Consultancy Relationship in ERP Implementation from Consultancy Aspect:
A Case Study in Turkey

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Abstract

Consultancy practices have significant influence on the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) project success. In this sense, client-consultant relationship comes into prominence in terms of project achievement. Therefore client-consultant relationship needs to be understood in depth in order to strengthen the consultancy practices and eliminate problems between two parties. Hence, in this research client-consultant relationship is examined from ERP consultancy aspect during ERP implementation phase in Turkey. Some factors that influence this relationship is evaluated and existing client-consultant models are analyzed whether they are compatible with the client-consultant relationship within ERP concept. Cultures basis as an influential factor is examined in order to understand this impacts on this relationship. ERP consultancy profile and partially client profile are drawn in order to have deep insight of this relationship.

Keywords: ERP consultancy, client-consultant relationship, ERP implementation, client-consultant relationship models, Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, Oracle packaged culture.
Executive summary

Introduction and problem identification

Since it is identified in the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) literature that one of the key successful factors of implementing ERP systems is external consultants, their skills and expertise on ERP systems; many studies emphasized on the key role of ERP consultancy and client-consultant relationship. Furthermore, some scholars analyzed these issues based on management consultancy point of view and from clients’ aspect. However, characteristics and problems of the client-consultant relationship in ERP implementation have not received enough attention to be investigated. Our aim is to focus on this specific point from ERP consultancy aspect in order to cover the gap in the literature through focusing on these questions:

1) What are the main characteristics of the client – consultant relationship in ERP implementation in Turkey?
2) To what extent are the existing consulting models compatible with the ERP consultancy?
3) How can culture affect the client-consultant relationship through ERP implementation?

Methodology

The methodology is used in this thesis is the explanatory case study so as to understand the client-consultant relationship through observing the interpretations and perspectives of the ERP consultants in their natural environment. Semi-structured interviews and a qualitative questionnaire are employed to gather ERP consultants’ experiences, their perceptions and interpretations. Besides, Hermeneutics approach is used to collect and analyze data.

Findings

In our findings, the most distinctive fact is client’s dominance on the client-consultant relationship during ERP implementation which, to our knowledge, has not been considered in any management consultancy models yet. Both consultants and clients have active role in the relationship; however, consultants are obliged to shape their roles and behaviors with respect to client’s manner and project scope. Another important point is the Oracle packaged culture which refers application of embedded business processes and technical / business logic of the ERP systems requires customization on the implementation processes. Customization might be a significant issue between client and consultant due to the fact that in customization process, clients show their dominance on consultants and some clients demand consultants to perform whatever they requires. In this case even ERP consultants could be asked to do some tasks which are not relevant to ERP consultancy concept such as business process management and business process re-engineering. Furthermore, Turkish business environment, accordingly Hofstede’s cultural dimensions such as; power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity and individualism shape this relationship approach.

At the end we have found out that client-consultant relationship within ERP consultancy concept is not exactly compatible with any model of client-consultant relationship within management consultancy concept. Therefore, we explored that this relationship has characteristics of each management consultancy models in some measure. Therefore, we come up with a new proposed model called ‘Transitive Model’ that has a transitive form between the characteristics of existing consultancy model and has a cultural base that shape
these transitions. This model gives insights from different perspectives. It combines different characteristics of existing consulting models and explains dynamics of the relationship from this perspective then associates them with consultancy roles, problem types and cultural dimensions.
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1. Introduction

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems have been taken placed in managers’ agenda from various industries for nearly three decades not only for large companies (Shanks, 2000 cited Schlichter and Kraemmergaard, 2010, p.487) but also for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) increasingly (Adam and O’Doherty, 2000; Ferguson, 2004; Gould, 2003 cited in Chen et al., 2008, p.159). According to a research conducted by the Aberdeen Group (2007), 30% of 1400 manufacturing companies have been using ERP systems for 10-15 years and 25% of them for 5-10 years. These rates show a relative maturity in adopting ERP systems. However, 13% of participant organizations do not use and 8 percent of them have an implementation plan in a year that also points out a future extension for the market. Total revenue growth was 14% percent and license revenue increased 18% in 2006 and estimations for 2011 show $47.7 Billion total revenue in ERP market which was $28.8 Billion in 2006 (AMR Research, 2007).

By adopting ERP technologies, organizations gain ability to integrate their information flows and data, streamline their business functions, as well as reconfigure business processes and enable real time information gathering across the organization (Ross et al., 2006, Soh et al., 2000 cited in Schlichter and Kraemmergaard, 2010, p.487; Zhang and Li (2006). These and many other advantages are realized whereby successful conjunction between organizations and the ERP systems. However, this is not a common case in practice since it is reported that 70% of ERP implementations could not return their estimated benefits and from 40% to 60% or higher percentage of the ERP implementations are classified as failures (Majed, 2000; Langenwalter, 2000 cited in Wong, et al., 2005). Many projects paused or ended with disappointment, chunky benefits or even engendered bankruptcy (Davenport, 1998, p.122). Accordingly, failure in ERP implementation causes loss of financial investments, time and business value as well as dropping market price, losing market share and competitive advantage (Wong, et al., 2005).

In light of these points, many studies have been conducted to guide ERP projects and mitigate unwanted results by identifying key factors for achieving a successful ERP implementation and benefits realization. In that studies, many factors such as top management support, business process re-design, realistic project goals, communication among project participants, user involvement, and management of legacy systems are examined and stressed as critical. Besides, Zhang and Chuan Li (2006, p.232) advocate that one of the key successful factors of implementing ERP systems is external consultants, their skills and expertise on ERP systems. Additionally, many of studies point out the key role of ERP consultancy and client-consultant/vendor partnership in different phases of the projects (Thong et al., 1994; Marlene, 1999; Janson and Subramanian, 1996; Willcocks and Sykes, 2000; Somers and Nelson, 2001; Wong et al., 2004). Significance of the consultancy is also emphasized from different aspects like selection of the software (Tsai et al., 2009) and as an actor in knowledge transfer (Sedera et al., 2003; Ko et al., 2005; Wong et al., 2004).

1.1. Problem Description

Considering vast amount of failure stories and the emphasis on ERP consultancy as a critical success factor as stated above, it is advocated that building a strong relationship between
clients and consultants is a decisive point for the success of ERP projects (Zhang and Chuan Li 2006, p.231). However, it is difficult to perform due to many factors which inhibit the relationship. These negative factors might be derived from clients or consultants’ side such as each party’s organizational structures; personal skills, cultural dynamics, social norms and values, or conflicting expectations and hidden agendas and so forth (Wong et al., 2004). High degree of these contradicting factors undermines the harmony between clients and consultants which is necessary for handling the complex nature of implementation. Otherwise, it engenders serious risks against the success of implementation. For this reason, our research is structured on the relationship itself and problems between clients and ERP consultants through ERP implementation. In other words, what we find problematic is the ill-structured and ineffective relationship through implementation that is an obstacle against a proper knowledge exchange; clarification and solving of problems; and diffusion of the ERP system into enterprise.

Many prior researches have focused on the client-consultant relationship so far. Researchers have developed some models to describe constructs of this relationship and suggested techniques and principles to increase performance of it and consulting service as a whole as well (Schein, 1997; Alvesson, 1993, 2001; Devinney & Nikolova, 2004; McGivern, 1983; Bell and Nadler, 1985; Risseeuw, 2007; Jespersen, 2009). But those studies analyze issues from the management consulting point of view. Hence, specific characteristics and problems of the relationship between clients and ERP consultants through ERP implementation have not received enough attention to be investigated. So the problem is difficulties on building a strong and effective relationship which is used as an advantage to achieve the ERP implementation goals. Besides, what factors create or influence on these difficulty stands as a background issue. Our study therefore is an attempt to investigate these factors and respond the need for enough attention.

1.2. Scope of the Research

It is useful to first take a look at our theme which is “Client-Consultant Relationship in ERP Implementation” to explain our research scope. So firstly, a consultant refers a professional helper who helps another person in a social context; and a client can be described as a help-needing person or organization. Thus, consulting is a human relation, fundamentally the act of helping and initiating, facilitating change. In this point, ERP consultancy is a subset of consulting services which specifically deals with ERP systems, fitting them into client organizations and clients’ ERP specific issues. The term relationship generally refers a mutual connectedness of two parties. Thus, the most ideal form of the client-consultant relationship may be best explained as ‘becoming so integrated that the client discovers its personal power by the strength of the consultant’, Bell and Nadler, (1985, p.1).

Lastly, we follow the model from Zang and Li (2006, p.228) to clarify what steps ERP implementations includes. Based on the model, “ERP implementation” in our study, refers these following steps; project organization, data preparation, system installation, software testing, test run and customization, drafting regulations/procedures, and system acceptance (See Fig.1). Namely, we consider all processes between contracting with the consultancy firm and the “go live” day.

Based on these brief definitions, client-consultant relationship in ERP implementation refers a temporary co-operation between the client organization that targets to employ ERP systems
and benefits from it; and the consultants are external professionals who are responsible for helping the client to attain its targets.

![ERP implementation steps](image)

**Figure 1:** ERP implementation steps

(Zang and Li, 2006, p.228)

In this manner, by conducting this research, our aim is to create a better insight regarding characteristics of the relationship between clients and ERP consultants. It is purposed to understand whether existing theories which model consulting relationship, could sufficiently cover the ERP consultancy context. For this end, we analyze what characteristics each theory and models have and meanwhile seek out fundamental features within ERP context which remain uncovered. In order to apprehend these features and dynamics of the relationship, we gather consultants’ perceptions and interpretations about their work and clients. Our scope is therefore analyzing this subject from the consultancy aspect. This gathering process is carried out through qualitative data collection methods within an ERP consulting organization in Turkey. By this gathering, it is intended to come up with a model which explains individual, cultural and technical determinants of consultants’ relationship with clients through ERP implementation and recommendations to strengthen it. For this purpose, we asked two research questions below to investigate stated research aim:

1) **What are the main characteristics of the client – consultant relationship in ERP implementation in Turkey?**

2) **To what extent are the existing consulting models compatible with the ERP consultancy?**

As it is mentioned before, consulting is defined as a human relation that is tightly-connected with parties’ social context, values and norms. Thereby, client-consultant relationship in general is influenced by cultural factors (Wang, Klein and Jiang, 2006). ERP consultancy and relationship with clients as the focal point of this study is investigated from its cultural dimensions as well. Our case study which is conducted in Turkey presents Turkish cultural characteristics for discussion. In this point, we intend to find out in what ways this country culture effects ERP consultants’ role negotiation, problem solving and interaction practices. We take Hofstede’s (1988) cultural dimensions that are described in the literature review as a basis to determine a general pattern of Turkish business culture. These country level characteristics could assist us to understand how existing models’ and mechanisms are compatible, if not, what country level cultural determinants have an impact behind it, also to what extent they are considered as a driver for using current mechanisms in our study organization.

Since this study takes ERP solutions into account which are packaged software designed and developed by big software providers (SAP, Microsoft, Oracle, IFS, Infor etc.), another cultural impact is derived from this “packaged” characteristic. Its pre-determined nature, in other words, strict limitations for customizations and “embedded business practices” of the original culture may impose problems that in most cases causes disappointed clients and
creates tension between clients and ERP consultants through implementation (Davenport, 1998, Boersma and Kingma, 2006). This problematic fact, therefore, leads us to investigate what potential pressures the packaged nature imposes to the client – consultant relationship and affects ERP consultants’ stance through interactions. In other words, we expect to find out the influence of these cultural dimensions, - country culture and packaged nature of ERP - on the client-consultant relationship in ERP consultancy. In order to examine these culture perspectives, following research question is asked:

3) How can culture affect the client-consultant relationship through ERP implementation?

These research questions are addressed by a case study within an ERP consultancy firm named Experteam Consulting which is an Oracle partner. A description of this organization is given in the following section. This case study research is conducted by considering some boundaries. Focusing on an ERP consultancy firm which implements Oracle solutions is one of our limitations in terms of considering only one ERP provider. In this point, impacts of packaged nature of other ERP solutions like SAP, Microsoft or Infor is not under investigation. In addition, we base our study on consultants’ point of view which is a factor that leaves clients’ interpretations and perceptions out of scope. For data collection, we communicate to specific number of consultants and managers from this firm in Turkish language. Conducting our research by focusing on a Turkish firm as country culture aspect and investigating Oracle packaged culture are also seen limitations for the culture dimension of the study.

1.3. Company Description

We conduct this case study within Experteam Consulting organization. Experteam Consulting was founded in 2000 has been providing Oracle Enterprise Business Suite (EBS) ERP applications and Oracle database technologies as a Platinum Oracle partner. The company is located in Istanbul / Turkey and has been implementing Oracle solutions to local and international organizations from various industries such as healthcare, insurance, telecom, logistics, pharmaceutical, manufacturing and so on. 245 ERP consultants are employed including technical, functional consultants and database administrators from junior to principle levels. Their solution and service portfolio includes implementation of Oracle EBS ERP, Oracle BI and Oracle corporate performance management solutions as well as database integration, database upgrade, technical support and training services.

1.4. Justification of the Research

Consultancy and client-consultant relationships are referred as critical success factors in the literature. In light of these facts, problems that undermine building a solid client-consultant relationship and erode consultancy effectiveness do exist in practice. They are echoed by some previous scholars in general, as poor communication between clients and consultants; unrealistic expectations from ERP systems; meager knowledge about client business environment; lack of motivation of both parties; consultants’ competences (Appelbaum and Steed, 2004); deficiency of emphasis on results; users’ prejudices about consultants (lack of trust, interaction) (McGivern, 1983, p.381); ill-organized responsibility division between clients and consultants; unawareness of the project scope (McLachlin, 1999, p.395) as well as, poor project and change management (Finney and Corbert, 2007, p.335). Although they were placed in some studies before, many researches were conducted based on client aspects for analyzing the success/failure of ERP implementation and also data was mostly collected from
the client side. However, despite consultants have a significant role in implementation phase, the dearth of specific and in-depth empirical researches which focus solely on ERP implementations still remains. Future research suggestions call for investigation of client-consultant relationship issues and point out a need for ERP consultants’ point of view (Appelbaum and Steed, 2004, p.74; Wong, et al., 2004 p.12; Wang, et al. 2006; Wang, Klein, and Jiang, 2006). Also Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlapfner (2009, p.289) point out that there is fewer empirical studies to explore social practice in consulting projects. Moreover, in their study, Devinney and Nikolova (2004) define the client-consultant relationship as interaction between different interpretive communities and emphasize some difficulties as well as adopted mechanisms related with knowledge transfer, sharing interpretations, power and so forth.

In this point, we believe that there is a gap between what is known about characteristics of general client – consultant relationship and situation in ERP consultancy. Thus, as stated, our aim is giving a detailed insight about client – consultant relationship in the ERP implementation process by taking the consultancy point of view. In this manner, we apply previous scholars’ concepts and views regarding this relationship to test their compatibility with the ERP consultancy field. This provides us an understanding about what model(s) can explain this relationship better, what roles ERP consultants currently play and how they tackle with the client-consultant relationship issues. From this point, we also come up with suggestions to ERP consultants which could be applicable to support their relationship with clients.

Based on these points this research could make academic as well as practical contributions. Since, not many previous studies have paid attention to the client-consultant relationship in the ERP area; by focusing on ERP implementation process and having an ERP consultancy perspective, this study might take a small step to cover this need and present characteristics of the client - ERP consultant relationship. Then characteristics of this relationship could provide an insight about managing knowledge workers. Furthermore, applying existing client-consultant relationship models would be a contribution in terms of validating and enhancing them to the ERP consultancy. Additionally, testing the usage and effectiveness of previously suggested mechanisms and practices for managing the relationship in our research setting would be a contribution to the literature with respect to improving existing mechanisms or introducing new ones. By adding the country culture aspect, we would show the degree of connection between applicability of existing models and techniques, and a specific country culture. We might also make contributions by presenting the “packaged” system perspective to examine its pressure on ERP consultants as well as the interaction with clients. On the other hand, practical implications might be a conceptual framework regarding how to strengthen client – consultancy interaction and improving ERP consultancy success. Lastly, our study gives a perspective to researchers and managers of ERP consulting firms related with a rarely analyzed packaged system nature and effects on ERP consultants’ behavior.

This research is organized as follows. In the first section, we introduce the problem description, scope of our research, company description that we interacted for conducting this case study and justification of the research. The literature review as the second section provides detail review regarding consultancy relationship, existing consulting models, cultural dimension and their sub-topics. The following section presents our research methodology by explaining our approach, data collection and analysis methodology. The fourth section is dedicated to present our analysis. Lastly, we present our results and the transitive model in the results and discussion section.
2. Literature Review

Literature review section constructs the theoretical framework of this study. Many conceptual and empirical studies have been conducted about the relationship between clients and consultants from different perspectives. In this review, we present fundamental concepts, existing client-consultant models and principles that applied to the ERP consultancy context. Firstly, consultancy concept, client and consultant roles are described in detail. Then four existing consulting models which explain the client – consultant relationship, some mechanisms to strengthen the relationship are presented. The “packaged” culture of the ERP systems and its effects on the relationship through implementation are explained. This provides an additional perspective so as to understand consultants’ standpoint and their interaction with clients. Lastly, Hofstede’s cultural dimension model is presented. This also provides a significant perspective to understand what basics lay behind the relationship and the dimensional model is used as a guidance analyzing the existing models from the national culture aspect.

2.1. Basics of the Relationship

2.1.1. The Client Role

The “client” role is obviously one of the two main roles in a consulting relationship which basically resides in demanding side and owner of the problem. The client, in broad terms, refers an individual or organization which needs help regarding a particular area so that employs a consulting service to be provided help (Schein, 1997; 1999). Similarly, Freedman (2001, p.22) emphasizes on basic three points of clients which are commitment to solve organizational issues; lack of internal resources; and their costs to form a fully internal solution. So, that is, the client is “ready and probably willing to, but not able to deal with its issues without consulting assistance” (Freedman, 2001, p.22). Clients can vary in terms of the type of help. It may be an individual person in an organization or a small business owner who aims to improve his/her skills. On another hand the client may be an organizational unit or the whole organization which needs help for a particular project. The range of organization types involves government, non-profit and private organizations in all sectors (Philips, 2006, p.15).

There is an institutional relationship between two parties and a framework set by a temporary contract (Kubr, 1988, p.42). If we cascade the client organization down, we can have a number of individuals or groups as directors, managers, supervisors, team leaders and staff members who are involved in the consulting service. The help needing client system therefore, comprises many sub-systems or individuals who basically need help (Kubr, 1988, p.43). Schein (1997, 1999) shortly has matched the “client” concept with a help needing organization. In this sense, it is useful to elaborate what sort of help a client calls for. The reason behind needing a help from outside has two main folds which are: the need for tangible, measurable results; and the need for an improvement of the client’s capability of adopting and using new functionalities (Champion, Kiel and McLendon, 1990). The need for results indicates concrete outcomes which observable and measurable such an effect to bottom line, increased time to market (Czerniawska, 2002, p.22), changes in organizational structure, changes in behaviors and attitudes of members. The need for growth on the other side, points out increased capacity of the client to adopt new methods, systems or technologies and apply itself rather than demanding a repetitive help by consultants. Thus clients are defined as organizations which feel the necessity for special knowledge and skills; operational service or an outside viewpoint to fulfill these types of needs (Kubr, 1988).
In light of these definitions and two main needs of clients, it is important to point out why clients use consultants in order to illustrate a clearer picture regarding the clients’ role. One reason is to reduce cost by using specialized experience and know-how of consultants. If the organization does not possess the required skills and knowledge to attain their objectives, hiring a consultant is a sufficient way of reducing costs instead of acquiring the required knowledge and skills by themselves (Czerniawska, 2002, p.21; Kubr, 1988, p.6). Also consultants in some cases are needed to accomplish some specific tasks which occasionally arise in the organization thus client employees could carry on other important projects (Cohen, 2001, p.7). These reasons mainly fall under “the need for results” in terms of demanding a tangible outcome by using outside knowledge and skills. Another reason for clients is to gain a competitive advantage by exploiting consultant knowledge to do their business faster, better and innovative in comparison to their competitors. Besides their specialized knowledge and experience, consultants are hired to provide an alternative, outside viewpoint to the client organization. Since client managers are often surrounded by their daily business operations and influenced or delimited by their organizational structure, culture, values as well as personal capabilities, an independent, unaffected perspective is needed to provide an objective view (Kubr, 1988, p.7; Philips, 2006, p.16). In the following table (See Table 1) some reasons of why clients need consultants are listed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compliance</th>
<th>Efficiency Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Bottleneck</td>
<td>New Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing Flexibility</td>
<td>Lack of Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Expertise</td>
<td>Lack of Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time</td>
<td>Lack of Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1**: Some reasons to hire consultants

(Philips, 2006, p.17)

There is no one-fits-all definition of the client since its characteristics differ in various organizational structures and consultancy needs. According to Schein (1999, 1997) the client concept can be classified by asking questions like “whom am I working for?” and “who needs what help?” These questions helped to extract basic client types as listed below, in order to illustrate the focal point(s) of the help, peripheral relations and other actors.

**Contact Clients**: This is the first contact person and an introduction stage for a consultant. The contact client is an individual who first contacts with a consultant whereby a request, problem or question. The contact client introduces the consultant to other members in the organization who may take place in the project.

**Intermediate Clients**: These are individuals or groups who participate to meetings, interviews, workshops, trainings or other activities along the consultancy project.
Primary Clients: They are individuals or groups who are basically owner of the problem or the focused work, in other words, people who need help. Primary clients also control the budget which comprises the consultancy project, thus have a type of power on the project.

Unwitting Clients: Individuals or groups who are placed around the primary clients or the client system, and will affected during the consultancy project. However, unwitting clients are not aware of these effects.

Ultimate Clients: This type of clients refers a group or a community of people whose welfare must be considered at first hand. This is the organization as a whole in which the consultancy project is run and affected by the intervention.

Involved “Non-Clients”: Shortly, this is a classification for the “others” who do not fit types above. They are individuals or groups who are aware of what is going on, what likely effects may be observed by the intervention as well as whose interests may stop or undermined the consultancy project. Non-clients basically represent any power plays, politics or hidden goals which may be perceived as obstacles for the helping process.

Along projects, consultants usually interact with more than one type of clients therefore they must be able to distinguish which clients resides under what types in order to sustain consultancy performance. Since different types of clients may have different interests, goals and understandings regarding the problem or issues, consultants must be able to provide balance between benefits of different client types (Schein, 1997, p.3).

Another classification of client is made with respect to levels of problems (Schein, 1997, 1999). While the first classification deals with the basic features and roles of clients within the client organization, this underlines what levels of problems are concerned by whom. So client roles by levels of problems are listed as follows:

Individual Level: This level of problem is inside of an individual and the help is needed to address this problem. These problems are relevant to personal issues like career or personal development which is guided by trainings, coaching, or mentoring. For example, trainings can be helpful for an individual to gain a new set of technical or interpersonal skills to improve his/her work and contribution. This individual help can be possible for any types of clients like contact, primary or ultimate clients.

Interpersonal Level: In this level, consultants deal with problems derived from a group of individuals, their inter-relationships and relations with the client system rather than one individual’s personal issues. The interventions mentioned in individual level can be applied to the interpersonal level to tackle with relationship problems among individuals or between 3rd parties.

Face-to-Face Group Level: This level addresses problems observed within a formal group which means that members are aware of the predefined and structured connectedness between each other. Consultants are focused on individual or relationship issues which undermine group performance and prevent the group working as a “group.” For this reason, consultants play different roles such as a non-direct facilitator who manage the group agenda and moderate meetings; or individually contact with members to address issues which affect other team members.
**Intergroup Level:** The intergroup level addresses problems or issues that are reasoned by the situation between groups, teams, departments and other organizational units. This scale of problems, as it is seen, comprise group and examines how groups interact with each other. The consultants in this case consider a system with a larger scale and more complex issues within this system. The main goal in this kind of assignments is to cultivate coordination and better alignment of the organization units.

**Organizational Level:** This level of problems is related with the total benefit of the organization such as mission, vision and corporate strategy. The consultants work with individuals, departments and other organizational divisions together but the main focus is to eliminate problems which affect the organizational integrity and total client system.

**Inter-organizational Level:** In this level, problems are pertinent to the coordination, collaboration and alignment of organizations or community units to build a kind of consortium or network (Chisholm, 1997 cited in Schein, 1999, p.68). The consultant works with different levels in organizations by focusing on inter-organizational level. It is noteworthy that the organizations which try to form a community are autonomous members and not necessarily bounded to each other.

**Larger System Level:** This is the largest level pertains to problems and issues which comprise wider community or the whole society. The consultants work with social networks, organizational or community groups to handle issues related to the health of societies for example environmental issues.

### 2.1.2. The Consultant Role

The other main role in the relationship is obviously the “consultant” role that they are asked by clients to provide tailored solutions and advice by using their expertise and previous experiences gained from different industries and clients (Chen, et al, 2008). In the previous section the client role is defined as a help needing person. In order to complete the picture, consultants are described as professional helpers. Consultants have some basic objectives as helpers which are stated as (Turner, 1982, p.121) providing information and solutions to clients’ problems; making analysis and diagnosis; facilitating client learning process and improving the client organizational development. In order to accomplish these objectives consultants adopt different roles which they interact with the client in different ways as well as focused on different objectives. Besides these roles, it is important to state a primary role which might be seen providing and maintaining the balance between clients and themselves. The balance refers a status of the relationship that comprises different even conflicting opinions, expectations and values are managed as well as mobilizing all actors’ knowledgebase. Thereby, consultants must be able to manage that relationship to produce outcomes which make both parties satisfied (McGivern, 1983, p.437). Besides the balance between two parties, consultants must also be able to get equilibrium between theories or body of knowledge gained so far, and practice in which non-technical, political and environmental factors take to the stage (Risseeuw, 2007, p.24).

The role which consultants play and the balance between theory and practice are performed related to what type of problems consultants deal. In other words, approaches which are adopted for solving problems and the degree of interactions with clients are associated with nature of the problem. Correspondingly, Nikolova (2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009) presents a
general problem classification (See Table 2) that is a determinant of the consultants’ approach and the relationship between clients and consultants. According to this classification, problems are grouped as exact/inexact in terms of whether pre-defined, formulized methods are applicable and additionally, grouped as routine and innovate problems in terms of familiarity of the problems. Three types of problem are introduced based on this classification; they are simple routine, complex routine and innovative problems. Simple routine refers a problem that consultants are familiar with and can be solved by directly applying consultants’ body of knowledge which is gained before. Pre-determined and applied techniques and methods can be used to resolve clients’ issues with minimum interaction. Complex routine problems are also familiar to consultants. However, contrary to simple routine problems they require more interaction with clients and discussion of the current state of problem since, formalized, pre-determined techniques are not properly applicable to this type of problems. Innovative problems are new problems which consultants are unfamiliar with them. For this reason, there is no applicable background knowledge or experience to address the problem. It therefore needs an intensive interaction and new way of thinking to tackle the problems.

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<th>Exact Problems</th>
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Table 2: Classification of Problems


As already mentioned before, these problem types which consultants face, consciously or reflexively guide consultants regarding what techniques, methods and approaches to employ to address the issues. Basically, these problems are factors to play basic consultant roles and switch between them when it is needed. Thereby, another dimension of providing balance takes it place on the stage as well. The consulting grid is formed by Champion, Kiel and McLendon (1990) includes nine basic consultant roles explained below. These roles are in general organized according to the clients’ need for capacity improvement, and need for tangible results and task completion that we mentioned in the previous section.

The Consulting Role Grid

The consulting role grid (See Fig. 2) presents nine roles which are suitable for distinct consultancy tasks in different steps. Axes of the grid display consultants’ responsibility for the two main clients’ needs growth and results which are stated in the “client role” section and three colors shows to what extent clients and consultants produce a collaborative work (Champion, Kiel and McLendon, 1990, p.66). Throughout the project, consultants must determine the most convenient role to take by assessing each task’s characteristics. If the consultant focuses mainly on project results, this leads an unbalanced, dependent relationship which client can hardly learn acting alone and so as an example in the case of ERP implementation, dependency to the consultant firm lasts longer. In the beginning of the relationship, the roles which require “partnership” may not be taken, since the trust between two parties has not been built properly. But, by choosing the correct roles for the right tasks,
consultants can build trust over a time. Description of the roles is presented below (Champion, Kiel and McLendon, 1990, p.67):

**Hands-on expert role:** In this role consultants take all responsibility about the tasks on behalf of the clients. It refers a consultancy process that consultants are the only party to take decisions of actions and expected to produce the best results for the client. It is not aimed in this role to improve client’s capacity and learning related tasks. The consultant work alone and does not concern explaining his/her way of producing solutions. So, if the problematic situations are observed again, consultants will be requested to provide solutions.

**The modeler role:** The consultants as modeler take majority of responsibility to achieve successful results. At the same time, there is an attention on improving the client’s own capacity and organizational learning. The modeler performs all tasks on behalf of the clients as a hands-on expert, but he/she makes his/her approaches or methods apparent to be observed and learnt by the client system. Thus, the consultant as a modeler is ready to answer client’s questions about his/her way of solving problems. On the other side we could understand that clients are also willing to ask questions and gain new skills. At the end, clients might be able to solve their problems themselves when they repeat, without or limited consultant support.

**The partner role:** Consultants usually take this role when clients have the capacity to contribute to solutions. For this reason, both parties share responsibility of the tasks. An important attention is given to results and client’s organizational growth. So, parties are also responsible for a big jump in the client’s capacity to carry out tasks and have a valuable experience. This aspect refers that the client aim to learn and eager to put its own knowledge to task completion. So as to fulfill this need consultants in the partner role must be able to teach clients effectively what missing in their organization effectively.

**The coach role:** The coach role refers a consultancy service that the consultant is not the one who is primarily responsible for task completion. He/she namely acts as a feedback mechanism on the client’s performance after observation. In line with the client’s performance, the coach gives advice, provides feedbacks and assists his/her client through the actual task performance. As it is seen, whereas the consultant as a coach has indirect effects
on task completion and task results, has direct and important influence on growth and client’s learning.

**The teacher/trainer role:** Comparing to the coach role, this role is more distant from results of specific task activities. The teacher role is more focused on general performance of the clients and assumes that the clients have knowledge about basics of the activities and solution process.

**The technical advisor role:** In this model consultants give technical support to clients for specific tasks. They are not concerned about the growth of client capacity and organizational growth either. They are more focused on what the clients struggle in a particular situation and what technical expertise they need. In this role consultants may have close or distant relationship with clients like support via phone or e-mail or on site periodic visits.

**The counselor role:** This role refers a position that consultants are focused merely on improving the client’s capacity and organizational growth instead of concerning the performance of a specific task. The main role of a counselor is to help and motivate the clients to gather, analyze and come up successful conclusion from his/her experience. Since the counselor is not involved in how clients carry out tasks and what is happening during the performance, he/she relies on the client’s data.

**The facilitator role:** The help of the consultant in this role is for process-oriented activities for instance moderating meetings, problem analysis, brainstorming or displaying data. Intervention of the facilitator helps for a limited growth of the client’s capacity. However, as it is seen there is no direct influence on task completion or performance of activities. Contribution of the consultant might be by teaching special techniques to facilitate processes. Hereby, it leads a limited growth of the client’s capacity.

**The reflective observer role:** In this role consultants have least responsibility on results and capacity growth. The consultants are in charge of assisting clients through feedbacks and impressions. These limited activities lead clients to monitor themselves by significant indicators such as trust, teamwork and openness.

After we set basics of the client-consultancy relationship by presenting the role of the two parties, characteristics of the relationship and main problem types, next section briefly describes existing consulting models to deepen theoretical background of our research. First model to describe is the traditional expert model, and then critical consulting model brings an alternative perspective to the consultancy. Following reflective practitioner model and lastly, interpretive model put additional dimensions to the consultancy concept.

### 2.2. Consulting Models

Models presented in the next subsections are existing models which illustrate client – consultant relationship in management and business consultancy. Four models is analyzed, they are expert model, critical model, reflective practitioner model and interpretive model.

#### 2.2.1. The Expert Model

*The Expert model* is structured by underlining the expertise of consultants. The word ‘expert’ is defined in the Oxford dictionary as “a person who is very knowledgeable or skillful about a particular area.” The relationship between clients and consultants therefore, starts from a need
for an expert knowledge which is not available within the client organization and not easy to learn due to time and resource constraints (Schein, 1999; Kubr, 1988). Here the consultant is a knowledge resource who is available on demand, supplies information, diagnoses the organization, run a new system design and recommend solutions to problems (Kubr, 1988). Consultants bring their knowledge and experience based on their previous works in similar problem settings. According to this specialized experience they are able to know which processes are effective or problematic, and also able to offer suitable solutions based on their expertise (Philips, 2006, p.17). For this reason, the client hires a consultant to fill this knowledge gap and meanwhile to save his/her time, to focus on its core businesses. To describe the required expert knowledge Toppin and Czerniawska (2005) use an example of hiring an electrician. According to that example, a person notices that lights in his house does not work and he knows that it is a technical problem caused by electrical wiring then hires a licensed electrician and asks her to fix the problem instead of trying himself or attending technical courses in order to be knowledgeable to fix the problem. He basically relies on the electrician’s expertise, pays attention to what she says and considers only results whether his lights work again or not. In this case, an electrician sells her specific knowledge to a buyer who wishes a solution for a known problem. So, we can say that there is an apparent problem or symptoms of a problem; and knowledge “out there” to be brought to cover the issue; besides the help needing person has neither specific knowledge nor resources to gain this knowledge. If we extend this case to business organizations, we can give an example (Schein, 1999, p.7) of a manager who wishes to know how employees’ likely reactions are against a new type of employment policy and what types of policies are adopted by competitors. Managers hire a consultant to able to get information about these issues. Then consultant examines existing employment contracts; mostly adopted policies among competitors; and conducts interviews with employees; then finally comes up with a bunch of reports and opinions to cover the managers’ knowledge gap. Or in another example, the manager may wish to know how a segment of customers feel about a specific type of product. The manager therefore, asks a market research firm to conduct a research and have information about the issue. In these examples, problems and required knowledge are known, thus consultants are people who are able to apply this specific knowledge and transfer to the client organization. Clients basically concern with results of consultancy service, do not think about how consultants get to the end point.

Another way to exemplify the expert model starts with a set of signals or symptoms instead of an explicit need which point a malfunction within a system or organization. Managers recognize a signal of a problem for example a negative trend of the sales revenue or raising distribution costs. However, the root causes of these problems are blurry. Thus, they ask a consultant to analyze the signals, diagnose the organization and recommend a remedy and lead the healing process (Schein, 1999; 1997). For example, the consultant conducts in-depth interviews through the organization; analyze business processes, existing technologies, information flows and gather data from potential ineffective sub-systems. After that, builds a way to eliminate detected defects and takes actions to overcome problems. This entire process is illustrated by using doctor-patient metaphor. According to this metaphor, a patient feels sick and uncomfortable himself then contact with a doctor to find out what is wrong and what is the cure. Following the diagnosis, patient has an option to accept the suggested treatment. Here in this relationship the patient, namely the client, gives more grants to consultants to diagnose the problem, find out a treatment and apply for the organization’s sake.

The expert model is also echoed by Czerniawska (2002, p.20) as named ‘specialist relationship’ which focuses on fulfillment of a specific need, such as implementing a software
package. She claims that the specialist relationship is based on effectiveness and has measurable parameters to assess the performance, like running a software package successfully in the client’s system or not. This claim supports the electrician example that it is stated above – whether lights work or not. Specialist relationship also takes an objectivist view point by considering a true knowledge which resides “out there” and transferable to the client’s problem as well as its basics are not changeable depending on the client situation. In this manner, an expert person is assigned to apply his/her expertise and fulfill clients’ needs.

These examples so far have highlighted apparent, clear needs of clients and a careful choice of an expert helper who addresses these needs and applies his/her standardized knowledge to them (Ashford, 1988 cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.4). In this point, experts are representatives of the neutral, objective best practices which are previously tested by other client projects (Alvesson and Johanson, 2002, p.235). Expert knowledge in the models is independent from its context, objectively definable, easy to transfer from one case to another (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004). Besides, the doctor-patient metaphor makes the expert knowledge been included in diagnosis stage as well. Thereby, it can be claimed that the conventional expert relationship model sees consultancy concept as a linear, one way knowledge transfer process from consultants to clients (Bessant and Rush, 1995, p.101) in which clients’ needs has explicitly defined problems and requirements; or at least strong symptoms point out the problem. These cases also ascribe consultants an ‘outsider’ role which interacts with the client in a relatively short period of time and the boundaries to play this role is clearly demarcated like employees “inside” the client organization and consultants are “outside” the organization (Kitay and Wright, 2004, p.6). The expert model has been built on some basics which are musts to benefit from this relationship (Schein, 1999, p.7). They are:

- Definition of requirements explicitly or having some symptoms that alert the problem.
- Client’s needs must be clearly communicated to the consultant.
- Consultant’s capabilities must be assessed carefully by clients to be provided by accurate information.
- There must be objective knowledge “out there” to implement to the client’s problem.
- The client must pay attention to the consultant’s diagnosis and offered solutions also must be able to apply the offered solutions.

At the beginning of the relationship, clients grant power to consultants as the help needing party and somehow express their dependency to consultants. In different cultures for example in Western countries, needing help might imply being incapable of solving his/her own problems; show one’s weakness and intellectual incompetence; and dependency to an expert knowledge (Schein, 1999; 2002). In light of this view, the expert model can be illustrated as a state of in-equilibrium between clients and consultants in which one party - mostly consultants - is perceived or placed at ‘up’ and the other party – mostly clients - is placed ‘down’. This initial imbalanced situation may pose some different stereotypes to clients and consultants (Schein, 1999; 2002) which have effects on the relationship.

One side of these stereotypes is that the client may feel resentment and act as defensiveness against the expert’s opinions and suggestions. These reactions are adopted either consciously or unconsciously so as to point out an expert’s fault and make him/her look bad then gaining a relative parity. The hidden cause of these reactions is derived from balancing the “down” position of the client. Another possible, reaction of the clients may be feeling relief and strong subordination to the expert’s opinions (Schein, 1999; 2002). This reaction reflects being comfort of expressing his/her problems to another person which is perceived as a magical
cure. Relief and subordination also make managers who are under pressure feel less stressful and more secure (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004). Feeling secure and relief may cause less interaction with solution process and put more burdens on consultants’ shoulders. From the consultant’s perspective, a common reaction is using the power granted by the client since client’s dependency to the expert knowledge. As Everett Hughes states (cited in Schön, 1983, p.4) that “the professions’ claim to extraordinary knowledge in matters of great social importance.” And in return experts are granted extraordinary privileges and paid attention. Also client’s feelings like weakness, subordination and relief may lead consultants using their higher status to give premature advices without extensive understanding about the problem. Because of the seduction of the authority, consultants might be reluctant to listen to clients, underestimate their opinions or even blaming clients not to follow his/her directives. Shortly, accepting the given power might prevent consultants to build a relationship with clients (Schein, 1999; 2002) and limit interaction between clients and consultants. The necessity and degree of interaction is up to the scope and type of tasks. If the expert faces with familiar, standard problems the need of interaction might be less in comparison to unfamiliar problems.

**Shortcomings of the Expert Model**

Critics to the expert model mainly emphasize on its characteristic of limited interaction with the clients and also its functionalist view (Nikolova, 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.34). Consultants get in touch with clients as an outside knowledge resource, undertake some tasks and apply his/her solutions for the client needs. In this described relationship, one issue is that how deeply a consultant could examine the client’s business, its needs and then present a sufficient solution (Schein, 1999; Devinney and Nikolova, 2004; Kitay and Wright, 2004). As the expert model advocates an objective, one-fits-all solution, it is not able to produce tailored and unique ones for clients’ specific needs. That is why the expert model is criticized as being incapable of handling such projects which include complex routine and innovative problems that are not familiar and require extensive knowledge exchange and creation of new understandings on the issues. For this reason, the expert model fits well with a model of consulting were the client buys a generalized service in form of a standard knowledge (Jespersen, 2009). Since the functionalist view is dominant to describe the model, it is contended that the social and institutional context embedded in the relationship is mainly neglected (Kitay and Wright, 2004, p.10; Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.5-6). These structures are taken into account to build a long-term relationship in which consultants can understand client specific dynamics such as organization’s norms, values and roles as well as comprehend different aspects of the perceived problems (Kitay and Wright, 2004, p.10).

Moreover, due to initial imbalanced relationship which is described above, clients might feel resentment and reluctance to give detail information regarding the problem (Schein, 1999, 2002). That situation keeps problems’ details under-covered or even cause not to discuss real problems, and thereby undermine solution process. Besides, subordination to the consultants’ expertise might make clients passive audiences and prevent taking responsibilities for their own problems (Schein, 1999). From the consultant side, granted authority and power might inhibit paying attention client’s opinions and trusting gathered information. Namely, the relationship which one part is perceived as up and the other is down prevents building an effective relationship and producing tailored solutions for the clients (Kubr, 1988; Schein, 1999, 2000).
**2.2.2. The Critical Model**

The critical model is the second client-consultant relationship model. According to Devinney and Nikolava (2004; Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlafnner, 2009) the critical model is different than the expert model. Its approach has more critical attitude and it focuses on image creation and client expectations. These are ignored by an expert model (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004).

Primarily, before going through the critical model, we need to understand the underlying basis and components of this model. Alvesson (2001) considered the consultancy companies as knowledge intensive organizations such as; management consultancy firms and computer consultancy firms. The knowledge-intensive companies include the professional organizations that contain intellectual works and these works are run by well-educated and qualified employees. Usually these firms provide professional services or qualified products (Alvesson, 1995; Robertson and Swan, 1998; Starbuck, 1992 cited in Alvesson, 2001, p.863). Knowledge work has problematic attitude in the knowledge-intensive companies; and it is not easy to categorize these companies and knowledge workers that work in the knowledge-intensive companies (Alvesson, 2001, p.863). As we can understand from this explanation, consultant is a knowledge worker that deals with the problematic and complicated knowledge work in a knowledge-intensive organization. The notions as ambiguity, rhetoric and image (Alvesson, 2001; Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlafnner, 2009) take place and have a contribution to knowledge flow in this knowledge-intensive form. In the light of this environment, while the consultants do the knowledge work, they need to interact with the client. The critical model is based on this interaction regarding knowledge-intensive form.

For the critical model, knowledge is interpreted as a socially constructed phenomenon which is based on social recognition (Alvesson, 2001; Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlafnner, 2009). The professional knowledge is defined as a language of managers and management consultants, which represents the mutual way of defining and knowing the phenomenon about the organizations, management and manager (Clark and Salaman, 1998 cited in Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlafnner, 2009, p.290). In addition this knowledge is defined as ‘ambiguous, metaphorical, and context-dependent’ and slippery (Alvesson, 2000; Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Clark, 1995 cited in Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlafnner, 2009, p.290; Devinney and Nikolova, 2004).

The critical aspect deals with how consultants ‘demonstrate value to clients’ (Fincham, 1999, p.338); and this is provided by ‘the range of rhetorical techniques, ways of controlling the image that clients receive, the definition of client problems’ (Fincham, 1999, p.338). Starbuck (1992 cited in Fincham, 1999, p.338) stated that consultants create an understanding that indicates the inadequacy of the clients’ understanding in clients’ mind. Therefore, rather than evaluating the quality of the advice, the symbolic outputs as a part of the impression creation process become more valuable. Moreover, some consultants benefit from rationality of appearances such as scientific methodologies and practitioner competence. Also rhetoric has impact for this impression management (Fincham, 1999, p.338).

To this model, the managers are stressed and have external pressure on them and the consultants create an ambient for managers in order to make them feel secure; rather than creating and transferring knowledge. Accordingly, managers need consultants to tell them stories and use images instead of presenting real solutions (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.5). Beliefs, impression management, and images have impact on this knowledge, especially
impression management is important for the client-consultant interaction. Basically gaining the business is the most important matter for the consultant; therefore impression on client is important in order to achieve the goals of consultant. To critical model, consultants use images, metaphors, and humor in order to impress their clients (Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlafifer, 2009, p.290). In client-consultant interaction, client has the role of impression manager. In this model, client expectations are important; however knowledge sharing and creation is disregarded. Consulting knowledge is built during the client-consultant interaction (Risseeuw, 2007; Jespersen, 2009). Consequently, critical model emphasizes on the symbolic character of consultancy, therefore there is no well-structured corporation between the parties. This attitude does not help to acquire rational outcomes (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.5).

Since client-consultant relationship also includes the knowledge-intensive characteristics. In critical model, rhetoric and stories, images and ambiguity are important for impression management which is a main goal of the consultant.

Ambiguity

Alvesson (1993, 2001) stressed the fact of ambiguity between consultant and client. According to him, ambiguity includes contradictions that are not able to be resolved and uncertainty. Moreover, there are also uncertainty about the boundaries, principles and solutions. Ambiguity cannot be made clear by providing more facts and it represents ‘the possibility of rationality’ by ‘clarifying means-ends relationships or exercising qualified judgment’ (Alvesson, 1993, p.1002); therefore it has differences from the term of uncertainty. There are three kinds of ambiguity such as: (1) ambiguity of knowledge; (2) ambiguity of significance of knowledge; and (3) ambiguity of results claimed to be contingent upon knowledge work (Alvesson, 2001, p.864).

The ambiguity of knowledge represents knowledge as slippery and difficult to understand, define and describe, moreover the realization of knowledge depends on who is considering it (Polanyi, 1967 cited in Alvesson, 2001, p.865). So, interpretation of the knowledge is not certain and differs for each person. Even though knowledge is difficult to understand and define, to process the knowledge has ability to get valuable outcomes. Therefore knowledge-intensive organizations have an ability to solve complicated problems by creation innovative solutions (Alvesson, 2001, p.865); thereby the consultants as the knowledge workers in the knowledge-intensive organizations need to deal with the ambiguity of knowledge in order to treat knowledge for creating good solutions. For the good outcomes, interpretation and beliefs, expectations and symbolism are significant for the impression management, because those norms symbolize the wisdom, intellectual and rationality (Alvesson, 2001, p.865-866).

The significance of knowledge is hard to be determined in knowledge-intensive companies. In these companies, individuals are assigned in a work team and showing their special abilities or talent is limited. Therefore the significance of knowledge is limited in many cases and it is difficult to separate knowledge from the abilities. This represents the ambiguity of significance of knowledge (Alvesson, 2001, p.867).

The results produced have also ambiguity and it is a third form of ambiguity concerns. In the field where the knowledge workers perform, there is a continuous uncertainty. In practice the evaluation of professional work is difficult (Alvesson, 2001, p.867). For instance evaluation of the work of computer consultants also includes uncertainty and ‘agreement on problem

**Image**

Alvesson (2001, p.870) stated that knowledge, expertise and problem solutions are associated with the ambiguity of knowledge and the work in knowledge-intensive firms; in this sense impression, beliefs and negotiations of meaning are significant for these notions. Image is a part of the work of knowledge intensive organizations and the knowledge-intensive nature. In addition image is significant for the knowledge belongs to the knowledge workers, ‘for ambiguities of the content of the skills’, for the knowledge used and, for evaluation of the results (Alvesson, 1990 cited in Alvesson, 2001, p. 870). Image can be important for some levels such as; professional–industrial level, corporate level and individual level. It can be effective in interaction between the parties. Image is used for marketing also for production process and post-production process. For the management consultants and professional service companies, image as size and brand name is very important. These features provide reliance and show the quality of the company. In individual level, studies shows that appearance of being professional gives strong impression to the other side. People seem more reliable, disciplined by their physical appearance (Alvesson, 2001, p.870). Therefore for the consultants image is vital for the impression management and creating positive influence on clients.

**Rhetoric**

‘Rhetoric is the art of speaking or writing influentially or persuasively’ (Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlapfner, 2009, p.295). Rhetorical skills are significant for the company in terms of its activities, its workers and external relationships. Alvesson (2001, p.871) denoted that rhetoric ‘refers to elements of argument and persuasion which may, or may not, be backed up by facts’, also it is kind of persuasible way of talking. Moreover it takes place in the core of knowledge-intensive being (Alvesson, 2001, p.871). In many knowledge-intensive organizations, conversation and communication are core part of the work. Communication and interaction are very significant for the technical oriented knowledge-intensive organizations such as consultancy companies in order to accomplish their projects successfully. Service work contains language ability and verbal interaction (Alvesson, 1993, pp.1007-1008). Also Alvesson (1993, p.1008) defined the knowledge workers as language workers. Rhetoric provides better capacity, work and results of work. In external relationships, knowledge, abilities, reputation are constructed. In a word knowledge is developed and communicated through the relationships and interactions. Knowledge intensive firms use their knowledge in order to have prestigious clients; in this manner they can make their knowledge well-known. This is kind of a reputation of these firms such as consultancy firms. According to Alvesson (1993, p.1008), a consultancy firm needs to deal with a right client, and also a client wants to use right consultant. One case study that Alvesson (1993) conducted indicates that in a computer consulting firm, formal or theoretical knowledge is not a center of the work. However, it is emphasized that communication ability, social orientations and flexibility are the crucial characteristics of the company. The personalities, orientations, corporate culture and managing social relations were much more significant for the company and these were carried out by verbal skills, actions, material symbols and communication. Here rhetoric is important for dealing with the complicated and communicative side of computer consultancy work; in other words rhetoric emphasizes the people side of the project rather than technical expertise or knowledge. These kinds of
consultancy works have ambiguity due to relatively complicated technical works such as programming works, and complicated social and organizational situations. In this case, rhetoric is a way to focus on knowledge for consultancy companies (Alvesson, 1993, p. 1010).

Rhetoric provides effective manipulations of the clients’ impression through communication based on the clients’ background, their problems and their industry characteristics (Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlapfner, 2009, p.295). One case study conducted by Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlapfner (2009) in a technical consulting company, represents that rhetorical tactics are significant to create positive client impression and quality expectation. In addition, ‘consultants’ appearance, rhetorical skills, and argumentative brilliance’ (Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlapfner, 2009, p.295) are very significant in order to manage client’s impression.

In critical model, clients are more involved to the interaction than the expert model. Consultants represent and change the meanings of the clients by negotiating them. The client managers act like co-producers of consultancy (Nikolova, 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.39). In this model, the point is there is no prominent dominance of the consultancy. The boundary of dominance of consultancy is set by the client managers. If they allow the consultant be more dominant, and then the consultant can act in that way. Therefore it depends on the client managers’ acts (Jespersen, 2009, p.39). Client managers are usually defined as passive actors in the critical model. They become dependent on the consultants advice and also they expect that the consultant creates new fashions, fads and innovations in management. In some cases the client managers are afraid to lose control in the market due to the fact that their competitors also may use the new trends in management. Therefore, they may feel unsecure in terms of new fashions in management. In this case, the client managers need the consultants to keep that control through the new ideas of management produced by the consultants. However sometimes consultants are not able to run news ideas. Because they have dependency on the client top managers, therefore they should follow all the rules and procedures. This can cause to use obsolete solutions for management (Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlapfner, 2009; Kieser 2002; Nikolova, 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.39).

**Shortcomings of the Critical Model**

In critical model, the consultant and the client basically share the same social context; moreover they have interaction during the process. However, it is claimed that they cannot produce shared knowledge (Nikolova, 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.40). As we see from the literature above, image and rhetoric is so significant in the client-consultant relationship. Even in some cases client let the consultant be dominant in their interaction. This manner is not adequate in terms of client participation. In critical model, we cannot determine how the knowledge transfer is conducted between the parties and how knowledge is received by the client. Since the knowledge provided by consultant is based on rhetoric, images and storytelling; knowledge transfer between client and consultant is neglected (Jespersen, 2009).

In this model, the fact of resistance to consultant by client is ignored. Furthermore, consultant is defined as an actor who impresses the client by symbolic manner; this is a controversial situation in the context of why the need of consultancy service is rising ((Nikolova, 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.40). The critical model accepts the ambiguity of knowledge; and based on this acceptance, knowledge transfer is not done. Because that model claims that the interaction between two parties is about persuading the other one. Therefore, clients’ knowledge is ignored in terms of knowledge transfer. Furthermore, as we mentioned before,
client is dependent on consultant in terms of following fashions. This manner also decreases the contribution of the client in this relationship (Jespersen, 2009, p.40).

In critical model focuses on the projects that include innovative and complex problems. In this manner this model is not suitable for the projects which need fast and effective solutions for the problems faced before (Nikolova 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.41). Therefore if the client demands fast solutions, the critical model is inadequate to meet the demands. As we see from the statements, in this model the relationship is not considered as mutual. It is oriented in one way; this one way means that consultant is an active actor and her/his task is to impress the client. On the other hand, client is a passive actor and it is considered as audience. Consequently we can say that clients are dependent on the consultants’ advices and their consultancy and they do not have any contribution in this relationship (Jespersen, 2009, p.41). In fact the resistance of client to the consultant’s power, the clients’ contribution, and independency of client and knowledge transfer are disregarded in this model. These missing facts may prevent the successful client-consultant relationship in some cases.

2.2.3. The Reflective Practitioner Model

This model is derived from the view which points out the limitation of technical rationality in handling complex real-world issues. This limitation is basically a misfit between actual practice of phenomena which involves uncertainty, complexity, uniqueness, instability and value-conflict, and positivist origins of the technical rational tradition (Schön, 1983, p.39). Schön (1983, p.41) states a gap in his book between professional knowledge and demands of real-world practices in terms of their focal points and basic characteristics. On the grounds of this gap, practitioners’ work has evolved to a state which is surrounded by uncertainty and ill-defined problem situations. Schön (1987) defines this state as a swampy, low land of the professional practice’s topography and argues that most of the issues of humans, organizations and societies are fall into this low land area; rather than problems with clear goals and well-defined structures of technical rational tradition. With regard to this perspective, reflective practitioner model deals with the swampy land of issues in which also consulting services take its place (Ciborra, Hanset and Braa, 2001 cited in Soh and Sia, 2004). So as to understand this model, we first present basics of the gap between technical rationality and professional practice; and types of practitioners’ expertise which are stated as knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action by Schön (1983, 1987).

From the technical rational perspective, professional practice is a process of problem solving. Namely, selecting and applying the most suitable means to reach the defined ends. So, problem solving in technical rational perspective is a matter of deciding what techniques or models to apply to achieve the established ends efficiently. Correspondingly, practitioners are instrumental problem solvers who select technical means best suited to particular aims (Schön, 1987, p.3). However, in the real-world practice, problems do not present themselves explicitly and do not isolate themselves from various peripheral variables. That is why, ‘problems’ are seen as a ‘problem setting’ which comprises different technical and human factors, as well as that is firstly, a process of deciding, clarifying ends to achieve and then deciding means to apply (Schön, 1983, 1987). Different technical and human factors make each real-world cases unique and require improvisation and inventing (Schön, 1987, p.5). For example, a physician recognizes some symptoms that are not associated with a known disease. Similarly, an engineer faces with a problem that is never mentioned before at the literature or not suitable to be handled by theories, techniques or tools which are employed before. He/she, therefore, must form a new or perhaps a unique way to overcome those new
issues. These examples can be multiplied and extended to other professions and disciplines. Here the main point is in practice; cases on the table are unique and show unfamiliar features which are specific to each case. In other words, the cases are not “in the book” (Schön, 1987, p.6), problems are unfamiliar and complex, so that the practitioner should somehow find a way out and approach from different aspects to invent a solution rather than applying common models or techniques. In some examples, real-world problems also include different, sometimes conflicting views which switch issues to ill-defined economic, political or social problem situations instead of a pure technical problem. Construction of a road for instance can be considered as a technical issue for civil engineers but in fact it has environmental, economic, financial, social and political aspects which bring uniqueness and uncertainty into the game. In accordance with this view, another example is argued that legal education is not only teaching students how to make legal arguments and judicial interpretations based on previous cases but also giving skills of negotiation, client relations and legal ethics (Schön, 1987, p.14).

The gap has been already discussed becomes apparent when we try to handle real-world complexity by employing existing theories and techniques. It escapes the boundaries of technical rationality so as to deal with unfamiliar situations which do not have certain ends. New meanings and approaches must be developed which is not only a technical but also fits into a socially and institutionally structured context. If we modify the electrician example that we present in the expert model, we would draw a new situation which a customer has troubles with very high electric bills and needs a solution. Here, reasons of the problem might be derived from the electric wiring; performance of electric devices; malfunction of electric meter or consumption behaviors of family members. It therefore, might not be sufficient to hire an electrician and ask him/her to fix only the electric wiring since even it is not certain what causes high electric consumption. Besides various potential reasons, the problem situation might have some characteristics that surprise helpers (Schön, 1987, p.28). Namely, unfamiliar situations in which there are no apparent fit between the characteristics of the problematic situation and the available, applied theories, techniques or formulas. In this multifaceted context, what is needed is a process of interaction between problem owners and helpers as well as having an appropriate “knowing” to a particular professional practice (Schön, 1987, p.33). Two types of knowing are shaped the reflective practitioner model adopted in professional practice. They are knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action.

Knowing-in-action: Schön (1987, p.25) describes knowing-in-action as a sort of know how that is revealed along in an intelligent action such as riding a bike, playing a musical instrument or analysis of a balance sheet. They are skillful actions, decisions, judgments and adjustments that we do spontaneously by processing implicit rules and procedures that are almost not possible to articulate and explain clearly. So, these are actions that more than we can explain. We show our knowing-in-action in numbers of daily actions we perform, and in our professional practice. Riding a bike is a common example which is hard to verbalize how to ride. Schön (1987, p.25) explains that if we ask people how to keep his/her balance when the bike begins to tilt to left, they may say that by turning the wheel to the right they regain their balance. However, that answer is not true would even cause people fall down. This simple example shows that the know-how which is embedded in people’s actions does not match with their descriptions. These actions are spontaneously taken, observable in the action and hard to describe. Our descriptions for knowing-in-action consists of the sequence of operations we commit; procedures and rules we follow; our values, norms, strategies, theories and assumptions that we adopt as backgrounds of these actions (Schön, 1987, p.25).
Knowing-in-action is a dynamic process involves awareness, appreciation and adjustment parts. For example catching a ball is a continuous activity. We are firstly aware of a ball is coming then we anticipate its speed, distance and direction, after that we adjust our position and by the way we extend and cup our hands to get ready for the ball. Or if we figure out that it is so fast that can hurt us, we quit and avoid from the ball. This online anticipation and correction lead this action to be intelligent activity (Schön, 1987, p.26). So it shows that knowing-in-action is a dynamic process that we take our decisions and actions along the activity.

**Reflection-in-action:** When we have learned how to ride a bike, catching a ball or analyzing a balance sheet, we can execute these activities spontaneously with awareness, appreciation and adjustment processes and; without having to think about them. However, these activities are not always occurred smoothly and flawless. In some cases, familiar and routine activities surprise us by unexpected results or errors along the process (Schön, 1983, 1987). Reflection-in-action highlights the corrective interventions to these unexpected and unfamiliar errors in present action. It is therefore, different from reflection-on-action (Schön, 1987, p.26) or “stop-and-think” concept (Arendt, 1971 cited in Schön, 1987, p.26) which contends assessing previous actions to find out how our knowing-in-action plays a role producing unexpected results as well as terminating an ongoing action to think about what is wrong with the process then continues to apply corrective decisions. Thus, reflection-in-action focuses on actions in present time namely, refers thinking on errors that we face during an activity then reorganizing what we are doing while the process is still on (Schön, 1987, p.27). These conscious readjustments, changes are reflections in our actions and they have immediate effects on the action. In reflection-in-action rethinking on our knowing-in-action leads to learning by doing and further thinking that influence what we do. Schön (1987, p.28) gives a useful example to present our reflections during actions.

I built a gate out of wooden pickets and strapping. I had made a drawing and figured out the dimensions I wanted, but I had not reckoned with the problem of keeping the structure square. As I began to nail strapping to the pickets, I noticed a wobble. I knew the structure would become rigid when I nailed in a diagonal piece, but how could I be sure it would be square? Then came to mind a memory about in a rectangle, diagonals are equal. I took a yardstick, intending to measure the diagonals, but I found I could not use it without disturbing the structure. It occurred to me to use a piece of string. Then it became apparent that, to measure the diagonals, I needed a precise location at each corner. After several trials, I found I could locate the center point at each corner by constructing diagonals there. I hammered in a nail at each of the four center points and used the nails as anchors for the measurement string. And then, when I had the diagonals equal, I nailed in a piece of strapping to freeze the structure.

If we take this example, we see a series of moments during the process that one faces with a surprise and then reshape his/her current understanding and assumptions (Schön, 1987).

1) First of all, the process starts with a situation of action which is done spontaneously and routinized. The knowing-in-action leads us to expect categories of results that we consider as normal. In this example, Schön expects building a wooden gate which is square.

2) These routine processes occasionally produce, depending on the problem context, a surprise which do not fall into the results expected as well as undermine the process itself, such as the issue of keeping rigidness of the gate.
3) A surprise leads reflection in what we are doing presently. We evaluate what a situation knowing-in-action gets us and start thinking critically on our actions. We ask “what is this?”, “how have I been thinking about it?” and “what do I have now?” Schön asks himself in his process how he could keep the square shape of the gate.

4) In reflection-in-action, we question our given assumptions and operations of knowing-in-action. We try to find out fixing the surprise that we face. In this process, we reorganize our understandings and strategies about the phenomena then reframe the problems. In this example above, it is noticing the rigidity problem and trying some solutions to eliminate the problem.

5) By questioning the basics of our assumptions, we make series of experiments that we reflect from each then cumulatively; explore new understandings and also create alternative approaches to the problem and what we intend to achieve. We test both our current understandings and new actions which may produce new surprises then create further reflections and trigger critical thinking. Schön, in his example, tests his understanding of squareness as equality of diagonals and adequacy of the procedures. He invents new procedures to keep the structure square and tests them as well.

In light of descriptions and examples about knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action, reflective practitioner model advocates that consulting service is a complex, multilayered process which includes not only technical issues but also issues such as ill-defined and conflicting goals, uncertainty, political and social contradictions. The latter types of issues make previously tested, “in the book” solutions inadequate but make the problem situations unique and unfamiliar. Consultants in this point must invent unique solutions for these unique problems also must reflect in their actions through the process of helping. Their knowing-in-action and how they tackle with uncertainties are embedded in social and institutional contexts, namely, in their community of practitioners in which groups of practitioners who share conventions of actions and a particular way of doing things. They are structured in their actions and apt to apply repetitive actions (Schön, 1987). Thereby, consulting knowledge is constructed in this community as a result of their individual and social variables (Schön, 1987). This means that consultants have their own frameworks and one type of worldview to interpret issues and have a tendency to apply standard solutions to handle the client demands. As it is already mentioned this tendency is vulnerable in terms of fulfilling clients’ needs sufficiently, especially in complex problem situations, since solution of problems and organizational development require an omnidirectional insight about the problem situation as well as invention of new understandings and methods. In this point, reflective practitioner model points out the interaction and a sound communication between clients and consultants in building a solution together. Contrary to the expert model, clients in the reflective practitioner model have a more balanced position against consultants and consultants’ extraordinary expert knowledge as Hughes (1959 cited in Schön, 1987, p.32) states which provides privileges to consultants. For that reason, this model presents a relationship between clients and consultants which is minimally defensive, learning oriented and gives importance to develop a mutual understanding about the problem situation (Schön, 1987, p.258).

In messy problem situations, consultants may be obliged to develop new understandings and techniques to reduce the problem situation in a more clear state. Along this process, consultants have to be informed about how the client organization carry out their operations, how things are going within the organization as well as power relations and company norms.
Reflective practitioner model thereupon, characterizes a relationship in which both parties can exchange information about technical topics; moreover, sensitive topics those are hard to share like disappointments of members, negative impressions, doubts about consultants’ performance or clients’ motivation to elevate the consulting process (Schön, 1987, p.259). With respect to inventing new way of handling issues, a consulting relationship according to this model must have processes which are testable and constant monitoring of actions taken. So, in this perspective, it includes learning about backgrounds of such actions or behaviors. For instance, if we get back to the electrician example; we must question consumption behaviors of the family members to get an alternative aspect about high cost electric bills.

According to this model, client and consultants must act reflectively in all phases of consulting process to promote to a balanced relationship. They supplement each other so that develop new skills to trigger new knowledge creation (Schön, 1983, p.300). Consultants should accept their ignorance regarding the client organization and its unique characteristics. So that, they should avoid from initial the “up” position against clients that we mentioned in the expert model. Consultants should be open for altering or leaving standard solutions and be willing to operate experiments on the spot to meet the needs. On the other side, clients should perceive, understand the processes occurred within the organization and its external environment so as to improve the problem situation. In this perspective, clients should develop skills of asking questions in order to obtain how the consultant responds to challenge and uncertainty; also to find out different perspectives of the problem situation, potential solutions and hidden risks (Schein, 1999; Schön, 1983, p.301). The balanced, reflective relationship also claims that the problem must always be owned by the client itself. The tendency of putting all burdens on the consultant’s shoulder prohibits building a balanced reflective relationship. Schein (1999) contends that clients are always owners of the problem which refers the fact that clients have to live with the consequences of the problem and have to be proactive in problem situations. Consultants are helpers for their clients to solve problems.

Differences between the expert model and reflective practitioner model are presented below (See Table 3) in terms of what type of views each of them demands (Schön, 1983, p.300).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Reflective Practitioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am presumed to know, and must claim to do so, regardless of my own uncertainty.</td>
<td>I am presumed to know but I am not the only one in the situation to have relevant and important knowledge. My uncertainties may be a source of learning for me and for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep my distance from the client, and hold onto expert’s role. Give the client a sense of my expertise but convey a feeling of warmth and sympathy as a “sweetener.”</td>
<td>Seek out connections to the client’s thoughts and feelings. Allow his respect for my knowledge to emerge from his discovery of it the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for deference and status in the client’s response to my professional persona.</td>
<td>Look for the sense of freedom and real connection to the client, as a consequence of no longer needing to maintain a professional facade.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To conclude, the reflective practitioner model highlights a constant reflection between two parties and rejects the state that one party takes matters into only his/her hands.

Critics to reflective practitioner model and Donald Schön’s arguments are based on some empty spots in the model which are related with power issues and client’s role in knowledge creation. Through the interaction of different communities of knowing and parties with different understandings, it is not clear that whose view is going to be adopted if an unsolvable conflict occurs; or how these parties come up with a shared decision. In this point, it is stated that power relations between clients and consultants must be considered. Reflective practitioner model does not touch upon how one’s power influences and altered through interaction (Jespersen, 2009). Furthermore, as mentioned above, new knowledge creation is crucial for addressing unfamiliar and complex problem settings. Through the interaction both parties render their knowledge accessible, exchange opinions and question each other’s actions. However, reflective practitioner model does not see clients as equal participants of new knowledge and advice creation. It gives the majority of responsibility to consultants in advice and knowledge creation (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004).

2.2.4. The Interpretive Model

The interpretive model is the last model on what we focus in terms of client-consultant relationship. In interpretive model, similar to reflective model, consultant is a reflective practitioner. And this consultant has its own knowledge based on her/his experiences and theories. In this model, knowledge transfer and knowledge creation are the significant notions. In addition, it is assumed that client and consultant have different understanding and perception; therefore they belong to different interpretive communities. The knowledge transfer and knowledge creation are carried out among these communities. In a word, consultant and client have their own particular knowledge and they should create a shared understanding and create their own knowledge (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.9).

The notion of interpretive communities is based on the concept of communities of practice and communities of knowing. In next parts, we will explain the interpretive communities with the concepts of communities of practice and communities of knowing, moreover, how the knowledge transfer and knowledge creation are carried out in the interpretive communities. Basically, these terms construct the basis of interpretive model. For the knowledge transfer and creation is used for balancing the power position of one party in the client-consultant relationship. Similar to reflective model, rhetoric and stories are used in order to change the power balance in a relationship (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.9). The interpretive model focuses on power in the client-consultant relationship and ‘knowledge and power are eng related and enforce each other’ (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.9).

Devinney and Nikolova (2004, p.9) built this model based on Schön’s (1987) notion of knowing-in-action that we explained in the reflective practitioner model. According to Schön, social and institutional context includes the professional knowing-in-action and it is shared by community of practitioners. In this model people have their own cognitive processes in the social context and knowledge is produced as a result of this process. Individuals keep this knowledge in their minds. Moreover, individuals create their own knowledge through the
collective actions. Accordingly, knowledge is created and transferred within the interpretive communities through the interactions of individuals belong to these communities (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, pp.9-10).

**Communities of Practice:** In this notion, working, learning and innovation take place and they are defined as the related forms of human activity. These practices are compatible and interrelated (Brown and Duguid, 1991). Brown and Duguid (1991, p.40) defined these practices as: ‘work practice is generally viewed as conservative and resistant to change; learning is generally viewed as distinct from working and problematic in the face of change; and innovation is generally viewed as the disruptive but necessary imposition of change on the other two’. These practices take place in the communities. The participants of communities have different ideas, perception and interests and they make various contributions to the activities. Communities of practice do not have socially visible boundaries (Lave and Wenger, 1999, p.23). It was defined as ‘a set of relations among persons, activity and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice’ (Lave and Wenger, 1999, pp.23-24). A community of practice is necessary for the existence of knowledge, because the community of practice contribute the essential interpretive support in order to understand the roots of knowledge (Lave and Wenger, 1999, p. 24). Basically, communities of practice consist of people who involve in a process of collective learning and interact each other in order to perform tasks or learn how to do the processes in a shared context. Therefore learning is very important for the community of practices and it is an underlying concept for community of practices. In addition, interaction of the participants is in the cause of learning process (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1999).

**Communities of Knowing:** ‘Organizations are characterized by a process of distributed cognition’ (Boland, Tenkasi and Te'en, 1994 cited in Boland and Tenkasi, 1995, p.351) and they include different processes, environment and technologies. This characteristic makes them complicated to be understood by people completely. As we indicated before, knowledge-intensive firms are more complicated due to being affiliated to diverse expertise and knowledge discipline, therefore Boland and Tenkasi (1995, p.351) defined these community of specialized knowledge workers as community of knowing. There are many communities of knowing in knowledge-intensive firms such as; professional specialties, functional areas, project teams and so on. Those communities of knowing intertwine each other and individuals may belong more than one community of knowing (Boland and Tenkasi, 1995, p.352).

**Interpretive communities:** The concept of interpretive communities evolved from the notions of communities of practice and communities of knowing. This concept is based on a definition of organizations as distributed knowledge systems. An organization as a system has parts such as individuals, and each individual have their own mind and perception. According to this aspect no individual can have the entire relevant knowledge of organization; rather the knowledge is distributed between different individuals (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.10). In interpretive communities, people build their own understanding through interacting with other people who share the same interpretive positions. During this process shared understanding and meanings are constructed in conceptual frameworks by people belong to an interpretive community. Basically this process defines learning process and it occurs naturally through the interaction of people in a network. Owing to this process, the interpretive community and individuals give direction to each other. After a while the produced
frameworks become mature and they are chosen by individuals. By this means, diverse interpretive communities are developed (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.10).

Basically, these communities are basis of organizations. Since organizations are complex structured and includes various people from different expertise, processes and environment as distributed cognition; they have multiple, overlapped communities or communities of communities. In addition organizations are defined as collective communities that are formed by learning practice and then the ideas emerge from spontaneous interactions between individuals construct the innovation practice (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Devinney and Nikolova, 2004). Therefore, we can say that interpretive communities are not stable, they can be reconstructed and different individuals participate to multiple and different interpretive positions. In other words, interpretive communities have not clear boundaries, they are flexible and switching any interpretive position to another means change in individuals’ usual mood, perspective and characteristics. Whenever new person join to the community, knowledge is transferred and shared understanding is constructed (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.11).

Since, consultants’ organization is considered as knowledge intensive firms, interpretive communities are also parts of these organizations. From this aspect, the team consists of members of clients and consultants deal with many different aspects and meanings. However, after a while the members of this team have shared framework and understanding in their minds through their interaction. Thus, client- consultant team is also considered as community of interpretive communities (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.11).

After we explained the concept of interpretive communities and their basis, we focus on the interaction between the individuals. For our case, we should take the client-consultant interaction into the consideration, due to the fact that the client-consultant team is an interpretive community. And in this community there are two core actions are performed such as; knowledge transfer and knowledge creation. Basically, knowledge creation is the significant process that differentiates the interpretive model from the reflective practitioner model. Because reflective practitioner model, the client’s role is not defined clear during the knowledge creation process. On the contrary the interpretive model focuses on the client’s and consultant’s role during the processes of knowledge transfer and knowledge processes. In the next sections, we will explain the knowledge transfer and knowledge creation processes.

**Knowledge Transfer**

Different communities may see the problems from different aspects in similar conditions. The problems are defined during the interaction process of the individuals in their networks and the definitions are not objective (McGivern and Fineman, 1983; Behrens and Delfmann, 2002 cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.11). Since the organizations have multiple interpretive communities, understanding each other is a problem during the interaction. Therefore understanding each other’s problem is very important in order to get interaction and build shared understanding. Therefore, knowledge transfer is carried out between different interpretive communities. Some boundaries must be extended between the different interpretive communities to provide the sustainable connection between them; in addition knowledge transfer can be performed through sharing conceptual frameworks by these different communities (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.11). ‘Aligning actions’ are significant in order to share conceptual framework to provide knowledge transfer (Stokes and Hewitt, 1976 cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.11). At the beginning members of
different communities try to perform organized actions and after a while they take some communication behaviors and interact with each other (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.12). Alignment among different communities is a case of ‘creating enough mutual understanding among them to evolve solutions that will be understood and implemented’ (Schein, 1996; cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.12).

Moreover, meaning is an important context for the interaction and it has two dimensions such as; content and frame. The dimension of content explains what is expressed and the dimension of frame shows how something is expressed (Fiol, 1994 cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.12). With respect to these contexts, meaning takes place in the content of communication and also in a way of communication as a frame. Framing is important for the collective decision processes. If there is no shared meaning, people run the learning process by framing their different interpretations (Fiol, 1994 cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.12). This is a part of knowledge transfer and Figure 3 illustrates the knowledge transfer between the interpretive communities in terms of client-consultant interaction. As you can see on the Figure 3, client and consultant organizations have their own overlapped interpretive communities. The client-consultant team is built from these interpretive communities and they reflect their own perspectives and share their understanding through mechanisms such as boundary objects, brokering and aligning actions. We will explain these boundary objects in the next section.

According to Devinney and Nikolova (2004, p.13), ‘the emergence of shared meanings, shared conceptual frameworks and a shared repertoire of communications behaviors will be positively associated with the transfer of knowledge within the client-consultant team’. Furthermore, sharing reflections, ideas and frameworks by socials interaction provides better and long-term relationship with client. In this case *shared language* is very important to provide durable knowledge transfer and long-term reliable relationship between client and consultant (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.13).

![Figure 3: Knowledge Transfer between Matching Interpretive Communities](Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.36)
Knowledge Creation:

Knowledge creation is a process that can be done by people through reflecting their knowledge critically and expressing it differently. This kind of reflective and critical thinking is named as deliberative cognition and it comes out when people face a problem; or when they are not satisfied with the current situation and searching for a new solution; or when the existing knowledge is not successful for the problem faced recently (DiMaggio, 1997 cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.13). So, knowledge is created through developing new meanings and frameworks to current issues in the context of reflective thinking. During the knowledge creation process, individuals reconsider their knowledge and draw distinctions in interpretive communities through various practices.

In client-consultant team, knowledge creation process is carried out by both client and consultant through interaction between client-consultant, sharing perspectives and ideas, and reflecting their own knowledge between the interpretive communities. During this process client and consultant take reflections on their knowledge and reconsider their own perspectives. Therefore in this process client is active as well as consultant. New knowledge is created through some tools that can represent the perspectives such as; models, metaphors, workshops, figure and so on (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.14).

Consultants have an impact on the clients in terms of the way of doing something in a client organization. Consultants produce new language and then present it to the clients. In this manner, consulting practice change the current configuration and tries to interpose between new and old language (Clegg, Kornberger and Rhodes, 2004 cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.14). During this process, clients also affect the way of consultants’ work. They exchange the perspectives and they are the parties of mutual transformation. In addition clients contribute new knowledge and perspective to consultants; hereby consultancy firms can sustain their success and gain new experience and knowledge. This client-consultant interaction enables knowledge creation between two parties. The shared perspective and active interaction between interpretive communities provide better ability to understand and solve the problems; after all, in this way new knowledge is created (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.14). Basically knowledge creation is performed through sharing perspectives, interpretations and this is a basis of finding innovative solutions for the problems. In addition, knowledge transfer is required in order to provide knowledge creation (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.15). Hereby, client-consultant relationship becomes stronger and this interaction produces innovative and reasonable solutions. Knowledge transfer and creation in client-consultant team is illustrated in Figure 4.
Devinney and Nikolova (2004, p.15) suggested three steps for the process of knowledge transfer and creation:

1. First step is the discussion of the problem in a way that includes client’s members through using their language in order to understand their perspectives (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.15).

2. Second step is using various visualization methods or boundary objects in order to draw attention to different aspects and analysis of the problem (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.15).

3. Third step is inducing the client’s members to build their own way of solution. Hereby the client’s members are included to the problem solving process interactively. By this way they understand the problems deeply and provide more knowledge to the consultants. .this step enable the parties to share understanding and meaning, moreover effective interaction (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.15).

**Mechanisms for understanding and sharing perspectives**

Some mechanisms are used to provide shared understanding and perspectives within the client-consultant team. The usage of mechanisms enables to create common language and shared meanings through knowledge transfer (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.16). In this section we will explain these mechanisms that are used for understanding and sharing perspective between client and consultant.
**Boundary Objects**

Boundary objects are defined by Star (1989 cited in Wenger, 1998, p.106) as ‘objects that serve to coordinate perspectives of various constituencies for some purposes’. These objects can be some artifacts such as: documents, systems, tools, physical models and diagrams, labels, cause and narrative maps; concepts and encoded information into memos, computer systems, so on (Wenger, 1998, p.106; Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.16). Boundary objects are used by management consultants as different techniques to create mental picture of their arguments. These tools are necessary to ‘provide common framework and terminology for consultant’s work process’ (Werr and Stjernberg, 2003 cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.17).

In addition, these tools facilitate the interaction between client and consultant and learning process between these two parties. Consultant companies usually use structured IT-based knowledge management systems in order to share the experience gained from projects and provide standard toolkits. General knowledge such as methods, tools and concepts are transferred by computer-mediated knowledge transfer. This way is not very effective for specific expertise knowledge. Since the consulting companies include interpretive communities, the learning process is performed within the interpretive communities and; the tools and communities are built during specific projects. The people who are not involved to the projects have difficulties to understand others’ knowledge gained in specific client’s project. Moreover, existing tools and methods need to be explained and adapted to new interpretive communities in order to make contribution to shared understanding (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, pp.17-18).

**The Role of Brokering**

According to Wenger (1998, p.109), brokering is a term that represents mediation between two parties. The procedures can be interpreted differently by two different parties. Brokers are able to understand this difference and persuade the parties in order to adopt new procedures in their way of understanding. In addition Wenger (1998, p.109) called brokering as multi-membership. In this sense, brokers are capable of doing new connection between the interpretive communities and provide coordination between them. This connection provides understanding and new possibilities of meaning. Basically brokering requires coordination, translation and alignment between different perspectives; as a result learning can be carried out through introducing into community elements of another by brokers. Hence, brokering is a complicated function Wenger (1998, p.109; Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.18). In consulting companies brokers enable the knowledge transfer (Werr and Stjernberg, 2003 cited in Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.19). Here developing cognitive complexity that is an ability of realizing various dimensions; enable people act as a broker and they are able to apply many different perspectives (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.19). Brokers need to have ‘capacity for understanding others, capacity of introspection and self-awareness, ability to build interpersonal relationships and increasingly broad views of society and social issues’ (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.19). These skills support the cognitive complexity and this attitude enables the brokers to gain dominance in the interpretive community. Hereby, they can lead the communities and create understanding between them easily (Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.19). We can say that, if the brokers are well equipped, knowledge transfer can be carried out swiftly and the processes can be performed easily. So that, especially functional consultants need to improve their brokering skills in order to have strong interaction between clients. And gaining cognitive complexity may be a good advantage for
them to take more information from clients in terms of interaction between interpretive communities. Consequently, in interpretive model consultants play different roles during the interaction between these parties. Therefore clients need to attune to the consultants and they must be involved to this interaction process as much as possible. Only by this way, the relationship becomes stronger and produces good results.

**Shortcomings of Interpretive Model**

The interpretive model is a theoretically constructed; however it was not built upon empirical works like the expert, the reflective practitioner and the critical model. Therefore the advice for how to improve the client-consultant relationship may not match with the critical realism (Nikolova 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.42). Another issue is trust. According to the interpretive model, ‘trust might not be independent of power’ (Jespersen, 2009, p.42).

There are different types of consulting, thus consultants must be careful in selecting which kind of consulting and they must consider whether their demands are met with the type of consulting they chose. The consulting type affects the relationship and results of the interaction as well. There is no ideal type of client interaction, there are many convenient interactions. Therefore, consultant must evaluate the appropriate interactions and make their decisions according to this. The context and the type of problem determine the type of relationship between client and consultant (Fosstenløkken, Løwendahl and Revang, 2003 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.42; Nikolova, 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.42). The consultant must learn ‘how to enlarge their professional discourses to fit, rather than silence, client’s stories. In addition, they must learn to redefine institutional roles and relations to permit clients and interpretive communities to collaborate in telling their stories and sharing their interpretations, and make room for client stories and start sharing their interpretations’ (Nikolova, 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.43). Since the client-consultant relationship has complex nature, it needs to be improved by combination of different theoretical and methodological approaches. Hence, this model is not adequate to explain all the details of client-consultant relationship. The client-consultant collaboration must be more explored by the empirical studies (Nikolova, 2007 cited in Jespersen, 2009, p.43). Table 4 represents some mechanisms for sharing perspectives.
Table 4: Some mechanisms for sharing perspectives

(Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative/Story</td>
<td>An oral or written performance or exchange between two or more people during which a past or anticipated experience was being referenced, recounted, interpreted, or challenged (Boje, 1991, 1995)</td>
<td>Helps to build new meanings of a problem and acts as a repository of accumulated experience (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Werr and Stjernberg, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokering</td>
<td>When people transfer some elements of one community into another and thus create indirect relation between communities where no direct relations (e.g. shared frameworks) exist (Burt, 1992, 1997)</td>
<td>Connects unconnected communities and enables sharing of perspectives and new possibilities of meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphors</td>
<td>“Signification by similarity or analogy” (Barley, 1983)</td>
<td>Creates novel interpretations of experience by asking actors to see one thing in terms of something else (Donnellon et al., 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical argument</td>
<td>“a set of utterances that include a premise, an inference, and a conclusion” (Donnellon et al., 1986)</td>
<td>Used in a context of disagreement to move another person to agreement through incremental steps (Donnellon et al., 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic indirect</td>
<td>“the purposeful use of behavioural forms that are ambiguous and therefore create equivocality” (Donnellon et al., 1986)</td>
<td>Achieves consensus or suppresses dissent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible definitions</td>
<td>e.g. machine parts (Beckky, 2003)</td>
<td>Create a common ground for understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the literature review, we tried to build an understanding of different aspects based on four general models constructed for the client-consultant relationship mostly focuses on the management consultancy. In the next sections will adapt these models to ERP consultancy by empirical data through interviews with different ERP consultants. We will try to figure out how the client-consultant relationship is performed in ERP projects during implementation phase. These four models presents different roles for the consultants and our aim is to see which roles match with the ERP consultancy and which models are applicable for the client-consultant relationship in ERP projects. We will try to understand the perspective of ERP consultants and their roles in this relationship by interviewing them. In addition, there is another underlying factor of these models/roles which is culture. We will also touch upon this subject deeply in the next sections.
Summary of Consulting Models

Devinney and Nikolova (2004) developed a summary of four consulting models (See Table 5) from the aspects of used metaphors, knowledge asymmetry, and nature of knowledge and power issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphors</th>
<th>Expert Model</th>
<th>Critical Model</th>
<th>Reflective Practitioner Model</th>
<th>Interpretive Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub forms</td>
<td>The &quot;expert consultant&quot; applies predetermined solutions to problems, almost irrespective of the contexts in which he finds them. The main task of this kind of consulting is the solution of practical problems and its value lies in its functionality and usefulness. The &quot;pure researcher&quot; studies social issues and problems, independent of a particular problem and client. This is the case when for example university professors work as consultants. The goal of the researcher-consultant is to bring scientific expertise into the companies.</td>
<td>There are two sub forms: management gurus and management consultants. Management consultants rely less on charisma than management gurus. While management gurus create a universal appeal, consultants address individual client’s needs. These differences are however a &quot;matter of emphasis rather than category distinctions&quot; (Fincham, 2002).</td>
<td>The &quot;reflective practitioner&quot; solves only cases when the client’s problem is of sufficient importance because the establishment of this relationship is difficult and time consuming. In emergent or routine situations when clients usually wish a fast and efficient solution rather than a long and risky conversation process the expert type of consultant is more appropriate.</td>
<td>There are consultants who support established or fixed positions of meaning or interpretations and engage themselves in solving of problems within the domain of dominant interpretations or management fads (&quot;the dominant interpreter&quot;). On the other hand there are consultants who engage themselves in disturbing and bringing &quot;noise&quot; in fixed interpretations (&quot;the disturbing interpreter&quot; or &quot;parasitic consulting&quot;).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Nature of knowledge | Knowledge is a decontextualised, objectively definable asset or a resource; it is independent of its carriers and their interpretations. Consulting knowledge is based partly on an abstract body of knowledge and partly on consulting methods. | Knowledge is a social product. Consulting knowledge is developed in interaction with the client and is ambiguous and symbolic. Images, stories and symbols serve as "rationality-surrogates" and constitute consultant’s real expertise. | Knowledge is embedded in a context of meaning and can have different meanings for different people. Consulting knowledge is only partly based on technical expertise (abstract body of knowledge). An important part of it is embedded in a skilful | Knowledge resides in people’s minds and is created and shared within socio-culturally constituted discursive practices. Consulting knowledge is based on abstract concepts and experience developed. |
| Knowledge asymmetry | Consultants as experts have the capacity to solve clients’ problems; the client is a lay persona and is more or less excluded from the problem solving process. There is a unidirectional knowledge asymmetry. | Because of the intangible and interactive character of the consulting service clients have difficulties in evaluating consultant’s knowledge and the provided service prior and after it has been delivered. There is a unidirectional “knowledge” asymmetry. | Client and consultant both possess knowledge important for the problem solution; there is a mutual knowledge asymmetry. | Because client and consultant belong to different interpretive communities they have different perspectives on topics. There is a mutual knowledge asymmetry. |
| Knowledge transfer | Communication is a process of information transfer between client and consultant. Important aspects of the communication process are the communications channels, the characteristics of messages and the motivation and absorptive capacity of the involved individuals. | Communication is a process of creating impressions, images and stories. In this way consultants try to impress the clients and convince them, that they have something valuable to offer. Rhetorical skills and acts are important aspects of the communication process. | Communication is a process of reflecting on the own understanding and sharing it with other. This requires intensive interaction between the involved individuals. | Communication is a process of translation and of creating alignment between interpretive communities. Only when some conceptual frameworks are shared is knowledge transfer possible. Through the process of translation new meanings and thus new knowledge is created. |
| Power issues | Because consultants possess unique scientific body of knowledge, it is the right of the consultant to determine the problem solution on the basis of professional judgment. The client doesn’t participate in the problem solving process and is dependent on the knowledge of the expert (consulting-centric view). | Consultants are powerful and persuasive figures; they use rhetoric, stories and symbols to impress clients and sell them management fads. The client is passive and dependent on consultants and the management fads they create (consulting-centric view). | Both consultant and client are powerful and interdependent because both parties possess relevant knowledge and make important contributions to the problem solving process. | Client and consultant are mutually dependent. Power is constructed through discourse; it is dependent on knowledge and vice versa. Power is an “interpretive dominance” over other interpretive communities. |

**Table 5: Summary of four consulting models**

(Devinney and Nikolova, 2004, p.34)
2.3. Cultural Perspectives

2.3.1. Packaged Nature of the ERP Systems

In this part of the literature review packaged nature of the ERP systems is presented. We have reviewed the literature in that point to provide an understanding regarding what packaged nature is and how it influence ERP implementation in general.

What is packaged software?

Packaged software systems are general or dedicated systems that are developed to be employed for various types of purposes. General packaged tools today are very easy to use like popular spreadsheet; e-mailing or statistical analysis programs which users purchase then immediately start using (Lucas, et al. 1988); whereas dedicated packaged applications are much more complex systems operate such as accounts receivable or order management functions. For this reason, it requires in most cases huge financial obligations, human resources, technical knowledge and months to implement. Even if these resources are sufficiently provided, a full “package” of benefit realization or a high return-on-investment is not a guarantee. Packaged software implementation has been discussed by many authors for several years in terms of its difficulty to carry out a successful transformation and achievement of expected benefits (Davenport, 1998, Sia and Soh, 2007; 2004, Rothenberger and Srite, 2009; Zhao and Fan, 2007; Kholeif, et al, 2007). Since packaged systems are developed for the whole market not for specific organizations, they must be able to address multiple user and organization types; differentiate their features and embedded processes. They must simply satisfy thousands of customers in various industries and must fulfill their organizational requirements as well as market changes (Carmel and Shirley, 1995). The characteristic of developing a single enterprise system for all industries and organizations inevitably exposes misalignments between implementing organization and the system. These systems are not only physical products that are produced then purchased by customers, but also socially constructed artifacts that developers ascribe some meanings, inscribe their worldviews, values and own interpretations about processes they design and code. A packaged system therefore reflects institutional context and social “spirit” of its developers (Orlikowski, 1992, p.426; Latour, 1992). Thus, customers purchase not only software but also inherent values and interpretations of developers. In other words, packaged software imposes its own technical and business logic on implementing organization (Davenport, 1998; Luo and Strong, 2004; Kumar and Hillgesberger, 2000).

In this sense, if we look at the ERP concept, an important characteristic of ERP systems is that they are packaged software solutions rather than customized systems (Kumar and Hillegersberg, 2000; Luo and Strong, 2004, p.322). So, they come to organizations, as already mentioned above, with pre-assumptions about organizations’ business processes, standard procedures and embedded practices so-called “best practices” (Davenport, 1998). These systems consequently reflect worldviews and social context of development teams which are also physically separated from system end users hence user involvement in development process is very limited (Carmel and Shirley, 1995). Furthermore, they reflect business practices and organizational requirements of some reference organizations’ which are examined in order to model and design the ERP package (Soh and Sia, 2004, p.377). Thereby, an obvious, conceptual distance and disconnection emerges between its development background and practical usage. Figure 5 below depicts three different players in ERP development, implementation and usage. They are ERP vendors which design and develop...
the system for example Oracle Corp. or SAP; ERP consultants are partner firms of vendors spread around the world to assist implementation of ERP systems; and implementing organization is the client organization which purchase and use the system (Boersma and Kingma, 2006). Even though embedded best practices are considered as universal and must-to-apply for the favor of organizations, ERP implementation failures show that it is hardly possible to run these best practices in most cases. In this point, we could say that best practices are “best” from vendors’ point of view (Davenport, 1998). Due to organization, industry and culture-specific requirements, there is an initial misalignment between the ERP package and implementing organization (Sia and Soh, 2007; Soh, et al., 2000). Eliminating this misalignment and providing a fit between two parties is a highly complex process includes two complementary ways (Kholeif, et al., 2007). One is reengineering the organizational business processes and changing how operational tasks are carried out to comply with the ERP standards. The other way is technical customization of the ERP packaged to fit existing or reorganized organizational processes.

Figure 5: Three different players

Technical customization refers technical modification of the ERP system to fit it into the organization. Davenport (1998) states three customization options which are module selection, configuration of tables, and modification of standard codes. Glass (1998 cited in Luo and Strong, 2004) makes a similar classification of ERP customization as configuration, extension and modification. And Brehm et al. (2001 cited in Luo and Strong, 2004) give a more detailed classification with nine types of customization: configuration, bolt-ons, screen masks, extended reporting, workflow programming, user exits, ERP programming, interface development, and package source code modification. When a degree of misalignments is identified between the institutional context embedded in the package and the implementing organization, organizations take actions through technical customization or business process reengineering (Soh and Sia, 2004). In a typical ERP implementation, organizations decide a mix of technical customization and process change. To come up with a decided mix requires a rigorous analysis of misalignments, involvement and coordination of consultants and client side participants such as operational departments, IT staff, and management.

Package Culture: Due to system complexity, modification of the ERP source code and configuration of tables may engender implementation problems such as increasing the complexity; incompatibility with other modules and standard functionalities, new versions, upgrades and security patches (Kumar and Hillegersberg, 2000; Luo and Strong, 2004; Soh and Sia, 2004; Rothenberger and Srite, 2009). Furthermore, it requires expensive, time
consuming development process which causes overspending and postponement of the “go live” day. These technical challenges and risks against project completion lead organizations to customize their business processes to adapt to the system. It is therefore, the fact that ERP systems force organizations to comply with the package embedded structures and way of operating business (Wang, Klein and Jiang, 2006). They have hereby, a rigid, coercive characteristic. In light of these points, the packaged culture refers a normative, monolithic technical structure of ERP solutions. Additionally, it refers ERP vendors’ and consultants’ tendency to apply standard packaged practices, its technical and institutional structure; and encourage minimum source code customization in order to decrease risks and costs of customization on implementation processes (Sia and Soh, 2007, p.8; Luo and Strong, 2004, p.325).

Through the implementation process, the packaged culture could impose its embedded structure and initiate a likely battle between clients and consultants in terms of whether mass customization of the ERP system or applying standard functionalities instead. This tension exposes risks against ERP success and affects client-consultant relationship and poses client dissatisfaction. Luo and Strong (2004, p.326) propose a framework in Table 6 which presents a matrix of customization choices with technical and business process customization. Each row shows an option of technical customization and each column represents the extent of change on related business processes.

### Table 6: A framework of customization options

(Luo and Strong, 2004, p.326)

According to the framework, each axis carries a risk factor. If the initial misfit between the system and organization is high, depending on the degree of misfit, implementation participants undertake risks to attain a possible best fit by changing process and/or customizing the system. The risks in process customization are related to organizations’ ability to improve their current business processes and manage incremental or radical change. In this case, an implementing organization must be able to evaluate its existing business
processes then create new ones which can provide overall benefit and competitive advantage to the organization. Besides, technical customization is also associated with risk factors in terms of technical difficulty in changing the system source code. In that case implementing organization and ERP vendors must be able to manage large scale of development effort. As it is seen in the Table 6, no customization cell exposes the least risks against implementation whereas system and process reengineering cell is the most risky one which refers reorganization of processes and making necessary changes to the system. It is noteworthy that the best recipe might look like a well-planned combination of customized functionalities and standard ones (Luo and Strong, 2004, p.326). However, the

So far we have presented why ERP vendors avoid customization and why it poses some risks against successful implementation. Also we have mentioned the degree of risks (See Table 6) associated with technical customization and process customization. So now, it is necessary to highlight some drivers of technical customization in order to understand dynamics of the packaged culture. Organizational structures are constructed by both external normative factors and factors which are voluntarily adopted (Scott, 1988 cited in Soh and Sia, 2004). Imposed factors refer some institutional structures imposed by authoritative sources. Countries put pressure on organizations whereby laws and rules. These rules regulate industries and organizations’ business activities. Organizations therefore, are obliged to comply with these regulations in order to be legally active in their business. Furthermore, professional and industry institutions exert authoritative pressures on businesses such as guidelines and standardization procedures. Organizations must adopt these guidelines to be accredited and recognized by other organizations or customers (Soh and Sia, 2004). These external pressures are not changeable or controllable by implementing organizations. So, there is no doubt that mis-alignments which are derived from this type of factors lead customization of the ERP package. Organizations operate in different countries more likely experience these misfits since, each country has different regulations and laws to govern industries and organizations. This fact exposes serious risks against ERP implementation so inevitably this is an important driver for technical customizations especially if different countries are in the scope of implementation (Soh and Sia, 2004, p.381). Voluntarily acquired factors on the other side refer adopted processes and cultivated characteristics without any external pressures. Organizations have different organizational structures since their strategic focus, experience, business perceptions and organizational routines are different even in the same industry. These structures evolve and internalized by firms over a time through strategic and operational needs, market segmentation, market changes and resource constraints (Scott, 1988 cited in Soh and Sia, 2004, p.381). This fact makes almost all organizations unique cases as well as the implementation itself. In their lifecycle, organizations face different breakdowns, crises and opportunities which construct their characteristics and business reflections to similar cases. For example, some organizations can easily take risks and are more flexible to compensate associated drawbacks. Moreover, some organizations which do business in volatile industries develop special business processes to respond changes quickly, or develop distribution channels which are unique and considered as a competitive advantage. Client organizations normally prefer to keep their characteristic that they find strategic so that these factors are important determinants that lead technical customization of the ERP systems (Soh and Sia, 2004, p.382).

Besides, these two types of drivers, Rothenberger and Srite (2009, p.668) introduce additional drivers leading technical customization which are derived from project and project participants’ characteristics, judgments and their relations. These drivers provide an additional
perspective which shows the effects of project participants’ relationship between them and their understanding about the project scope on technical customization. They are:

1) **Experience and Knowledge of Implementation Team:** Knowledge of consultants about the ERP system has direct effects on developing technical customizations. Consultants are expected to have knowledge and deep experience. By using this knowledgebase, they should be able to handle customization requests by offering alternative solutions embedded in the system’s standard structure. For example, lack of knowledge and experience about standard functionalities might cause custom development of a functionality that already exists in the standard system. On the other side, client side participants as well must be knowledgeable about ERP systems and its implementation process. They must also know why they are implementing a new system and what benefits they would obtain. Otherwise, with limited implementation and ERP knowledge, key users might be apt to replicate their existing systems and processes.

2) **Involvement of Operational Departments:** It is stated that having employees from different operational divisions with solid business process knowledge could elevate implementation success in terms of merging technical system knowledge and business knowledge. Key users from operational departments should take part in the project from the beginning. Since, an organization specific expertise is brought; involvement of these departments provides credibility to technical customization decisions along the implementation. Organizations normally request custom development for their strategic business processes that give them competitive advantage. In this sense, it is important to distinguish what processes are included in customization.

3) **ERP Project Acceptance:** Another crucial factor described is employees’ limited motivation to embrace the ERP system and change. Implementation of ERP systems requires reengineering of the existing business processes and needs support from related key users. If we take a different perspective it is also an opportunity for an organization as a whole to update and renew their business processes and technical procedures. However, if a resistance emerges among key users and other client employees, they would not intend to overhaul their legacy processes; even the ordinary and non-strategic ones. Thereby, reluctance of users to change their processes therefore, leads to a large extent of technical customization and mislead the implementation. As it is presented in the Table 6 (Luo and Strong, 2004), reorganization of existing business processes exposes some degree of risks to organization. In other words, it needs users to take responsibility of reengineering decisions and spend efforts to accomplish it. In the case of a resistance and lack of acceptance of the project, clients hesitate to take risks and push the responsibility to consultants by high demand of technical customization.

In conclusion, the packaged culture that we describe above has significant effects on implementation success and relationship between ERP vendors and client organizations as well as between ERP consultants and client employees in micro scale. Since package software applications carry predetermined technical, institutional principles, ERP packages force client organizations to review and change their business processes in order to adapt the system. This is the normative characteristic of the ERP systems which is expected clients to comply with otherwise results with unsatisfactory system performance and inadequate benefits. In most cases, the predetermined technical, institutional principles do not fit into existing client organizations. It so that, raises a misfit between two systems. If we take some drivers into account which are mentioned above, it is so hard and risky for organizations to undertake a
transformative change in their way of doing business. In that point, some conflicts emerge between ERP vendors and client organizations.

2.3.2. Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

Culture is a significant factor for design, development and management of Information Systems. Better understanding of culture needs to be improved in the context of Information Systems in order to get insight of multi-cultural values and deal with different values and work orientations (Myers and Tan, 2002). Individual values are the results of socio-cultural background and these values have an important role in design and management of Information Systems (Kumar and Bjom-Andersen, 1990 cited in Jones and Alony, 2007, p.408). As a result, human cultural values are important and must be considered, since people deal with Information Technology (IT) through Information Systems (Jones and Alony, 2007, p.408). Therefore, culture is an important dimension to evaluate for Information Systems (IS).

Since our focus is ERP systems as an IS area, we believe that culture has impact on the client-consultant relationship in ERP implementation and is a basis of the models of client-consultant interaction. Firstly, we will give the definition of culture then we will analyze the client-consultant relationship more specifically. Thus, we think that Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and Turkish Business Culture are related and affect the client-consultant relationship. In this part we will give literature review of these subjects.

Basically, culture has been studied and discussed by many scholars. Therefore, there are several definition of culture. Hofstede (1984, p.21) defined culture as: ‘a collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group from another’. Culture consists of systems of values and it can also be defined as ‘the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group’s response to its environment’ or as ‘mental programming’ (Hofstede, 1984, p.21). Culture is reflected on all the aspects of life such as; individual and family activities, community and governmental systems, general characteristics, business life, decision makings, organizations and business ethics (Jones and Alony, 2007; Matsumoto, 2006).

Since culture has impact on many different aspect of life, as well business life, we think that it has also impact on client-consultant relationship. Because culture includes systems of values and in client and consultant organizations, values are shaped by national and organizational characteristics. This values form the reactions of people to their environment.

The Power Distance

Power distance is stated as a measure of the personal power and personal influence of bosses on their subordinates. In other words, it is the degree of less powerful individuals’ acceptance and expectations of power that is distributed unequally within an organization (Hofstede, 1997 cited in Sims and Cegez). The term “power distance” is derived from Mauk Mulder’s theory of power which defines as “the potential to determine or direct the behavior of another person more so than the other way around.” In his theory, power distance is described as “the degree of inequality in power between a less powerful individual and a more powerful other, in which they live in the same social system” (Hofstede, 1984, p.70).

Distribution and perception of power can vary in each culture and it is contended that each culture justifies authority by its core values (Gasse, 1976 cited in Hofstede, 1984, p.72). There are two poles characterizes power in different ways which are monolithism and pluralism. At
the first pole, power is held by a few or group of people who possess the authority and full control. At the pluralistic pole, the control of leaders is limited and competition between groups and leaders is encouraged and also perceived positive. Different cultures may carry some characteristics of these two poles.

The power distance index in Hofstede’s studies is created based on three structural questions (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.56) which are the first one examines whether employees are afraid of expressing disagreement with their managers. The second one questions what kind of style managers adopt in decision making process whether an autocratic style or a paternalist style or neither of them. The third one is related with the previous one which seeks out what style of decision making subordinates prefer that their managers adopt.

In organizational context power distance shows itself in different ways. In high-power distance organizations, centralized organizational structure gives power to few people’s hands. People who have power are granted special privileges like having own rooms, different launch menus, office tools and even parking spots. These privileges are another ways of imposing their power. Many supervisors in a vertical hierarchy report each other and subordinates are often expected to do what their supervisors say. Moreover, subordinates also expect to be told what they do (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.73). The relationship between bosses and subordinates mainly shows paternalist characteristics. A preferred boss is someone who makes his/her subordinates feel comfortable in communication and who is respected most. In other words, the role of a good father at workplace is generally looked for by subordinates. This refers an emotional relationship between bosses and subordinates in high power distance organizations (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.74).

On the other side, in lower power distance organizations, there is no strictly structured differentiation between subordinates and bosses. Individuals consider roles as existentially unequal so that high level job titles do not refer a superiority or being “up” on others. In a flexible hierarchical structure, roles may change easily. Contrary to high power distance organizations, a flat hierarchy and decentralized structure have limited number of supervisors who are granted with very limited or no privileges. The ideal figure of a boss is someone who is fair, accessible and resourceful. Subordinates can express their disagreement to bosses and expect to be consulted before a decision is taken. However, they admit that bosses generally say the final word (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.74).

**Differences between Low and High Power Distance Cultures**

In the light of given fundamental descriptions of power distance, it is important to present some key features of low/high power distance cultures to comprehend how these may influence on people’s behaviors. Some differences are listed below (See Table 7) between cultures with low and high power distance (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; 1984). These different features involve general norms and workplace behaviors:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Low Power Distance</strong></th>
<th><strong>High Power Distance</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy means an inequality of roles, established for convenience.</td>
<td>Hierarchy refers an existential inequality between higher level and lower level roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralized structure is mainly observed.</td>
<td>Centralized structure is mainly observed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pragmatic relationship between subordinates and bosses.</td>
<td>An emotional relationship between subordinates and bosses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privileges and symbols of higher status are common.</td>
<td>Privileges and symbols of higher status are not accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers prefer participative subordinates.</td>
<td>Managers prefer directive or persuasive subordinates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees are rarely afraid of disagreement with their bosses.</td>
<td>Employees are mostly afraid of disagreement with their bosses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents put less value on obedient children.</td>
<td>Parents put more value on obedient children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian attitudes in students are a matter of personality.</td>
<td>Students show authoritarian attitudes as a social norm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers rely on their own experience and opinions with their subordinates.</td>
<td>Managers rely on rules and their superiors’ experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7:** Differences between low and high power distance  
(Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.64 ; 1984, p.92)

Since Turkey is scored 66 and ranked at 18 (See Table 8), it is seen a moderately high power distance country. This view also support by Akin (2010) that superiors have always more power and perceived as most respected people. Their guidance is often unquestionable both in social life and organizational context. For this reason, participation of lower level employees is very limited and there is a strong reliance on rules and procedures in Turkish organizations. Turkish business professionals have characteristics which are constructed within a high power distance.
distance society, such as avoiding conflicts and a tendency to agree with superiors, overemphasizing job titles and being passive in decision making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>PDI</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>PDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>predicted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>Hong Kong</td>
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<td>Germany (F.R.)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Great Britain</td>
</tr>
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<td>Colombia</td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Turkey</strong></td>
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<td>Peru</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>263</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Mean of 39 countries (HERMES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Yugoslavia (same industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Power Distance Index (PDI) Values by Country Based on the Scores on Three Attitude Survey Questions for a Stratified Sample of Seven Occupations at Two Points in Time

(Hofstede, 1984, p.77)

The Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance (UA) is described as the degree of feeling to be threatened by novel, uncertain and unknown situations (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). According to this definition a high rate of uncertainty avoidance points out members of that culture feel uncomfortable in less predictable and unfamiliar situations and consequently avoid from that situation. Uncertainty is a certain fact that we live and will live with it forever. Since the time is the main concept that imposes uncertainty which we can never approach to it and predict certainly (Hofstede, 1984), humans have always been experiencing uncertainty at least low level. However, high degree of uncertainty engenders anxiety and aggression so that human beings have somewhat internalized the uncertainty and constructed some mechanisms to deal with its effects on individuals and societies. Technology, law and religions have emerged as mechanisms to live with uncertainty in a sense. In these, technology refers artifacts created by humans against uncertainty from the nature; law indicates all formal and informal rules that guide how people behave. And religions are means of accepting and tolerating the uncertainty. These mechanisms are obviously changeable in time and non-homogenous
thereby people can adopt many different technologies, rules and religious in order to handle uncertainty situations which sometimes contradict with what others’ adopted (Hofstede, 1984).

Technology, law and religion as mechanism of avoidance in social life turn to technology, rules and rituals in organizational contexts (Hofstede, 1984). In organizational structures, uncertainty is associated with the “environment” in which includes everything that is not controlled by organizations. To avoid uncertainty, organizations employ technology since it gives a relative advantage to forecast short-term future and the environment. In this point it is a rational way of handling uncertainty by statistical methods and decision support techniques and systems. Besides dealing with the environment, organizations create rules and monitor their effectiveness while expecting to reduce uncertainty within their organizations which is caused by unpredictable behaviors of members. By setting rules, organizations try to make their members’ behaviors more predictable. People are apt to ascribe different meanings to rules which are sometimes positive and negative. Rules are sometimes blamed by being so strict that leaves no rooms for people’s creativity and flexibility. Conversely, rules are sometimes seen as means of revealing people’s energy and make them more focused. As a third mechanism rituals do not have impact on making unpredictable future more predictable. In this manner, they are non-rational mechanisms which support organizational harmony and reduce stress on people, for example, sacred language, taboos or relying on experts (Hofstede, 1984).

Hofstede (1984) in his study refers three elements of uncertainty avoidance which are rule orientation, employment stability and stress. These three indicators determine how cultures feel when they confront with unfamiliar situations, namely the level of uncertainty. The questions of rule orientation seek out to what degree individuals within an organization are committed to rules even if breaking them is organization’s favor. If individuals are apt to break the rules if it is for the benefits of organization, it points out low level uncertainty avoidance. The employment stability examines how long an employee thinks to continue his/her work in the same organization. Answers to this type of questions which state five or more than five years employment indicates high level of uncertainty avoidance. These two elements are two ways of avoiding uncertainty. Stress on the other hand, is defined as “a state of mind and body which corresponds to the state of preparation for aggression” (Hofstede, 1984, p.119). It is obvious that there is no human who does not experience a stressful situation or does not feel stress. However, Hofstede (1984) argues that stress also shows the level of anxiety and has a linkage with strong rule orientation and employment stability. These three factors therefore form a level of uncertainty avoidance in country levels and used to calculate their uncertainty avoidance index (UAI).

**Differences between Low and High Uncertainty Avoidance**

In the light of given fundamental descriptions of uncertainty and its three components, it had better to present some key features of societies to comprehend how UA may influence on people’s behaviors. Some differences are listed below (See Table 9) between societies with low and high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; 1984). These different features involve general norms, politics, ideas and professional behaviors:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
<th>High Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizens are competent versus authorities.</td>
<td>Citizens are not competent versus authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty is accepted as a normal feature of life.</td>
<td>Uncertainty is felt as a constant threat of life to be avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling low stress and expression of less aggression and lower job stress.</td>
<td>Feeling high stress and aggression is easily expressed and higher job stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling comfortable in ambiguous situations and acceptance of unfamiliar risks.</td>
<td>Struggling to accept unfamiliar risks and feeling anxiety in ambiguous situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope of success.</td>
<td>Fear of failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are comfortable with open-ended learning methods and good at discussing issues.</td>
<td>Students prefer structured learning methods and concerned with the right answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers may state their lack of knowledge about a particular topic.</td>
<td>Teachers are considered as knowledge resources having answers for every question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High tolerance of deviant, innovate ideas.</td>
<td>Low tolerance of deviant, innovative ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less hesitation to change employers.</td>
<td>Tendency to stay with the same employer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less emotional resistance to change.</td>
<td>High emotional resistance to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In philosophy and science, tendency towards relativism and empiricism.</td>
<td>In philosophy and science, tendency towards grand theories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts at workplace are natural.</td>
<td>Conflicts in workplace are not desirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More prepared to compromise with opponents.</td>
<td>Lower readiness to compromise with opponents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A manager need not to be expert on the field what he/she manages. A manager must be an expert on what he/she is managing.

Hierarchical structures of organizations can be by-passed for pragmatic reasons. Hierarchical structures must be clear and be always respected.

Rules may be broken for pragmatic reasons. Rules must be obeyed in any case.

Competition between employees can be fair and right. Competition between employees is emotionally avoided.

Scientific opponents can be personal friends. Scientific opponents can barely be personal friends.

| Table 9: Differences between low and high rate of uncertainty avoidance |
| (Hofstede, 1984, p.90) |

The degree of uncertainty avoidance leads organizations to build different structures to deal with uncertainty. Organizations in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance are apt to develop structured rules and workflow bureaucracy which formal rules and procedures are prescribed in great detail. On the other side, organizations operate in low rate uncertainty avoidance must create a structure allows ad hoc negotiation and be able to tolerate uncertain situations (Harvey, 1997, p.134).

Since we focused on how national cultural dimensions affect on ERP implementation context in Turkey, Turkey’s uncertainty avoidance rate is significant. Turkey scored 85 on the uncertainty avoidance dimension (See Table 10). This is a rank of 16. These results refer strong uncertainty avoidance so that Turkish professionals may show some characteristic such as avoiding taking risks, high resistance to change, intolerance to workplace conflicts and deviant ideas. Kanungo and Aycan (1997 cited in Akin, 2010) also support that individuals in Turkey are loyal to their organizations and it is recognized as a positive attitude within society. Besides, Turkish professionals are afraid of being criticized and changing their way of working.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>UAI</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>UAI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actual</td>
<td>controlling for age&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>controlling for age&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>Peru</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Argentina</td>
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<td>USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Mean of 39 countries (HERMES)</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (F.R.)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Yugoslavia (same industry)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Country Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)
(Hofstede, 1984, p.122)

**Individualism and Collectivism**

Individualism is the third dimension of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. Hofstede (1984, p.148) described individualism as: ‘the relationship between the individual and the collectivity which prevails in a given society’. This notion affects the nature of relationship between human and organization. Individualism and collectivism express a continuum. In individualist culture the individuals are connected each other with loose ties. On the other side, in collectivist culture people are connected and integrated strongly. In collectivist cultures, group is more important than individuals and individuals try to pursue group’s well-being (Ford, Connelly and Meister, 2003; Smith and Dodds, 1994). Basically, individualism and collectivism measure the social/community integration (Jones and Alony, 2007, p.411). Hofstede (1984, p.149) stated there are some consequences of individualism and collectivism for ‘(1) society at large, (2) religion, ideology and theory, (3) organizations’. This means that this dimension can affect the organizational culture, relatively the interaction between individuals and also interaction between individual and the society.

Hofstede (1984) gives an example as; in collectivist nature, families are close and extended and the members support each other. On the other hand in individualist nature, this feature changes, people are more independent. This, basically this relationship and the connection between social norms affect people’s mental programming. Besides family there are many
factors have impact on this context such as; religion, education and politics. Based on Hofstede’s (1984) study, western culture is more individualistic than eastern culture. For instance, USA defines itself as individualistic; on the other side, China finds individualism as a selfish attitude and they believe that the best way of keeping individual in well-being is building the group’s well-being (Hofstede, 1984, pp.150-151).

According to Hofstede (1984, p.152) the degree of individualism and collectivism has a significant impact on the relationship between the person and her/his organization. In addition this degree or level affects the reasons of individuals in terms of carrying out the requirements of the organization. In collectivist societies, moral involvement is dominant, however in individualist societies calculative involvement exists. Another impact of this level or degree is putting itself in a position of special influence in an organization. There are two types of this position; locals and cosmopolitans. Locals are more involved to the problems in an organization and the locals more belong to collectivist society. On the other hand, cosmopolitans see themselves an integral part of outside world and they are usually a part of an individualist society. Furthermore, the degree of individualism or collectivism in organizations is also depends on employee’s educational level, history of organization and subculture (Hofstede, 1984, p.153).

Moreover, there is a relationship between the technology of the organization and the level of individualism /collectivism of the member. In western societies the technologies developed ‘more or less presuppose an individualist mentality in entrepreneurs, managers and workers’ (Hofstede, 1984, p.153). On the other hand, the collectivist nature with more traditional societies has a limit of technology transfer possibilities (Hofstede, 1984, p.153). When we look from IS aspect, IS is based on the goal of promoting collaboration and there are many tools to support this collaboration. This means that IS context requires knowledge sharing and usage, in order to carry out this requirement group discussions and decision making within the individuals’ network gain importance. If we consider Hofstede’s framework, in individualist cultures, the resistance against the collaborative support may be more than in collectivist culture and this may slowdown the improvement of collaborative information systems in individualist societies (Jones and Alony, 2007, p.411).

**Differences between Low and High Individualism**

In the light of given fundamental descriptions of individualism and collectivism, it would be better to present some key features of societies to comprehend how they may influence on people’s behaviors. Some differences are listed below (See Table 11) between societies with low and high individualist cultures (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; 1984). These different features involve general norms, politics, ideas and professional behaviors:
Table 11: Differences between low and high individualist cultures
(Hofstede, 1984, p.144)

Due to the fact that we conduct our research in an ERP consultancy company in Turkey; we will explain the characteristics of Turkey in terms of individualism/collectivism based on Hofstede’s (1984) study. Table 12 illustrates the individualism index of some countries. As we see from the figure, USA has the highest rank of individualism (IDV=91); in a word this means that USA culture has high individualism nature. On the other hand, Venezuela has the lowest rank of individualism (IDV=12), in a word this means, collectivist nature has a strong impact in the culture of Venezuela. However, Turkey is situated below the middle of the rank. Turkey scored 37 and this means that Turkey has a moderately collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1997 cited in Sims and Gegez, 2004, p.256). Therefore, we should consider this fact and try to interpret the culture dimension based on this information in our research.
In the study of Sims and Gegez (2004, p.263), since Turkey has a moderately collective culture, it is stated that in the sense of business practices; the employees and citizens may not be willing to run against the questionable business practices. Because they may think that this attitude would conclude disagreeable consequences. In collectivist cultures change comes with the conflicts and generally collectivist cultures look for the harmony. In the study of Sims and Gegez (2004), Turkish responders do not highly agree on the subjects that are related to their self-interest such as; taking office supplies, misusing sick leave benefits. This means, they firstly watch the benefit of their society. From the loyalty aspect, in Turkey as a collectivist culture, loyalty is important for the individuals to their society and this is reflected on their behaviours such as ‘treating others more fairly in their business relationships, either as employees, customers, or as organizations dealing with the consumer’ (Sims and Gegez, 2004, p.263). Moreover, giving more importance to honest interpersonal relationships is one of the features of the collectivist nature of Turkish culture (Sims and Gegez, 2004, p.263).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>IDV</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>IDV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>Peru</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany(F.R.)</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Mean of 39 countries (HERMES)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>(same industry)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Country Individualism Index
(Hofstede, 1984, p.158)

**Masculinity and Femininity**

The fourth cultural dimension of Hofstede is masculinity and it has opposite pole called femininity. The sex role distribution is transferred by socialization in families, school, groups or media. In this socialization framework, men are considered as *assertive* and women are considered as *nurturing* (Hofstede, 1984, p.176). If we analyze it in the business context, a
relationship exists between the goals of the organization and the career possibilities for men and women. Hofstede (1984, p.176) stated that business organizations aim masculine goals and increase the power of men. On the other hand, hospitals aim feminine goals and they tend to increase power of women. For men, earnings and advancement is significant; on the other side for women physical environment, interpersonal aspects and rendering service is significant (Hofstede, 1984, p.176).

Based on the female and male characteristics in society, the sex role system has a significant role to determine the cultural norms. Usually in the society woman is considered as an actor who bear children and man is considered as an actor who beget them. This distinction comes from biological differences. And many characteristics of women and men are considered based on these differences. Finally all the societies determine the behaviors suitable for men or for women through the influence of their cultural norms and traditions. In addition there is a common perception occurs in modern and traditional cultures as: men must deal with the economic issues and other accomplishment and women must take care of people especially children (Hofstede, 1984, p.177). One of the sex-role can be dominant in societies in terms of economic and politic life. According to one study that was conducted by Williams, et al. (1977 cited in Hofstede, 1984, p.178), In USA, Great Britain and Ireland male behavior shows the characteristic of ‘autonomy, aggression, exhibition and dominance’; and female behavior shows the characteristic of ‘nurturance, affiliation, helpfulness and humility’. In addition Bem’s (1975 cited in Hofstede, 1984, p.179) study points that male is associated with aggressive, ambitious and competitive attitudes; female is associated with affectionate, compassionate and understanding attitudes. Moreover, the sex role patterns have a meaning in socialization which means men and women learn their place in society. After they learn their roles, majority tends to behave in that way (Hofstede, 1984, p.180).

Since sex role has an importance in the society, it has also impact in organizations. Organizations have members from both sexes and jobs are assigned through being masculine or feminine. This distribution differs according to country, organization and time. For example McGregor (1967 cited in Hofstede, 1984, p.182) stated that in a society the model of successful manager has the masculine attitude and the expression of emotion is considered as feminine weakness which can have negative impact on business. Hofstede (1984, p.186) conducted an analysis with the international data and in he found some differences of the sex trends for women and men. For men, the important trends are: advancement, training, earnings, up-to-dateness; for women, the important trends are: friendly atmosphere, position security, physical conditions, manager, cooperation.

According to Hofstede (1984), masculinity and femininity refer to the dominant sex role pattern in society. Sometimes men can behave feminine or women can behave masculine there is no sharp boundaries between these roles. In this sense, masculinity represents assertiveness, competitiveness and material success and femininity represents the nurturance, modest and quality of life (Hofstede 1984; Ford, Connelly and Meister, 2003, p.10).

**Differences between Low and High Masculinity**

In the light of given fundamental descriptions of masculinity, it would be better to present some key features of societies to comprehend how masculinity may influence on people’s behaviors. Some differences are listed below (See Table 13) between societies with low and
high masculine cultures (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; 1984). These different features involve general norms, politics, ideas and professional behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Masculinity</th>
<th>High Masculinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with managers and other colleagues; friendly atmosphere, living in a desirable area and employment security is more important.</td>
<td>Earnings, recognition, advancement and challenge are more important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in group decisions.</td>
<td>Belief in independent decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers have less leadership, independence and self-realization attitudes</td>
<td>Managers have leadership, independence and self-realization ideals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement is defined as human contacts and living environment.</td>
<td>Achievement is defined as recognition and wealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work has less central role in people's life.</td>
<td>Work has more central role in people's life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People prefer shorter working hours to more salary.</td>
<td>People prefer more salary to shorter working hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company's interference in private life is not acceptable.</td>
<td>Company's interference in private life is acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More women in jobs with mixed sex composition.</td>
<td>Fewer women in jobs with mixed sex composition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 13:** Differences between low and high masculine cultures

(Hofstede, 1984, p.179)

From IS aspect, the paternal approach of IS management could be centralized and controlled. This centralization requires top-down approach for the architecture, standards, settings and the processes of IS (Jones and Alony, 2007, p.412). In addition Jones and Alony (2007, p.412) stated that ‘the accommodation for individual locations and business areas enabled by the flexibility of decentralized IS could be considered feminine’. In IS field the masculine developers are considered as outcome and process oriented and the feminine developers are considered as concerned with long term relationships (Kankanhalli, Tan, Wei and Holmes,
Furthermore, according to Kankanhalli, Tan, Wei and Holmes (2004 cited in Jones and Alony, 2007, p.412), feminine developers should be trained in order to cause them closer to masculine developers. On the other hand feminine attitude as relationship oriented provides trust and knowledge sharing that are beneficial for the performance of organization. As a result, feminine and masculine workers are necessary for the organization. We cannot avoid the feminine workers due to their important contribution to organizational performance (Jones and Alony, 2007, p.412).

Table 14 illustrates the country masculine index. Japan has the highest rank that is 95 (MAS) and Sweden has the lowest rank that is 5 (MAS). This means that Sweden has the most feminine nature of culture according to Hofstede’s (1984) study. Since we are dealing with Turkey, it has a rank that is 45 (MAS). In this sense, Turkey is considered as moderately feminine culture (Sims and Gegez, 2004, p.264). A research that is conducted by Sims and Gegez (2004) includes data from USA, Israel, Western Australia, South Africa and Turkey. The results of the research in terms of masculinity/femininity show that Israel, South Africa and Western Australia have the higher scores than Turkey for emphasis on material success. However Turkey has higher score than USA in terms of considering profitability. Therefore there is no certain difference between moderately masculine and moderately feminine cultures (Sims and Gegez, 2004, p.264). However, according to the results of Hofstede’s (1984) study, Turkey is closer to the feminine nature regarding consideration of relationships and quality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>MAS actual</th>
<th>controlling for % women</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>MAS actual</th>
<th>controlling for % women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (F.R.)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>_a</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>_b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Mean of 39</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>countries (HERMES)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Yugoslavia (same industry)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 14:** Country Masculinity Index
2.4. ERP Industry in Turkey

In order to have a deeper understanding regarding industrial dynamics of ERP implementation, this section addresses some features of Turkey. The story begins in the early 90s in parallel with the e-transformation initiation supported by Turkish government (Emiroglu, 2007). First ERP adopters were giant metal and chemical organizations to improve their production capabilities and reduce production costs (Ulusoy and Yegenoglu, 2007, p.8). Initial diffusion rate of the systems was low, however, after 2000 it has rose up and extended to other industries such as automotive, food processing and textile. Turkish ERP market has firstly developed by international ERP vendors like SAP and Oracle which are first vendors and thus had 51.68% market share in 2002 (Capital Magazine, 2008) (See Fig. 6). After its extension to other industries and organizations, more international players such as Microsoft, IFS, IAS, and IBM have joined the picture as well as national software providers started to develop their localized ERP solutions. In 2010, 6 international and 8 local ERP vendors operate in Turkish market (See Table 15) (Erpnedir, 2011). According to 2006 statistics (Dincsoy, 2008) ERP market size in Turkey is declared 30 million US Dollars and the expected growth between 2006 and 2008 is stated 10 percent per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERP Provider</th>
<th>Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oracle</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFS</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAS</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABAS</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netsis</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uyumsoft</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WorkCube</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teknosol</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senkron</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avakoza</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: List of ERP vendors operating in Turkey
Yegul and Toklu (2005) state in their research that, big companies (67%) which have more than 500 employees are interested in adopting ERP systems. Although SMEs have a tendency to exploit from enterprise business solutions, due to their considerable financial and time costs as well as difficulties in adaption to the system, bigger organizations are still players create majority of demands for ERP systems. However, ERP producers have been developing flexible and more adaptable solutions for SMEs in order to have share in SME market (Capital Magazine, 2008).

When we go through why organizations in Turkey implement ERP systems, a complex and heterogeneous picture appears which can differ with regards to organizations’ business scale, their strategic priorities and industrial determinants. They generally expect a considerable improvement in operational efficiency; increased coordination among functional divisions; process and data integration; and effective decision making. Expectations of organizations from ERP implementation listed in the Table 16 below (Yegul and Toklu, 2005). As already mentioned drivers for implementation involve a wide range of factors from possessing a strategic advantage to coordinate physically dispersed locations and also even handling Y2K problem for implementations initiated in the end of 90s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Improvement in existing business processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Providing coordination among business functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Accessing accurate and quality data, and improvement in decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Improvement in IT infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Standardization and simplification in business procedures and systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Re-organization and integration of legacy IT systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Standardized user interface in the whole organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cost reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Back office automation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If we analyze ERP industry in Turkey from vendor selection perspective; license costs and total financial cost of implementation emerge as the most vital factors for selecting ERP providers and ERP packages. Since it is a huge financial burden for organizations, adopters are apt to mitigate risks of initial costs and also have a tendency to guarantee post-implementation processes by giving importance to license costs, vendors’ references, previous projects and post-implementation support (Yegul and Toklu, 2005, p.4). On the other side, Baki and Cakar (2005) draw a different picture in terms of software selection by presenting cross module integration and compatibility with parallel IT systems at the top of the list. Additionally, post-implementation support and implementation cost take place as less considered elements. The factor of ease of customization also takes its place in different ranks in these two studies. In this manner, it can be interpreted that there is no homogenous view of organizations in Turkey through selection of ERP vendors.

Nevertheless, some factors possess equal importance in these studies. For instance, reputation and references of ERP vendors are perceived highly important which supports the study of Yegul and Toklu (2005). If we touch upon consultancy factor, working with knowledgeable and highly competent consultants is stated as important as system reliability and functionality which have higher importance. List of some criteria for selecting an ERP vendor is stated below (Table 17) (Yegul and Toklu, 2005; Baki and Cakar, 2005):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fit with parent/allied organization system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross module integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatibility with other systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency of the consultancy firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost and time of implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market position of the vendor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of customization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish language interface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting web portals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17: ERP vendor selection criteria
Organizations in different industries in Turkey implement core ERP modules in order to achieve operational efficiency, cost reduction and standardization of business processes. These core modules are listed as purchasing, finance, inventory management, sales and human resources (Yegul and Toklu, 2005). These preferences have similarities with preferred modules in other countries (Aberdeen Group, 2007). Since diffusion of the ERP systems in Turkey started with manufacturing industry, relevant modules are mostly preferred and implemented such as bills of materials, production planning and scheduling. Organizations in service sector have also preferred other modules like customer relationship and supply chain management (Yegul and Toklu, 2005). After all, it is important to focus on bottom line and ask to what extent they have got return on their ERP investment. According to Yegul and Toklu (2005), 85% of ERP implemented organizations observed a considerable positive effect on decision making processes of organizations. Half of participants stated that the ERP system had helped to reduce their stock level 51 percent. Increase in customer loyalty was observed by 46% of participants after use of the system.

Lastly, we have a look at what obstacle organizations face with through ERP implementation. The most common problem stated by organizations in Turkey is the resistance of users against change and unawareness of the project scope. Another difficulty is the crucial misfit between organizations’ business processes and structures, and characteristics of the ERP system (Ulusoy and Yegenoglu, 2007; Sarshar and Isikdag, 2004; Yegul and Toklu, 2005). Other factors which undermine implementation activities are listed according to degree of observation (Table 18):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of IT infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inadequate consultancy service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Need for changing existing business processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Workload of project participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lack of project management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Project budget constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lack of top management support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>High rate of turnover in project group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bugs and errors in the ERP system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Difficulty in customization of the ERP system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Obstacles against ERP implementation

In conclusion, ERP industry in Turkey is still increasing and at the same time organizations try to find a better way to exploit from their benefits. Huge financial cost and operational difficulties are still considerable roadblocks on the way of implementation. For this reason, organizations have been paying more attention to high quality services and flexibility to current systems and processes. This is a problematic point which affects implementation actors’ perspectives and behaviours.
3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters we examined the extant literature for the role of client and consultant, the models of the client-consultant relationship as well as the cultural perspective of this relationship as a relevant literature has been examined. Based on this literature, the research questions were determined which construct the basis of the empirical research part of this thesis. Accordingly, in this section, we will describe our research methodology including philosophical perspective, research method, data collection methods, data sources and data analysis mode. The methodology will be discussed upon the theoretical consideration that we examined in literature review part.

3.2. Research Approach

This research was conducted through following the interpretivist view which is a qualitative approach. We chose qualitative approach for this research because it examines perspectives and behaviors of people in specific situations and in their environment where they act, in order to have an insight about specific situations or issues. Therefore, qualitative research is conducted in the natural settings. By this way causal processes can be understood and this type of research may help to facilitate the actions based on the research results (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994, p.30, p.5). Interpretive research follows the qualitative tradition. Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) stated the objective of the interpretive research as to construct understanding of a phenomenon within its social context where the phenomenon is examined in its natural setting through understanding the perspective and the meanings of the participants. This helps to explain the reason of the way of people’s act and understanding of the inter-subjective meanings embedded in social life can be built (Gibbons, 1987 cited in Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991, p. 13). In our research, we focused on client-consultant relationship from the consultancy aspect in ERP implementation that takes place in Information Systems area (IS). Since we tried to understand meanings and perspectives of the consultants in this relationship in the context of their natural settings, we believed that the interpretivist view in the context of a qualitative approach might help to build understanding of this phenomenon deeper. As we deal with the Information Systems area, we believed that this research approach match with our aim. Furthermore, Klein and Myers (1999, p.69) classified IS research as interpretive and this claim supports our approach. They believe that knowledge of reality is gained through social constructions such a language, discourse, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artifacts. Besides, Walsham (1993, pp.4-5) indicated that interpretive methods of researches have the aim of ‘producing an understanding the context of the information system, and the process whereby the system influences and is influenced by the context’.

Since our focus is ERP area, it is indicated by some scholars that the examination of ERP projects creates a complex situation because of dealing with the variety of associated groups such as client top managers, project participants, users, technical / functional consultants, and, the inter-relationships among them (Skok and Legge, 2002; Elbanna, 2006). Understanding the meanings and perspectives of the consultants in ERP implementation and the relationship between the client and consultant require understanding impacts of the clients on these perspectives and relationship as well. Despite our focus is the consultancy side, we needed to take the clients’ behaviors and meanings in to account to understand this relationship and its effects on consultancy. Therefore understanding consultancy means to
understand its environment and their interactions and behaviors in this environment. Furthermore, we cannot ignore parties of the relationship when we consider the consultancy aspect. In addition there are some factors that affect the environment of client and consultants. We tried to build an understanding of whether the existing client-consultant relationship models of management consultancy are compatible with the ERP consultancy. Furthermore, we observed how this relationship is performed, which factors influence this relationship, the roles of the actors and the reasons of their actions in the context of client-consultant relationship. Additionally, we believe that the culture as a concept influence this relationship and we took the cultural dimension into consideration as the basis of this environment. In this context, we aimed to explore how Oracle culture (packaged nature of ERP system) and Turkish business culture affect this relationship. These concepts were investigated from the perception of consultants in their own environment.

Basically, we analyzed the client-consultant relationship from the consultancy aspect in ERP implementation in our research. However, when we look at the big picture there are some components that we mentioned before to define this relationship and, these components and conditions build complex situation in our research. Therefore, we followed the interpretivist approach to conduct this research in order to have a better understanding of this complex phenomenon through considering the perception and interpretations of both parties about each other and the ERP system, as well as their values and organizational working routines. Moreover, qualitative methods can be used throughout implementation processes (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994), because of that we thought that an interpretivist approach as a qualitative method is convenient for our research; since we analyzed our focus in the ERP implementation process.

3.3. Type of Research

The method for designing this research is an explanatory research. We adopted a single explanatory case study as a research strategy in order to achieve our research goal that is to understand the client-consultant relationship through observing the interpretations and perspectives of the consultants in their natural environment. By conducting a case study we explored how the client-consultant relationship is carried out and how the ERP consultants deal with the problems; used techniques, principles and as well why these are preferred. The results were compared with the models in literature. In addition, through the case study we understood how the culture aspect influences this relationship by observing the experiences and interpretations of the ERP consultants. Basically, the case study ‘examines a phenomenon in its natural setting, employing multiple methods of data collection to gather information from one or a few entities (people, groups, or organizations)’ (Benbasat, Goldstein, and Mead, 1987, p.370). Besides, Benbasat, Goldstein, and Mead (1987, p.370) stated that the phenomenon has not got boundaries clearly evident at the outset of the research. Moreover in case studies experimental control or manipulation is not used. Also Yin (2003, p.2) indicates that case study method enables researchers to keep in practice the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as; individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, international relations, and the maturation of industries. In addition, program, event, activity, process or individuals are explored deeply through the case studies and; the cases have time and activity limitations (Creswell, 1994, p.13). ‘The case study method provides excellent opportunities for respondents and researchers to check their understanding and keep on asking questions until they obtain sufficient answers and interpretations’ (Ghauri, 2004 cited in Becker-Ritterspach, 2006, p.90).
Three different strategies of the case study method are identified in literature by Yin (1994). These strategies are; descriptive, exploratory and explanatory. Explanatory case studies consider "how" and "why" questions to give a direction to the use of case studies, histories, and experiments as the preferred research strategies. And these "how" and "why" questions deal with operational links which occur during a span of time. This design tries to explain course of events and relate how things happened (Yin, 2003, p.6). Explanatory case studies try to link the event and its impacts, thereby the causality of the case can be investigated (Kathan, 2008, p.40). Through the explanatory case studies propositions are tested and basic associations are explored. Furthermore, there is no rigid boundary between different types of case studies (Yin, 2003). According to Yin (1981, p. 61) an explanatory case study consists of ‘(a) an accurate rendition of the facts of the case, (b) some consideration of alternative explanations of these facts, and (c)a conclusion based on the single explanation that appears most congruent with the facts.’ According to Campbell (1975 cited in Yin, 1981, p. 61), building an explanation can be considered as a kind of pattern-matching process. The pattern needs to fit multiple implications that derived from an explanation or theory. Therefore, the process is suitable to be applied for a single case.

Since we aimed to comprehend what are the main characteristics of the client – consultant relationship in ERP implementation process; why and how the existing techniques and principles are used in that cycle; and how the culture affects client-consultant relationship in the context of Turkish business culture. Moreover we aimed to investigate to what extent the existing client-consultant relationship models are compatible with the ERP consultancy. We believed that explanatory case study could be the most convenient strategy in order to reach our goals. Firstly, we examined the client-consultant relationship which is a real-life human relation without sharp boundaries from consultancy aspect in the natural settings of the consultants through interviews and questionnaires with the consultants without any manipulation or intervention. The interaction between the consultant and client was investigated and the sub processes of the implementation were examined. Moreover, we tested the client- consultant models as propositions that were explored in studies of Devinney and Nikolova (2004), Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlapfner (2009) and Jespersen (2009). We discovered why these models are compatible or not with the ERP consultancy. During this process we explored the associations between the components of the case. Basically, we constructed a causal relationship in our study. We discovered that culture has also significant impact to shape this relationship and we tried to investigate how this factor affects this relationship. As a result, we come up with the new model for the client-consultant relationship in ERP consultancy. We did not consider the other phases of ERP system; we only focused on implementation phase. As it is stated in the research questions and our aim, our focus is on ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. We examined the client-consultant relationship in depth and how they carry out this interaction and why the consultants use the existing techniques or strategies during this interaction. In addition, how the cultural traditions affect this relationship. Therefore, conducting explanatory case study in the context of interpretivist approach is the most useful research strategy in order to receive the right answers in terms of our aim and research questions.
4. Data Collection and Analysis

4.1. Data Collection

This interpretative research is based on observing and understanding the client – consultant relationship through ERP implementation. It is therefore, aimed in our study to examine and comprehend this phenomenon from different perspectives. In order to have a useful data which allows us to make deep interpretations and look from different aspects, data collection is carried out by two complementary methods which are first conducting semi-structured interviews and second conducting an interpretive questionnaire with open ended questions. Besides these primary data sources, secondary data sources like related literature and informal social contact are used. Semi-structured interviews are found suitable for our research in terms of providing a controlled framework and facilitating analysis while giving enough flexibility and freedom to respond to questions and probes their experiences without thick borders; at the same time, enabling to dig into some specific topics and touching upon other related aspects easily (Morse and Field, 1995 cited in Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007, p.619; Mintzberg, 1979 cited in Khalfan, 2004, p.34). Since our data collection is focused on consultants’ understandings and their experiences about consultancy service, semi-structured interviews are fruitful for this purpose. A conceptual framework for data collection and data analysis is presented below (See Fig. 8). Those processes are illustrated as a circle and integrated to each other. In other words, a data collection activity for example an interview is followed by an analysis and a review of current findings then another interview is conducted. Before conducting interviews for data collection, we have organized a preparation interview with a senior ERP consultant who is not an employee of our case study organization. By this preparation, we could have background knowledge about ERP systems in practice and general characteristics of projects in Turkey.

![Figure 8: A framework for data collection and analysis](image)

Interviews are conducted via voice calls on Skype with Oracle ERP consultants who have different years of experiences and have been in charge of at least two ERP implementation projects before. 4 ERP consultants have participated to interviews and interviewed through 7 sessions in two months period. Three consultants are functional ERP consultants who directly and intensively interact with clients, onsite and take part in all phases of the implementation process from gathering requirements to the go live day; due to this active role, they are found...
suitable for interviews. Main responsibilities of functional consultants in Experteam Consulting are listed below.

- Gathering business and technical requirements of clients.
- Analysis of requirements, creating flow charts and diagrams, writing AS-IS documents.
- Training users about Oracle ERP system.
- Installation and configuration of the software.
- Discussing clients’ business processes and mapping them into the system’s process for each module.
- Finding out some gaps between the system and business processes.
- Customization of the system with software developers.
- Creating test cases, test scripts namely carrying out test activities.
- Gathering requirements of user reports and development.
- Managing the “go live” day and support of users.

Two functional consultants are expert on logistics modules and implement modules such as purchasing, order management, inventory management and supply chain management. They have two and 4-year experience in their fields. The other functional consultant is specialized in human resource management modules and has 3 years ERP consultancy experience. They are currently working in multiple implementation projects in telecommunication, retail and pharmaceutical industries. Experiences in different industries provide consultants a diversity of clients to interact and face with different relationship issues. So that multiple ongoing projects provide us different insights since they are in different phases of the implementation. Considering this, collected data reflects client consultant relationship determinants from various projects and different levels. One technical ERP consultant is also chosen for the interview that mainly takes part in software development and customization processes, and gets in touch with technical client users and functional ERP consultants. The technical consultant is basically responsible for developing enhancements on the current system and adding or shaping functionalities under functional consultants’ directives. A two-session interview has been conducted with her so as to gain different aspects regarding the packaged culture and ERP customization concept.

All participants are asked open-ended questions about details of their relationship with clients, packaged software culture, Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and Turkish business culture. Interviews have organized in two sessions and lasted around 1.5 hour each. First session of the interviews are dedicated to get what consultants think about their role, their perceptions about clients. We also ask questions to analyze how they interact with different clients and what basics are paid more attention. By the first sessions it is simply intended to observe reflections of current consulting theories and some gaps that they could not clearly explain. Thereby, the data collected in the first session addresses our first and second research questions. The second sessions of interviews are organized to comprehend how Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and packaged software culture shape the relationship. So the second session is linked to our third research questions. Thus, we have gathered at the end an amount of accurate data that enables us to answer our three research questions.

Interviews have been conducted in Turkish. During the process, interviews recorded under participants’ approval in order to make an iterative data analysis and text notes have been taken to look back what topics participants emphasize mostly on. Recorded data has backed up in case any system crash and loss of data then after recording, audio data has been
transcribed. By transcription we have had textual data addition to audio data which enable us to notice different details of what participants mentioned.

Furthermore, to complement semi-structured interviews we have formed a questionnaire with open-ended, multiple-choice and grid type of questions which participants can answer in free-text format and weight choices according to their project experience. Six questions are asked to 200 ERP consultants and ERP project managers, and 50 of them have replied. This questionnaire provides us a general picture of what ERP consultants and consultancy managers think about the relationship and what factors they give the most attention in their consultancy service. Through this questionnaire, we gathered the most common difficulties that are faced and what factors make a positive contribution to the relationship with clients. Besides, some questions and multiple choices are dedicated to understand how Hofstede’s cultural dimensions are reflected whether his general claims are applicable to ERP practice. One question is also organized to evaluate what kind of issues is experienced regarding packaged software culture and customization requests. An online survey tool is used to reach participants so their privacy is fully protected. At the end of the questionnaire, we have gathered a general opinion of ExperTEAM Consulting regarding their service.

4.2. Data Analysis

By analyzing collected qualitative data it is purposed to deeply understand specific factors affecting the client – consultant relationship and interpretations of consultants in this research setting. In this study Hermeneutics approach and hermeneutics circle are adopted as data analysis and collection method. It is defined as ‘the theory or the philosophy of interpretation of the meaning’ by Bleicher (1980 cited in Myers, 2004, p.103). According to Bleicher (1980 cited in Myers and Avison, 2002, p.10), hermeneutics can be considered as an underlying philosophy and mode of analysis. It, basically aims to understand humans, what they do and what they say by analyzing and interpreting text and text analogue. Here, text analogue represents any context in which researchers are interested in order to understand the phenomenon through oral or written text. This context might be any human artifact, behavior, organization, system or culture (Myers and Avison, 2002, p.10; Myers, 2004). The meaning of text or text analogue refers an interpretation that aims to expose an underlying coherence or sense within a text or text analogue which is confused or cloudy in a way (Taylor, 1976 cited in Myers and Avison, 2002, p.10). Based on these definitions, the relationship between clients and consultants, consultants’ attitudes, expectations and Turkish cultural dynamics are interpreted as text analogues. Through hermeneutics method understanding of how information is interpreted and how information systems are used, can be built. Besides, hermeneutics is seen a useful way of perceiving system development processes and the influence of information technology in social and organizational contexts (Boland, 1991 cited in Myers, 2004, p. 104). The client-consultant relationship brings ambiguous issues on the scene; therefore for our data analysis it is considered suitable. In this case, hermeneutic analysis enables to make sense of whole, then dig into the relationship between people, organization and ERP systems.

Hermeneutic Circle

Determination of textual meaning is not the main focus of hermeneutic circle; hermeneutic circle enables the researchers to interpret the data being analyzed. This becomes a basis for the future understanding and this opens a door for further discussions. Also it supports creating new approaches during the research (Cole and Avison, 2007, p. 821). Hermeneutic
circle represents the dialectic between the understanding of the text as a whole and the interpretation of its parts which is a continuous movement from the whole to its parts and back to the whole (Gadamer, 1976 cited in Myers and Avison, 2002, p.11). Reading a book is given as a useful example by Myers (2004, p.107) in order to explain hermeneutic circle. Accordingly, a reader starts to read a book based on previously gained expectations and knowledge. Through reading, the reader gains her/his understanding of the context. After a while if she/he gets stuck or away from the context, she or he turns back to the book title or table of contents to review her/his general understanding about the book. Then she/he gets back to content and details of the chapters and sub-titles, after that circle starts again. When the reader finishes the book, she/he comprehends the whole idea of the book (Myers, 2004, p.107).

To illustrate structuring an understanding through hermeneutic circle, Heidegger (1976 cited in Cole and Avison, 2007, p. 822) proposed a concept named ‘Dasein’ (See Fig. 9). Spirals of understanding placed in the figure occur from interpretations of an action (Cole and Avison, 2007, p. 822). The theoretical development can be specified iteratively through accepting or rejecting the aspects of experiential prejudices (Butler, 1998 cited in Cole and Avison, 2007, p. 822). This circle is more about understanding the existing knowledge better through the iterations, not exploring a new knowledge (Cole and Avison, 2007, p. 823).

![Figure 9: The structure of understanding](Cole and Avison, 2007, p. 823)

Since hermeneutics approach and hermeneutic circle are adopted as a data analysis mode, we carried out a back-and-forward analysis method in this research. In other words, we used the ‘whole-and-part’ principle which is the dialectic between understanding of a text as a whole and interpretation of its parts which is a continuous movement from the whole to its parts and back to the whole (Gadamer, 1976 cited in Myers and Avison, 2002, p.11). Accordingly, we first aimed to build a background understanding about ERP systems in general and fundamentals of ERP implementation practice in Turkey. So as to gain this information, we conducted an interview with a senior ERP consultant as we stated above. Besides, we have gathered background knowledge by our literature review. Along the interviews and analysis process, each interview is followed by an analysis of data then moving back to the literature to review our interview questions and our knowledge to be able to gather new perspectives (Myers and Avison, 2002, p.10; Myers, 2004). These back-and-forwards enable us to keep track of our research aim and accumulate our knowledge.

Table 19 below summarizes stages of data collection and analysis processes and its sub-steps followed. Stage 1 starts with organization of questions for the preparation interview. The
preparation interview with an ERP consultant was fruitful for us to build a background knowledge addition to the literature review. It supported us to shape interview questions for following interviews. Besides, it was an opportunity to test our skills of moderating a semi-structured interview. In this first stage we come up with reviewed key concepts and interview questions which are relatively more suitable for the research aim. In stage two, four interviews were held iteratively each of them starts with an interview and followed by an analysis process. The analysis process is integrated with an additional literature review in order to link what is currently found out with what currently exist in the literature. Therefore, data collection, analysis and literature review steps are interwoven and feed each other to identify important factors about ERP consultancy and how it is carried out in practice in Turkey. So each interview in this study creates a base for further interviews. Throughout all steps of the second stage, there is ongoing interpretation of data and reasoning for consultancy roles as well as cultural dimensions. Input of the third stage is collected audio data then it is transcribed and textual data generated. Texts were read repeatedly and related interview notes were also read to get sense from data. Textual date basically provide us another means to interfere the same context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Sub-steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Organization of interview questions for the preparation interview (number 0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview number 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Review and follow up discussion of the interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4     | Analysis and coding of the audio data  
- Understanding general concepts regarding ERP in Turkey  
- Identification of the key concepts related with the research scheme and purpose  
- Linking the literature with the featured key concepts |
| 5     | Review and reorganization of the interview questions |
| 1     | Interview number (1,2,3,4) |
| 2     | Review and follow up discussion of the interview |
| 3     | Analysis and coding of the audio data  
- Understanding characteristics and dynamics of the relationship  
- Determining the role of cultural dimensions  
- Identification of additional key concepts  
- Linking the literature with preliminary findings |
| 4     | Review and reorganization of the interview questions and key concepts |
| 1     | Transcription of the interviews |
| 2     | Analysis of textual data |
| 3     | Discussion of new interpretations |
| 4     | Integration with preliminary findings |
| 1     | Organization of the questionnaire |
| 2     | Collection and analysis of data |
| 3     | Linking with findings from previous steps |

Table 19: Data collection and analysis stages
The qualitative data we gathered from our questionnaire is analyzed in light of what has been extracted through interviews. Dedicated questions for each consulting models, interpretations and expectations of ERP consultants have evaluated. Moreover, specific answers for Turkish business culture and ways of interaction have been categorized according to cultural dimensions.

4.3. Validity, Reliability and Generalization

We provide the quality of our case study design through giving importance to validity and reliability in data collection. According to Creswell (2009, p. 190), validation of findings is performed during the steps in the process of research as it is shown in Figure 10. ‘Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures’. Qualitative reliability points out that the approach of a researcher is consistent across different researchers and projects (Gibbs, 2007 cited in Creswell, 2009, p.190). Accordingly, we followed the advices of Creswell (2009) in order to provide reliability and validity. For reliability:

- We checked the transcripts to see whether there is any mistakes;
- We checked the codes if we have mistake during the process of coding data;
- As we are researches, we arranged regular and documented meetings and we discussed and shared analysis regularly in order to coordinate communication among us as coders;
- We cross-checked the codes and compared the results in order to get consistency.

![Figure 10: Data analysis in qualitative research](Creswell, 2009, p.185)
For validity:

- Data triangulation was used due to the fact that it is important in order to contribute internal validity. It is provided by using multiple research methods and data sources. Internal validity is significant for explanatory case studies since these studies consider the causal relationships between conditions (Kathan, 2008, p.43; Yin, 2003). In our thesis, we used a variety of methods and sources for data collection to contribute internal validity such as: literature, interviews and questionnaires.

- We tried to contribute different perspectives to the findings; this was also a way to provide validity.

- We added our comments and own perspectives to the interpretations.

- We took the comments of our supervisor and an ERP consultant from different company as external auditor in order to consider different and external perspectives.

Yin (2003, p.10) stated that the generalization is another problematic issue in case studies. Qualitative generalization means to generalize findings to individuals, sites and other places (Gibbs, 2007 cited in Creswell, 2009, p.193). However, qualitative research is conducted in a specific site. Therefore it is more particularity rather than generalizability (Greene and Caracelli, 1997 cited in Creswell, 2009, p.193). According to Yin (2003, p.10) case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. Based on these arguments, we believe that our research might be generalizable to theoretical propositions which focus on consultancy and consulting relationships. By conducting a single case study and dealing with a complex, multilayered phenomenon which may produce different understandings, our case does not include generalization of findings as a universal fact that is accepted by everyone.

### 4.4. Ethical Considerations

During implementation of this research, some ethical concerns were taken into consideration for data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, writing and disseminating of the research through following the advices of Creswell (2009).

Firstly, we introduced ourselves as researchers to the company in which the research was conducted. We gave information about the selection of the participants that are the consultants from different levels, type and position. Then the consulting company assigned the consultants respecting our conditions in order to interview. We also notified the company about the benefits for participating. We explained how this research can be useful guide for their interaction with the client. Confidentiality of interviewees and protection of data gathered from the case study organization was provided by a consent. Furthermore, we provided the assurance that the participants can withdraw from the study at any time they want. We also gave our contact information, if the participants need to ask any questions or want to make clear some issues. We also provided an assurance about hiding the identity of the participants. Therefore we just gave information about their position, gender, and time of experience. Besides, a copy of interview questions was sent to the company in order to inform them about the content of the interviews before we have performed. Thereby, their concerns about the questions were eliminated.
We usually contacted to the participants before interviews in order to ask their free time, moreover we notified them about the duration of the interviews. We respected the time that we notified to the participants. If we needed extra information, we asked for the permission to have another conversation. Furthermore, we did not disturb the consultants when they are busy with their profession, we respected their schedule.

We gave the guarantee of discarding the data after we keep it for a while. Then the third parties could not reach it. Moreover, if any disagreement, split or conflict occurs between us as researchers, we warranted that no one of us share the data with other people.

We used some methods to check the accuracy of the data by triangulation. We did not invent or falsify any finding from the data gathered. While we were writing this thesis, we tried to be objective and, analyzed and interpreted the data carefully respecting to the original data. Recorded and stored data of interviews, questionnaires and copies of corporate documents was not shared or used for any other purposes without permission of consultants and the studied organization. And this thesis did not and will not be used for the benefit of any other parties.

Since this research focused on the relationship between clients and consultants, some private conflicts and hassles was expressed by interviewees. We did not make any comments about those conflicts to avoid bias against any parties. These concerns were addressed by making consent at the beginning of the research and sending a copy of this thesis at the end.

Finally, after we completed the case study, we used an explanatory case study methodology checklist of Fisher and Ziviani (2004, p. 188) (See Fig. 11) in order to see where we are and whether we missed any step or process during the implementation of this thesis.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Is explanatory case study research appropriate to the research questions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Is there a comprehensive review of the literature?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Has a pilot study been completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Has the theoretical model underlying the research design been described prior to data collection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Has 'the case' been clearly identified?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Have the cases been selected based on the established criteria?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Has each case been considered as a separate subinquiry/experiment and selected as part of the process of ongoing hypothesis generation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Has the case study been operationalised by defining the concepts to be investigated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Have all possible rival explanations/hypotheses been tested?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Have data collection tools and techniques been defined?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 11:** Explanatory case study methodology checklist

(Fisher and Ziviani, 2004, p. 188)
5. Analysis and Findings

This chapter is organized to provide an analysis based on our collected data and present our findings. Our analysis includes examination of the current consulting models by presenting comparative tables which touch upon similarities and dissimilarities between current ERP practice and previous consulting models. So basically it is pointed out what characteristics the ERP consultancy relationship shares with consulting models. Analysis of the models is followed by the analysis of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and ERP package culture. Under these subsections, relationship between clients and consultants is interpreted by cultural aspects. All this analysis is ended up with a model named transitive model that presents our findings regarding how consultancy relationship is carried out through ERP implementation by consultant perspective.

5.1. Comparative Tables

These tables formed in this subsection present similarities and dissimilarities between each consulting model and the ERP practice in our research context. First we give the table to display comparison then it is explained in detail how they are experienced in the ERP concept and differentiated with the current models.

5.1.1. The Expert Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert Model</th>
<th>ERP Implementation: Experteam Consulting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>An expert knowledge exists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Knowledge is “out there” and objectively definable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knowledge is portable from one case to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Problem descriptions or symptoms are clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Clients have little or no knowledge about how to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>One-way knowledge transfer occurs between parties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20: Comparison with the Expert Model

As we present in this table, functionalist view of the expert model is not purely compatible for the ERP implementation context. According to data we collected, a technical expert knowledge does partially exist and required in terms of considering specific issues regarding the ERP system itself. Since implementation process is basically defined as putting software packaged into an enterprise, it obviously requires a technical expertise about its interface, software and database architecture as well as general business process knowledge embedded inside. ERP consultants, in this point, are expert on what ERP applications have inside, such as predetermined business processes, own business understanding, technical logic and so forth. Knowledge about the system is therefore “out there” and codified in official user manuals, system documents and general procedures but also gained through different projects. This technical knowledge is objective and portable from one case to another. However, this functional perspective displays only a façade of the ERP implementation which also crucially requires social and organizational fit between client organization and the software application. In this manner, we can say that limited knowledge is objectively definable and “out there” for consultants and other parties. For that reason, it is very difficult and impractical to copy a solution applied in a previous project and paste it to a current one.

Since ERP implementation concept escapes from technical rationality, clear problem descriptions are observable in very rare cases. During our interviews a senior consultant stated that they often met with clients who were full of confusion and little clarity about their problems. This fact creates complex problem situations that need an extensive and mutual effort to achieve a shared understanding regarding the problematic situation. On the other side, it is noteworthy to state that, to our interpretation, ERP implementation is not completely distinct from technical rational view due to its system related technical structure. From this aspect, tasks which include technical issues have clearer problem description and more structured frame to apply solutions methods.

If we take knowledge transfer between parties into account, one-way transfer from consultants to clients are observable as the expert model argues. Throughout user trainings, consultants transfer their knowledge about the ERP system to key users as teachers or trainers. Here there is a unidirectional transfer occurs to clients who are technical users and operational users within the client organizations. They absorb system specific knowledge provided by consultants then use it daily operations. The aim is to improve clients’ capacity of carrying out operations during implementation and post-implementation phases. However, one-way knowledge transfer is not adequate itself to describe knowledge transfer through implementation which is generally omnidirectional in which clients and consultants exchange their knowledge. Whereas transfer of software centric knowledge from consultants to clients occurs; clients also feed consultants by specific knowledge about organizational processes and
institutional structures about the implementing organization. They simply give to each other what is needed to realize a successful system adaptation.

Another distinctive characteristic of the expert model is the role of consultants as mentioned in the seventh row. Expert model considers clients as passive actors in the relationship due to their lack of expertise and their intention to focus on their core businesses. Contrary to this, to our understanding, through ERP implementation both parties are active actors. Although there are specific tasks which consultants are primarily responsible for results, clients and consultants are fully involved in the implementation and take responsibilities. From this perspective, the client – consultant relationship concept mainly differs from the expert model in ERP implementation context.

According to our interviews, clients generally have very limited knowledge and experience about what an ERP system is and what critical factors must be paid attention. In some exceptional cases clients may have previous IT implementation experiences that lead them to be a more active actor and make more contributions through implementation. However, in some cases relationship between clients and ERP consultants have similarities with the expert model in terms of client’s initial lack of knowledge about the system which is also the reason why consultants are hired. But ERP context differentiate themselves since clients pursue growth and organizational development regarding learning ERP system’s structure and having knowledge.

As already mentioned in the expert model, consultants have an initial and ongoing power on clients due to their expert knowledge and full responsibility on results. However, as a result of two-way knowledge transfer and mutual knowledge dependency of each party, consultants’ dominance on clients is not clearly observable in ERP implementation. It can be stated that comparing to the expert model, relationship between clients and ERP consultants is more balanced and can vary in different tasks.

In conclusion, client – consultant relationship in ERP implementation has similarities with the expert model in terms of consultants’ role and knowledge related with the ERP system’s business mindset and its technical structure. On the other side, there are deep dissimilarities due to the fact that a successful implementation requires fulfillment of vital organizational tasks, user involvement and providing specific knowledge about implementing organization such as strategic unique business processes, institutional values and organizational culture, which make client’s role equally important.

5.1.2. The Critical Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Model</th>
<th>ERP implementation: Expertteam Consulting Case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional knowledge exists. Knowledge is ambiguous, metaphorical, and context-dependent and slippery. Rhetoric and image are used to convince the client and deal with the ambiguity.</td>
<td>Professional knowledge exists. Knowledge is partially ambiguous, usually not metaphorical, context-dependent and slippery. Mostly based on prior experiences. Rhetoric and image are used in order to gain trust of the clients and convince them and make clear of the ambiguities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The symbolic outputs as a part of the impression creation process is more valuable than evaluating the quality of the advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Impression management is a main goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Consultants try to make clients feel secure; rather than creating and transferring knowledge. Client managers need consultants to tell them stories and use images instead of presenting real solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Images, metaphors, and humour are used by consultant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing and creation is disregarded. Consulting knowledge is built during the client-consultant interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Consultants represent and change the meanings of the clients by negotiating them. Knowledge transfer is performed in the context that client set up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The client managers act like co-producers of consultancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>There is no prominent dominance of the consultancy. The boundary of dominance of consultancy is set by the client managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Client is a passive actor and it is considered as audience. They wait for being convinced by the consultants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Consultant is an active actor and her/his task is to impress the client.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Client and consultant cannot produce shared knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Knowledge provided by consultant is based on rhetoric, images and storytelling; and there is an ambiguity of knowledge. Knowledge transfer between client and consultant is neglected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Resistance to consultant by client is ignored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The interaction between two parties is about persuading the other one. Therefore, clients’ knowledge and contribution are ignored in terms of knowledge transfer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Client is dependent on the consultant’s advice and also they expect that the consultant creates new fashions, fads and innovations in management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The model focuses on the projects that include innovative and complex problems. This model is not suitable for the projects require fast and effective solutions for the problems encountered before.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 21: Comparison with the Critical Model**

As we see from the table, we cannot say that the critical model is completely compatible with the client-consultant relationship context of ERP implementation. According to the critical model, knowledge is ambiguous, metaphorical, context-dependent and slippery; and professional knowledge which is a language of managers and management consultants take place in this model. Moreover, in the client-consultant interaction during ERP implementation, consultants have the professional knowledge based on their expertise. On the other side, the client in itself has the professional knowledge in terms of their business processes. Based on our observation through interviews, consultants’ knowledge is not ambiguous all the time. Knowledge of their expertise about ERP system is certain and according to the business structure of their clients, they can modify it. In ERP systems there are many methods to make the system compatible with the client’s business processes. On the other side, consultant’s knowledge about business processes is based on client. Clients have knowledge of business processes, problems and organization structure. During the interviews, a consultant stated that:

“Sometimes, the client does not explain the details of the business processes. They may explain them wrong or insufficient. Then when I check the related process, I realize that the client’s explanation is not right or complete. They might see this explanation as loss of time.”

If client does not transfer sufficient information of business processes to the consultant, the knowledge of consultant about business process may be ambiguous. In addition, professional knowledge of consultant is not metaphorical, but rational. They have deep knowledge about ERP system; they just use metaphor as a method in order to explain the system better to the clients. Their knowledge is not completely slippery; we can say that it can be reformed with respect to the client’s business processes. The core knowledge comes from prior experiences that the consultants gained from various projects; moreover Oracle ERP system has its own structure, techniques and properties. Based on our observation the consultants shape this core knowledge of ERP systems and create new context regarding to their client’s business processes, structure or business environment, moreover they apply this knowledge for the solution of problems.

In ERP consultancy, symbolic outputs like storytelling, rhetoric, and image are mostly used for expressing the situation or problem clearly. In addition, if there is an ambiguity, the methods such as storytelling and rhetoric may be used in order to reduce ambiguity and to understand the problem or process clearly. Image is important for impression but the quality of the advice is much more valuable because clients expect effective service and good solutions for their business. Moreover, presentation of the consultant and consultant’s
communication skills are important in order to impress the client, and gain positive impression. A consultant stated that:

“Some clients such as; banks pay attention to what you are wearing and how you are behaving; on the other side, some clients which have flexible environment at their organization pay more attention to how you are running the project. This completely depends on the client’s organizational culture.”

However, impression management is not the main concern for ERP consultancy unlike the critical model. We observed that at the first steps, during gaining trust of the client, impression management is much more significant for the consultants. By time, this management helps to keep the consultant’s reputation well. However, implementing the system in an appropriate way and satisfy the client in terms of providing good service are the main focus of ERP consultants.

Unlike the critical model, in ERP consultancy, knowledge creation and transfer are important and; story and image are used for knowledge transfer. As we mentioned before, these methods, metaphors and humors are for describing solutions or explaining the ERP system and how it works to client through translating into the client’s language. A client does not just expect that consultants make them feel secure. Client expects qualified solutions in order to increase the quality of their business processes effectively. Knowledge sharing and creation are important processes of client and consultant interaction. Consultants have core knowledge of ERP systems from prior experiences. Through knowledge transfer, sharing and creation, they add new knowledge and modify their existing knowledge regarding to each client’s business processes. Unlike the critical model, knowledge sharing and creation are important for ERP consultancy. As it is stated before, in ERP consultancy knowledge transfer is not unilateral. There is a mutual knowledge transfer between client and consultant during the interaction. As we mentioned before, consultants have knowledge of ERP systems functionally and technically; clients have the knowledge of their own business processes. They create meaning together. Especially during the analysis process, mutual knowledge transfer is very important for the consultant in order to find the solutions. However, some consultants stated that if they have enough information about the process, they do not interact with the client; they directly try to solve the problem. Some clients want to behave as co-producer of consultant; they expect that consultants construct the context of ERP system. On the other hand, some clients are more active and they act as producer like consultants. This depends on the manner of client.

For the client-consultant interaction in ERP implementation, there is no prominent dominance of the consultancy. According to the interviews that we have done, client has dominance on the consultant. To some clients, they have money and hire the consultants; therefore consultants must do whatever client wants. Especially, consultants stated that if a client firm is a big and reputable, this dominance increases and consultant makes more concession. In a word, the client determines the level of dominance. Furthermore, to the critical model, client is a passive actor and considered as an audience; and consultant is an active actor and his/her task is to impress the client. However, in ERP consultancy both client and consultant are active actors. Client does not act as audience; also participate to the system integration and analysis processes. They discuss processes and solutions together during the analysis process; and consultant needs knowledge of client so as to make solutions compatible to the client’s business. By this way they produce shared knowledge and client makes contribution to knowledge transfer. Clients sometimes tend to impose their thought or idea to the consultants.
and they try to rule the roast. Moreover, client has resistance to the consultants’ suggestions. Especially the staffs of the client firm do not want to change their processes sometimes. They resist to the change and sustain their prior system. They might be afraid to lose their job due to the possibility of that they cannot do the new processes properly. This may cause problem between client and consultant sometimes. In this case, consultants use rhetoric and their skills in order to convince the client to apply the new system.

Client is dependent on consultant in terms of implementing ERP system to their firm. Client usually wants to implement ERP system in order to increase the reputation of their company, have effective operations, reduce the cost and raise the sales, and provide the strong technical background and data integration. On the other side, clients draw the boundaries of this interaction in a way. They set up some rules and the boundary of the knowledge they share with consultant. In these boundaries, consultant suggests new trend, idea and fads. In this manner, consultant is also dependent on client. As a result, there is a mutual dependency.

Finally, unlike the critical model, ERP consultants encounter with routine, innovative and complex problems. During the interviews, consultants stated that with reference to the project and client, types of problems change and consultants must deal with different kinds of problems.

5.1.3. The Reflective Practitioner Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflective Practitioner Model</th>
<th>ERP implementation: Experteam Consulting Case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Knowledge is non-fixed and contextualized. It is partially based on technical expertise.</td>
<td>Knowledge is non-fixed and contextualized. It is partially based on technical expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Two-way knowledge transfer occurs between parties. A knowledge asymmetry exists.</td>
<td>Two-way knowledge transfer occurs between parties. A knowledge asymmetry exists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Relationship between clients and consultants are balanced.</td>
<td>Relationship between clients and consultants are balanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Consultant is the active actor in new knowledge creation.</td>
<td>Both consultants and clients are active in new knowledge creation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Power relations between parties are neglected.</td>
<td>Power relations have a significant role in getting to a consensus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22: Comparison with the reflective practitioner model

As it is presented in the table above, reflective practitioner model is characterized by complexity and unclear problem descriptions. Since different interpretive communities have different perspectives on a problem situation, each phenomena is unique and requires a unique approach to address it. According to our data, ERP implementation displays a multilayered picture which includes the ERP system, consultants, consultancy firm, client users and organizational structures as well as external business environment. In this complex structure, even though implementation projects start with a defined scope and deliverables guaranteed by contracts, these expected outcomes and problem descriptions are not clear enough as well as can be interpreted differently by users through the implementing organization and consultants. We interpreted through our interviews that first phase of a project is a process of building a shared and definable technical/business requirements of the client organization.

Since the ERP implementation has a complex structure, consultancy knowledge is not “out there” and not ready to use for each phenomenon. It is constructed by an intensive interaction and discourse between clients and consultants which means that knowledge of consultants and clients are embedded in a context in which different meanings shape knowledge of individuals. On the other hand, as we explained in Table 21, consultancy knowledge comprises software specific technical knowledge as well which is portable, codified and relatively fixed. Whilst constructing knowledge through reflection-in-action, two-way knowledge transfer occurs between clients and consultants. The initial knowledge asymmetry makes knowledge exchange a significant necessity. Consultants basically share their knowledge regarding the ERP system and clients provide specific knowledge about organizational structures and business processes.

As our data shows that client – consultant relationship in ERP implementation is balanced which refers that both clients and consultants are equal in terms of taking responsibility on actions for not only completion of tasks but also improving their capacity and organizational learning; sharing their knowledge and creating new knowledge as well as producing tailored solutions for unfamiliar problems. Furthermore, knowledge exchange provides opportunities for consultants to learn from their clients and gain industry specific experience for further projects. Complex implementation process exposes consultants to deal with unfamiliar and inexact problem situations. For this reason, it must be accomplished to improvise solutions through a constant interaction. Since parties are mutually dependent on each other’s knowledge and motivation, there is no default “up” or “down” positions that is derived from possession of an expert knowledge.

Although reflective practitioner model advocates a more balanced client – consultant relationship comparing to the expert model, new knowledge creation is mainly in consultants’ hands whereas clients have a supportive role which is not the actual case in ERP implementation as our data points out. Due to mutual dependency of both parties, clients are active as much as consultants during new knowledge creation by providing their industry experience and organizational knowledge.

Power relations is one of the concept that reflective practitioner model is critiqued. It becomes a matter into question when discourse between different perspectives ends up with a conflicting situation which needs a final decision or a process of one’s conviction in order to take actions. Power alteration between parties and how consultants or clients impose their
power on each other is a key point which might directly influence on the projects direction. Dominance of parties may change along the relationship by possession of knowledge. For example, clients may have power when specific knowledge is needed regarding organization’s strategic business processes, its value chain or organizational behaviors. On the other side, consultants may take over the power when system-specific knowledge is required.

To conclude, client – consultant relationship in ERP implementation has important similarities with the reflective practitioner model in terms of continuous interaction between two parties. The need for an intensive interaction is derived from the complex problem situation of the ERP implementation context which escapes from functionalist tradition. Moreover, consultancy knowledge is dependent on the context and built through discourse. On the other side, clients’ active role in new knowledge creation and providing solutions is different from what the reflective practitioner model states. Power issues which are neglected in the reflective practitioner model are important determinants to shape client – consultant relationship.

5.1.4. The Interpretive Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretive Model</th>
<th>ERP implementation: Expertteam Consulting Case</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Knowledge is created and transferred within the interpretive communities through the interactions of individuals belong to these communities. People build their own understanding through the interaction.</td>
<td>There are also interpretive communities in consultancy organization. The parties (client and consultant) transfer and create knowledge through the interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The client- consultant team is an interpretive community.</td>
<td>The client-consultant team can also be considered as an interpretive community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Understanding each other's problem is very important in order to get interaction and build shared understanding. Therefore, knowledge transfer is carried out between different interpretive communities.</td>
<td>Consultant and client try to understand each other. Mostly consultant has steps to insight more into the client's business processes. And client tends to learn the ERP system from consultant. Knowledge transfer exists between these parties. The ways of thinking of these parties are different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Knowledge transfer can be performed through sharing conceptual frameworks by these different communities.</td>
<td>Consultants use some conceptual frameworks in order to perform knowledge transfer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the client-consultant team, client's members and consultants reflect their own perspectives and share their understanding through mechanisms such as; boundary objects, brokering and aligning actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shared language is very important to provide durable knowledge transfer and long-term reliable relationship between client and consultant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Knowledge is created through developing new meanings and frameworks to current issues in the context of reflective thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Client is active as well as consultant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>New knowledge is created through some tools that can represent the perspectives such as; models, metaphors, workshops, figure and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Consultants produce new language and then present it to the clients. The role of consultant is reflective practitioner, interpreter, storyteller, broker and translator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Clients also affect the way of consultants' work. Clients contribute new knowledge and perspective to consultants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>There is a balance between the dominance of the client and consultant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are different types of consulting, thus consultants must be careful in selecting which kind of consulting and they must consider.

Consultants have many techniques. They select their manner regarding to client’s attitude.

Table 23: Comparison with the Interpretive Model

As we see from the Table 23, there are some differences between the interpretive model and client-consultant relationship context in ERP implementation. As it is mentioned in the literature review, interpretive model is theoretical and in practice there are some defects.

Client and consultant organizations have their own interpretive communities in their organizations. In our case, there are key users in client’s company, client managers, consultant managers and consultants as interpretive communities. Moreover, there are sub-communities of consultants such as: functional and technical consultants. Functional consultants are in more interaction with the client and they usually deal with requirements of the client; in other words they act as a bridge between technical consultants and clients. In this sense, consultants might interact with other attendants such as; project sponsor, project managers or department managers. A consultant stated that;

“The person who you are going to be in interaction depends on the module. This person might be purchasing staff, inventory staff or accounting and finance staffs. If it is necessary, we might work with other attendants such as; project sponsor, project managers or department managers”

The client-consultant team is considered as an interpretive community and consists of key users (client side), project managers (client and consultant sides) and consultants (See Fig.12). In this team, discussions are run by client users, managers and consultants then knowledge transfer is carried out through the interaction of these parties. They try to build a shared understanding and based on this transfer, new knowledge is created.

The way of thinking of these parties are different because they belong to different communities. When they league together, they try to understand each other and construct a shared understanding. Basically, they constitute a new community called client-consultant team. Moreover, they create a new language and way of thinking through interaction, discourse, social activities, knowledge transfer and sharing perspectives. Client members have knowledge about their business processes, organizational structure, special processes problems; consultants have technical and ERP system knowledge. In order to attain desired implementation results and producing innovative solutions for particular problems, transfer of possessed knowledge and knowledge creation are necessary between those parties. Therefore knowledge transfer is mutual. Consultants create a conceptual framework as a first step for a mutual understanding via aligning the actions and they use their prior experiences.

During the interviews, consultants stated that they act like broker between parties in order to constitute shared understanding. They use stories, rhetoric and metaphors as well as boundary objects such as; documents, prior e-mails, memos are employed to explain problems or the current system to clients. By this way they create a mental picture of the situation, problem or
the system. After all these learning and understanding stages; shared language is built between consultants and clients. Basically they form new language through knowledge transfer and creation for their client-consultant teams as a new interpretive community. Furthermore, consultants use some tools or methods for knowledge creation. When they interact with the consultant they use metaphors some visual models and rhetoric. Based on the interviews, consultants stated that they use special question techniques. For instance, if they could not take the right answers from client, they change the question or wordplay in order to receive the right answers. Firstly, they find out who is going to use this program, and then they interact with that person in order to take elaborate information. After they took the information, a plan is done in order to analyze the related subject in depth. If the client forgets to give any detail, the consultant gives an example from the prior experiences in order to understand whether the current situation is similar. By this way, client could remember some details that they forgot to share with the consultant. One consultant stated that;

“In analysis phase, I use some essential questions in order to understand the process. These questions are: What is the current process? How do you perform this process? How would you perform this process? When you perform in a new way, what kind of benefit do you expect to gain? With these kind of questions, we as consultants can determine the requirements.”

Furthermore, the consultants use flow diagram as a boundary object in order to understand the process well. And they work on this flow and seek for the parts if they can eliminate or fix. In order to make the issues clear, consultants present visual aids. In this sense, they use actual examples and make simulations. In addition, they construct a model which is run by actual data and they use Visio templates in order to express the issue to the client in depth. Flows and processes are displayed by this way and this provides the consultant and the client to see the big picture. The consultants usually design the screen through getting the client’s opinion. The key users are included in this process and they support the consultants to design the system. These methods are useful to obtain information from the client and very helpful to explain the issues better.

Moreover they use narrative/story through giving examples from prior projects and the situations they encountered before. By this way they can describe the situation in a way that clients could understand. The client – consultant team arranges some meetings and they discuss about the processes, problems, client’s requirements and implementation process. There are some demands of the client and consultants try to build the system based on the background of client’s business structure. Both parties open themselves to share their knowledge. However, some clients may restrict their knowledge sharing. They can give some information and some not. In this case, consultants try to take the information through some methods such as; asking different questions or same question from different aspect, and explaining the prior experiences. Afterwards knowledge creation is carried out. As a result client and consultant create new meanings and share their perspectives, discuss them and compromise. Basically, the critical and reflective thinking take place in the knowledge creation process. Usually, consultant and client discuss about a problem or alteration of the current system. They criticize the current knowledge and system. Meanwhile, some methods are used for the knowledge transfer, furthermore new meanings and frameworks are created; this process ends with the knowledge creation.

However developing shared framework could take time. And in practice with some clients, it is hard to develop it because some clients are not aware of ERP systems or technical issues. To explain the ERP system could be hard and constructing shared framework becomes
theoretical for some situations. As we mentioned before, ERP unawareness is widespread. The clients expect that the consultants act like usual program developer; they do not know the difference of Oracle. Sometimes, some clients want to change all the system according to their requirements. This means that they do not know why they want to implement ERP. Usually the client wants to change the ERP system rather than adapting their system to ERP system.

Client and consultant are both active in ERP consultancy implementation. They are always in active interaction. Consultants produce new language in order to translate their perspective and knowledge to the clients. In this manner, consultants act as reflective practitioner, interpreter, storyteller, broker and translator. On the other hand, consultant form the way of working based on the client’s business structure and the knowledge that client transfer to consultant. Therefore, the client change the way of working of consultant and make contribution to the creation and transfer processes. After this interaction, new perspective and shared understanding are formed.

In our case, we observe that the dominance level of consultant depends on the client’s attitude or the importance of the project. In this sense, the profile of client’s company, the consultant’s will of working with the client’s company, consultant’s loyalty to the client’s company and the importance and reputation of the client’s company specify this dominance. With regard to these norms, consultants decide the level of making a concession on client. If the client is a reputable and big company, the consultant managers might not stand against the excessive demands of the client. They usually mediate between the client and the consultants. Since the client is powerful, they do not want to lose the client. The consultants stated that in Turkey usually, the client have a manner which they hire the consultant and they are the one who is paying for the project. This manner makes the client powerful. Some clients have no ERP awareness, therefore they think that the consultant must do what they demand and also they expect them to change their business processes. This means that clients are not aware of what ERP consultancy means. The consultants and clients have different aspects. Sometimes the client’s perspective is wrong or deficient. Moreover, they are unwilling to change the way of their processes. Some clients have big and prestigious businesses. And this provides a reputation to the consultancy firm in the market. They do not lose these kinds of clients and they make a concession especially in customization phase. If the client is moderate this dominance level is balanced.

Consequently, the consultants work with various clients with different manners. They want to construct strong relationship through sustaining their connection. Thus, they change their behavior according to the client’s manner. In order to perform this requirement, they use some techniques to interact with the client. Most of the consultants stated that they go to the first meetings without prejudice. After they meet the client, by the time they learn the client’s reflections, reactions and attitudes. The consultants shape their behaviors regarding to these facts. If the clients behave so friendly, the consultants become a part of the client’s organizations. Some consultants stated that they can have closer relationship with the client. However, they stated this is not very professional because the clients want to use the consultant in reliance upon this close relationship. Then the consultants may encounter with the problems to balance the client’s requirements and their own company’s strategy.
5.2. Cultural Perspectives

We analyze, under this title, reflections of the Hofstede’s four cultural dimension on the ERP consultancy practice and client – consultant relationship.

5.2.1. Power Distance

Power distance indicates the degree of less powerful individuals’ acceptance and expectations of power that is distributed unequally within an organization (Hofstede, 1997 cited in Sims and Cegez). In other words power distance is a measure of to what extent individuals who have less power can act by their own decisions in a particular context which is organizational and ERP implementation context for this study. Turkey has been considered as a moderately high power distance country by taking the 18th rank in Hofstede’s (1984) study and this view is supported by Akin (2010) as well. If we turn to our case study and analyze what consultants stated in interviews, consultants are asked questions based on three structural questions that have been used by Hofstede’s (2010) studies previously mentioned in the literature review. Those questions are related with whether consultants are afraid of discussing issues with client managers or client supervisors; how managers’ decision making styles affect consultants and their relationship with clients and lastly how consultancy is affected by the preferences of client subordinates about managers’ decision making style. The degree of distribution of power has considerable influences on consultancy work and the relationship with clients. These influences may have negative and positive sites and change depending on the client organization.

Since the degree of power distance is moderately high in Turkey, it is stated by consultants that some clients have high power distance characteristics and some of them have less. When they take part in an implementation project they get an idea in a time about the client organization regarding how supervisors act to their subordinates and in what way subordinates expect to be treated. After this first impression consultants try to form up a way to diffuse client’s organization and promote their consultancy work. Since knowledge
intensive firms particularly ExperTEAM consultancy firm has a flat organizational hierarchy, semi-autonomous consultants and accordingly low power distance across the organization, after the kick off with a client, they first face with a misfit from their perspective like low power distance versus high power distance way of working in clients. They overcome this misfit by adapting the client’s organizational values, accepting norms and try to be accepted by the organization in a degree.

ERP consultants are mostly in contact with users in operational level who are subordinates of department managers or directors. That is why consultants take a friendly and informal speech for them. In this point we interpreted in our interviews that consultants may feel difficulty in discussing some issues with client managers than their subordinates. If they speak with a client manager, they put on a gentler and formal speech. Besides they are apt to be more explanatory and to be 100% sure so that have strong arguments to convince managers and handle critical questions. Consultants are basically afraid of making a mistake and fear to be seen unsure about their topic, when discussing with client supervisors. When a manager makes a mistake or misunderstands a technical process, it is harder to correct his/her mistake especially in a group meeting rather than a non-manager user. For this reason consultants may wait for a right time to raise their disagreements and take a very gentle approach to express them. If they cannot convince managers, managers always make the final decision. In this sense a consultant states:

“I behave more friendly and close to key users in operational departments. If a client has a centralized organizational structure, I may feel uncomfortable while speaking with managers than his/her subordinates. We sometimes do not question managers’ change request and prioritize their demands. Answers you give managers are much more different than normal users.”

In order to eliminate this fear and discuss topics with higher managers easily, a consultant firstly tries to be certain about his/her arguments, why the manager is wrong and why the consultant is right about his/her proposition. Then secondly, the consultant takes a kind and formal way of explaining those facts and reasons of disagreement. It is therefore interpreted that in the cases of high power distance is apparently felt, you have to somehow show your respect to a top manager’s hierarchical level and power, if you are explaining an issue and correcting him/her. Another consultant states:

“I always advocate that consultants should not be afraid of clients’ top managers. However, in some cases especially when you are in a group discussion, even if you are a consultant they may be apt to underestimate your opinions and ignore you. For this reason, consultants must be fully equipped and ready for all relevant or irrelevant questions when they are in a conversation with top managers.”

All consultants we interviewed stated that they prefer making mistakes or being in a conflict with non-manager key users rather than managers. Besides this hesitation inhibits building an open relationship with all project participants so that constraints project achievements. It is due to the fact that some serious disagreements with client managers or realization of consultants’ lack of knowledge might easily spread to other organizations and potential clients so that might affect consultants’ reputation in the market. If we consider the complex problematic situation of ERP implementation, the characteristic of high power distance may obstruct an open interaction with clients and erode the knowledge exchange process when innovative problems are on the table. Thus from this perspectives explained so far, we can
state that client organizations which have may force consultants to act as an ultimate and absolute expert who is always knowledgeable and fully responsible for every tasks which does not fit into the nature of ERP implementation. So the attitude to managers and how you present your opinion is a significant leverage to deal with negative impacts of high power distance.

Organizations with high power distance are described as environments in which subordinates are afraid of discussing things with their supervisors. If we look at the client – consultant relationship in light of this fact, consultants have to face with extra resistance from key users side about accepting standard functionalities and re-organizing the existing ones. In other words, if the solid link between implementation and change is not perceived by the organization, a need for the re-organization of existing business processes has to be pushed up throughout the organizations. This way from down to top can be easily blocked because of the power inequalities. A consultant in this point says:

“*In our ongoing implementation project sometimes key users realize that standard Oracle functionalities would give them advantage and optimize their process. However, they still insist on asking for customization because users are afraid of initiating a change and discussing this need with their supervisors. Basically they do not want to take this responsibility.*”

This example shows that in the case of a high power distance, organizational change must be applied by top-down strategy from supervisors to subordinates. Since power inequalities make forcing change from top to down easily rather than encouraging subordinates to “challenge” their managers regarding a need for change. Consultants therefore must be directly in touch with managers or top level members and convince them to overhaul business process and get ready for change. This approach is also used by ERP consultants presently. In general, consultants firstly intend to build a good relationship with client managers since it is an advantage on non-manager users to have them easily accepted consultants’ directives and speed up data gathering and decision making processes. Consultants state in this point:

“*My good relationship with the department manager is known by other users and this significantly increases my influence on others. Owing to this key users do not resist to new system as they did before*”

“I may try to have a close relationship with users who have a degree of power on other users. This shows other users that you as a consultant are important for this project and facilitate your acceptance”

These views also show that high power distance in organizations is used also as an advantage by consultants. For instance, when a consultant experiences an unsolved conflict with a key user, the issue is escalated to the manager in order to convince the user somehow. It is also stated that even though this is a practical way of circumventing the issues and get a speed in task completion, in long term not a fruitful method since the notions of user involvement and user acceptance are ignored. Consequently, it had better to use in urgent and inextricable situations.

On the contrary side, it is interpreted that client organizations which show lower power distance characteristics are suitable environments to discuss all issues openly and streamlines mutual knowledge sharing not only with non-manager key users but also with management
level. Our analysis points out that although some features of high power distance are used as leverage by consultants, lower level power distance enable users to involve discussions and raise their reflections to address complex problematic situations that require intensive interaction of project shareholders.

In conclusion, since power inequalities between higher level and lower level positions are considered existentially and common, high power distance has considerable effects on building and maintaining the client – consultant relationship. It is therefore consultants must be aware of its main features and try to use as an advantage of it as stated below by taking long term success into account.

5.2.2. Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance (UA) refers people’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguous situations. It measures the degree of cultures’ feeling to be threatened by new, uncertain and unknown situations (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). Depending on this feeling UA indicates to what extent a culture tends to program its members behaviors when they confront with unstructured and novel cases. Turkey is placed at the 16th rank and described as high uncertainty avoidance country (Hofstede, 1984). So people in Turkey feel uncomfortable and stressful when they face with novel, unknown, surprising and different situations rather than regular situations. People’s emotions and their inner force inside motive them and considered as drivers for business success. These resources for motivation may dysfunction under stress and anxiety then affect members’ behavior in organizations and how they work.

If we look at our case study organization and take ERP implementation context into account, ERP consultants usually confront with uncertainty and surprise since variety of human and non-human actors have a role during the implementation process and there is no pre-defined constant paths to follow for the end. Our analysis shows that consultants feel uncomfortable and stressful when they first face with uncertainty. For this reason more certain situations are strongly preferable for them and in ideal case they would like to eliminate foggy situations in their projects. However, they also emphasize that it is only ideally possible to work in a fully certain situations so that they are aware of in such complexity it is not possible to expect certainty. In this sense we can interpret that this irreversible complex structure has evolved their mindsets and force them to tackle with these surprising situations. An innovative type of problem motivates them in terms of discovering new technical information but strict time constraints and scarce of relevant information make them unhappy and stressful. For these sort of cases a consultant states:

“I see new problems as an opportunity to gain new technical knowledge so they motivate me. But if there is no information about the problem and given very limited time for a solution, I feel fear and stress.”

Other consultants also support this statement as what they first feel is fear and anxiety. However, they also find uncertain situations challenging and informative in terms of enabling searching and testing new functionalities also developing new solutions for further tasks. They also state that addressing uncertainty and unclear problem definitions are characteristics of their work. Since consultants inherently avoid from uncertainty how they address unknown problems starts with application and testing of defined Oracle standard functionalities. Here they try to restructure the situation by using previously defined rules and procedures. Our
interviews also organized to extract how initial stress and anxiety influence on consultants’ behaviours on clients and how the client – consultant relationship is affected. Concerning this it is found out that stress under uncertainty which is derived from anxiety might negatively change consultants’ attitude to clients. However, consultants in practice, adhere to their professional values and work ethics not to reflect stress onto their clients.

Besides, stress and anxiety in uncertain situations might be considered as a trigger for problem solution and new knowledge creation. Some consultants use anxiety and surprising situations as motivators so that they turn to more creative and productive actors:

“Yes, I feel sometimes extremely stressful but in some cases owing to this I search and learn a lot. Once I was urgently asked to solve a novel problem during implementation, there was not enough information about the problem as well as nobody to ask. These factors enforced me to focus on the issue and after a while by searching and developing some Oracle functions, I resolved the issue and learnt a lot.”

“Yes, I feel stress and afraid of failing but after this first shock I come back to reality and strive for doing what a successful consultant is supposed to do. I never reflect my negative feelings to clients but personally it affects you negatively.”

Acting depending upon one’s inner energy is a typical feature of avoiding uncertainty. ERP consultants in our case study show this typical characteristic and use it as an advantage by converting their fear and anxiety to drivers for motivation and creativity. Here, it is important keeping the balance between controlled by emotions and manipulating them towards a better mental determination. Work experience and internal case studies with experienced consultants are seen as main ways to achieve this ability.

So how ERP consultants motivate themselves is a sign of how high uncertainty avoidance may positively influence on consultancy service. In this manner, if we touch upon how the relationship between clients and consultants is influenced, we see no or very limited negative effects reasoned from stress of initial anxiety. Contrary to this, it may influence positively in terms of increasing the interaction between parties. Consultants get more together with clients to discuss solution alternatives for innovative problems and understand uncertainty in the implementation process. Purpose of this interaction is to make uncertainty more predictable and explain new issues with known models. So, more interaction is used as a way to program project participants’ behaviours and gather their remarks related to the issue. Regarding to this a consultant states:

“I am more in touch with clients when I am assigned to an unknown problem. I arrange special meetings to clarify the issue and gather some details. For instance we dig into specific business processes reside behind the problem and sometimes develop a solution together with clients.”

To conclude, ERP consultants in our case study show defensive reactions against uncertainty as mentioned by Hofstede; namely, they are apt to do something to eliminate ambiguity in their work since it makes them uncomfortable. First action that consultants take is controlling their emotions such as fear, anxiety and stress then using them professionally for their performance. More interaction with clients is the next step and by this the process of new knowledge creation starts. Finally, they develop a solution besides it gives a job satisfaction to consultants and due to more intensive interaction, both sides trust each other.
5.2.3. Individualism vs. Collectivism

In our case, during the interviews, we observe that consultants have tendency to the collectivist culture. While they are performing their tasks, they respect to the well being of their team. A consultant stated that consultancy firms have matrix organizational structure. This matrix was defined as: ‘a vertical functional hierarchy overlain by lateral authority, influence or communication, i.e. mixed organization’ (Knight, 1976 cited in Rowlinson, 2001, p.670). This means everyone is connected to a team or department in an organizational context. However, the members of different teams league together and form a group for specific projects. Usually it is expected that the client side join this group. Eventually, interdisciplinary work comes on the scene. In this project group, group decisions are significant. Some consultants stated that sometimes they might have closer relationship with the client’s employees. In some cases, they spend more time with the client than their own colleagues. It depends on the client’s manner. If the consultants have closer relationship with the client, they can be mixed up in an affair between the client’s demands and their company’s strategy. And some of the consultants stated that being in a very close relationship with the client might cause client to demand some unnecessary requirements from consultant. They stated that being professional is always a best way, otherwise you can face with undesirable demands and hard situations. One consultant stated that;

“That is normal to have closer relationship with the project group members rather than your own colleagues. Essentiality is the clearness and the power of the communication; this might cause you to be closer to the project group.”

Most of the consultants stated that if their colleagues or the client has a positive intent, they could help them to solve their own issues. However, consultants sometimes feel that client or the colleague misuse the consultant’s positive intent. In the first place, consultants do not behave egocentric; they usually prioritize to their team. In some cases, consultant does everything as much as she/he could, but the other side does not provide any support. In this situation, consultants could be in egocentric manner. However, generally they care about the well-being of their team as mentioned. They give more importance to the team/group rather than themselves as individuals. In a way, the working style of individuals affects the others. If a consultant makes any mistake or does negative actions, that could cause a problem for another consultant. There is an entire task and the clients share the responsibility of this task. If it is desired to accomplish the task successfully; every consultant should do the best and they should work for the team’s well-being, accordingly company’s well-being. From this aspect, being a team is important and we can see the trace of collectivist culture in the organization in our case study. So consultants need to build some methods to promote their relationship in a collectivist environment.

Another point for implementing successful project is the harmony of the project team. Therefore, consultants stated that, primarily, oral and written communication must be strong between consultants and clients. Second issue is trust. Mutual trust is so significant in order to work comfortable with the client. Last issue is ulterior motive. Consultants realize that the other person has ulterior motive, this affect the relationship in a negative way. From consultancy aspect, egocentric manner could harm the relationship. First and foremost is the success or failure of the team. Sometimes, consultants are obliged to work alone with the client, in this case, that consultant could show individualistic manner due to having all responsibility alone. Generally collectivist manner is dominant in this consultancy company.
There are some matters to harm the harmony of the team/group. These are personal ego struggle, egocentric manners, not to share of success, passing mistake to someone else, specific role taking, getting involved to someone else’s task, manipulation and effort to be dominant. Consultants believe that the roles and responsibilities of consultants need to be determined clearly before the project. If the client also is involved to a project team; team spirit or being team notions need to be adopted rather than consultant-client notion. However it is a team work or team success, there are personal gains. Therefore in some cases consultants resist to some undesirable demands or actions. If they struggle with this kind of problem or escalation, they deal with this through sharing this problem with the superiors or arranging contingency meetings.

In order to understand the individualist/collectivist culture better, we built a scenario. This scenario includes a meeting that consists of key users, project sponsor, managers from client side and two consultants. We asked the consultants how they would react when the members of the meeting indicate something wrong or deficient during evaluation. Consultants stated that when the client indicates something wrong or deficient about the system problem instead of process, they could correct it during the meeting. Especially if the subject evaluated is critical, the consultants believe to intervene it. However, sometimes this manner might be considered as incivility by the other side. This state can be considered as a reflection of the collectivist nature. If the person, who was corrected, resents; the relationship between consultant and that person might be damaged. Because there are also managers at the meeting, this manner sometimes paints that person to a corner in front of her/his managers. In fact,correcting the mistake on time is important in order not to lose time by discussing it. Here, wording or manner is significant. People should behave with other’s pride intact. The manner of consultants should be gentle. Moreover, if the correction is not so necessary, they should talk to the client personally.

When the other way is considered, if someone corrects a consultant when she/he does a mistake; consultants emphasize on wording, manner and intention. If any key user correct them unnecessarily or just about simple points such as; expression mistake or a matter that does not affect the process; consultants feel that the key user has ulterior motive to a consultant. However, if the corrected point is necessary and very important for the process, consultants do not consider it as a rude behavior. In this case, the main point is the manner and intention.

The last example on this scenario is that a colleague of the consultant corrects wrong or deficient statement of the consultant in front of the client. Here, if the consultants think there is another way to correct her/his statement and the colleague corrects her/him in different or unfavorable way, the consultant takes it personal and resents. They prefer to discuss the issues with their colleagues personally. Furthermore, they think that discussing something or conflicting in front of the client; change the consideration or image of consultants in the client’s mind. Because client think how the consultants produce solutions for the client’s problem while there is a conflict between them. Consultants usually prefer to find a way to bring to their colleagues’ notice without revealing it to the client or they discuss the issue personally, not at the meeting. In this sense, consultants watch over their colleagues. This manner is also a part of a collectivist culture.

Moreover, before intervening to their colleagues; they consider the experience of their colleague within their company and the existing project. If the colleague is more experienced than the consultant, consultant does not tend to intervene. If the mistake is explicit, the
consultant asks questions in order to show the mistake to the colleague without revealing during the meeting. If the consultant is more experienced than the colleague, she/he believes that it is necessary to correct the colleague. If the mistake is not so significant they usually prefer to explain the situation after the meeting personally. If the mistake could be masked, the consultant usually takes the floor and explains the situation with different words or in another way. If the client realizes the difference of these speeches, the consultants usually indicate as ‘we guess we expressed the situation inaccurately’ and keep on explaining the situation. In this manner, consultants try to prevent the perception that the consultants have inadequate knowledge. This shows that there is no competition between consultants; conversely there is solidarity in team. In other words, consultants do not offend the key users, as well, they watch over their colleagues. Group consciousness is advanced. However, they do not condone the explicit mistakes of their colleagues. The group notion is protected by giving particular importance to project success and long-term success. Consultants do not strive to put themselves first or represent their knowledge in order to score their colleagues off. Collectivist nature has impact on this attitude.

If we evaluate the position of consultants in an organization, we cannot clearly call them local or cosmopolitan. In some cases, they take part between being local and cosmopolitan. There is a fact that consultants do not behave completely individualistic. Hofstede’s moderate collectivist definition for Turkey coheres with this fact. This might be an influence of Turkish business culture on ERP consultancy firms. From IS aspect, we observed that individuals use the collaboration tools in order to share knowledge. There is no resistance against collaborative support. Consultants stated that if they cannot solve any problem on their own, they usually could get support from their colleagues or superiors. In this consultancy firm, team/group notion is important and everyone works for keeping the team/group strong.

When the consultancy firm in our case study is evaluated depending upon the comparison in Table 11 that illustrates the differences between low and high individualist cultures; we observed both low and high individualistic attitudes. However, sometimes consultancy nature is more disposed to collectivist culture. In our case;

- Provision by company is important such as; training and physical conditions; however consultants’ personal life has also importance.
- Consultants have emotional dependence to their own company; they usually respect their company’s strategy and rules. However, they might feel like they are also a part of a client’s side. Because project teams also consist of the client’s employees.
- Consultants are more involved with the company. They see themselves as a part of their company rather than being more individual.
- In the consultancy company trainings have importance.
- Managers both give importance to conformity and leadership. Because every consultant is responsible for a specific project, they also need to improve their leadership skills in order to balance their relationship with the client and other consultants.
- Depends on the case, both group or individual decisions are considered.
- Consultants do not only keep their social relations in the group level. They always try to build good relationships with the other parties. Depends on the project, they deal with various parties.
5.2.4. Masculinity vs. Femininity

During the interviews with the consultants, we observed that at the first meeting with the client, gender might be important. A female consultant stated that;

“Gender is important. Sometimes client may do sex discrimination. If the person from client side is female, and you are female; that woman might be short with you. Sometimes being a male consultant provides advantage. It depends on client’s behavior”

Moreover, that consultant indicated that there is a difference between outlook on male and female consultant by the client. The clients trust the male consultants more and there is a perception that the male consultants have more knowledge. Clients pay more attention to the thoughts of male consultants. On the other hand, male consultants stated that they did not feel the discrimination between male and female. However, some conservative clients expect from the female consultants to wear close clothes; even they could assign a male employee to work with a male consultant or female employee to work with female consultant. Male consultants think that female consultants do not behave masculine, but they are stubborn.

Based on the given information, we interpreted that female consultants might encounter with discrimination; therefore, male consultants might not feel this discrimination. This manner such as; trusting or regarding male consultants more could drive female consultants to have more masculine manners. This state forms the consultancy concept in this case study in masculine nature.

In fact, we can see both masculine and feminine attitude traces in the company that we investigated. Consultants care about assertiveness and achievement; however, competitiveness keep in the background. As we mentioned in the section of individualism and collectivism, consultants look after the benefit of the team or group. Because achievement occurs through the group/team success. For sure personal achievements are important as well; however, group/team well-being is at the forefront. Furthermore, nurturance as a特色 of feminine culture reveals itself as satisfying the client from many aspects such as; with appearance, image, rhetoric, good service, expert knowledge and having good relationship. Being modest is always required in order to have good relationship with the client and achieve company’s goals for the project. If the consultants behave as bad actor or look after her/his own interest; the project, relationship with the client or with the consultant managers could be damaged. Consequently, noone could get benefit from this manner. Another feminine speciality is quality of life; consultants try to enhance the quality of life in a way. They are achieving this through improving the quality of service and finding new ways to ease their work. This is also another important matter for them. However, as we mentioned before masculine manner is also necessary in order to gain some clients and have a good connection or be taken into consideration. Hereby, male dominated nature of Turkish culture might be influential. This should be examined by the future researches. Basically these preferences that we mentioned exist in the consultant company.

Yet, in consultancy concept, the consultant company’s culture is not adequate to evaluate the consultant behaviors. Consultants work with the clients; sometimes they spend most of their time in the client’s organizations for a long time. Therefore, client factor is also important for this evaluation. If we isolate consultants from client factor, we can say that they show moderate feminine attitudes which compromise with the Hofstede’s study in terms of business culture. However, when we include the client factor, we may observe the alteration. In a
sense, client’s manner is important, because consultants adapt, shape or change their behaviors with respect to the client’s manner. As a result, in terms of the client-consultant relationships, having masculine or feminine attitudes are unsteady. Some clients would like to see competitive attitudes or challenge, on the other side, some clients would give importance to the relationships and friendly environment. Consultants should observe and analyze the intention of the client very well and shape their manner according to this observation.

When the consultancy firm in our case study is evaluated depending upon the comparison in Table 13 that illustrates the differences between low and high masculine cultures; we observed both low and high masculine attitudes. In patches consultancy nature is disposed to masculine or feminine nature. Therefore, we are not able to consider that they have definitely low masculine or high masculine attitudes. In our case;

- Relationship with managers, other colleagues and clients; friendly atmosphere is important. Earnings, recognition, advancement and challenge are of secondary importance. Consultants give importance to the peaceful atmosphere in workplace environment. There is no strict competition between employees. Even some consultants prefer less salary to have peaceful environment.

- Belief in group decision is significant for the consultant. However, independent decision making are also considered. Consultants usually need to be dependent on their team/group decisions. Depending upon the project or the situation, both group and individual decisions are evaluated.

- Achievement is in some measure considered as human contacts and living environment for the consultants. However, in fact recognition and wealth also matter for consultants. Because everyone would like to advance her/his career and be rewarded for her/his efforts. Recognition in business life has importance for the consultants.

- Work has important role in consultants’ lifes, however we cannot define it as a central role in the consultant’s life. It depends on consultant’s personal view. Some consultants do the work only for earning money. Thus work has less importance for them. However some consultants think that their work is also their hobby. Therefore, work has more importance for them.

- Preferring shorter working hours to more salary depends on the consultants’ individual views. Some consultants demand to work more to gain more experience when they are still young. They stated that having less working hours might make them feel useless. However, having family is another issue. When the people have family, they also would like to spend more time with their families.

- According to the consultants, company’s interference in private life is not acceptable. Sometimes there are problems about getting the day off. This might offend the consultants. Apart from that the company does not interference the private life of the consultants.

- There is a high stress in the work environment because of the strict deadlines. Usually consultants spend much energy to satisfy the clients. They must follow the deadlines; this puts leverage on the consultants.
• The women are distributed to all level of positions such as; functional, technical consultancy or managerial positions. Top management consists of men, however women are able to influence the top-managers. Half of the project managers are women. In this company there is no sex discrimination between the employees. Consultants do not feel discrimination in their own organization. They may encounter with the discrimination with some clients.

5.3. The Transitive Model

Thus far we have presented similarities and dissimilarities between consulting models and the ERP implementation context in Turkey. After we analyzed four models within the context of ERP consultancy and from consultants’ viewpoint, we found out that none of these models could be comprehensively compatible with this context. There are many common features with these four models but we cannot say that any of them alone could explain the relationship of clients and ERP consultants through ERP implementation. Therefore, as a part of our study and based on our findings, we propose the ‘Transitive Model’ so as to illustrate dynamics of the relationship and what variables influence on it. On the one hand, it also reveals and explains what elements are not covered by the current theories relevant to ERP implementation in Turkey context. Needless to say, our presented model (See Fig. 13) is consultant centric and represents the relationship from consultancy aspect during ERP implementations in Turkey.

There are many factors underlying the characteristics of transitive model. We name the model transitive which means ‘relating to or characterized by (Merriam-Webster, 2011). We use this word because there are transitions among these four models along the ERP implementation that compose the transitive model. In different steps of the implementation, the relationship between clients and consultants shows characteristics from the expert, critical, reflective practitioner or interpretive models. Therefore, transitive model has not got a stable nature rather it is slippery. The reason why it is transitive directly linked with the nature of ERP implementation which is not only a technical implementation of a specific software product but also integration of organizational structures with the ERP system. In this manner, we cannot ignore the existence of expert knowledge and product expertise. At the same time, basics of the critical model such as image and rhetoric are practically used. Apart from the technical expertise and knowledge, due to initial knowledge asymmetry and the complex character of problem situations; ERP consultants need to interact with clients, exchange knowledge and create new knowledge together. For example, ERP consultants use their technical expertise when executing pre-installation of the system according to the client organizations’ specifications or running technical test on the system. Here, an intensive interaction with clients is not required so that the relationship is similar to the expert model. On the other side, when ERP consultants gather business and technical requirements, intensive interaction is a must then consultants should be able to develop solutions according to specific client needs or unique business processes. In this case, they reflect on what information they gather from clients and adjust the ERP system toward that direction. Here the relationship turns to a reflective practitioner model. When the situation is unfamiliar and novel like facing with innovative problems, clients also become a part of solution, consultants and clients solve problems together by brainstorming, sharing knowledge and creating new knowledge at the end. By this mean, the transitive model also includes features of the interpretive model. Even though we give some examples about implementation steps, there is
a heterogeneous pattern of which consulting model is explicitly observed when. Table 24 below presents what characteristics the transitive model borrows from existing consulting models.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitive Model (consists of four models’ characteristics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expert Model</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert knowledge exists in some cases especially for issues mainly about the ERP system itself. Consultants have to be knowledgeable but it is not the only competence that they have and not the only factor leads success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since the expert knowledge exists in some phases of the implementation unidirectional knowledge transfer is observable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Model</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric and image are used when there are ambiguity and fuzzy subjects. Especially, they are used in order to make the issues explicit or explain them better to the client. Moreover, that is a way of earning client's trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images, metaphors, and humour are used by consultant in order to express the fuzzy issues better and create understanding for the client.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client is dependent on the consultant's advice or the innovations consultants could contribute. This depends on the client. Some clients have no ERP awareness, and then they are compelled to what consultants contribute. On the other hand, some clients have ERP awareness and they know what they want, they lead the consultant through their requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Reflective Practitioner Model**

Consultants put their knowledge about the system and bring their consultancy experiences to the table from previous projects in different industries. To supplement this, clients provide knowledge about unique strategic processes of the organization and organizational dynamics. Knowledge is not fixed as in the expert model. It is contextualized depending on the problem situation and actors of the problems. Power alterations between parties have important effects on the client – consultant relationship.

Two-way knowledge transfer occurs. Since the relationship is balanced, clients are also a part of the solution process. Consultants reflect upon what clients provide regarding the issues and goals.

**Interpretive Model**

There are interpretive communities consists of client and consultant side. Their interaction occurs through the meetings, discussion and communication tools for discussing or analyzing business processes, problems faced or requirements of clients. During this interaction knowledge is transferred and created. All the parties create their own understanding.

There is a client-consultant team which consists of some communities such as; technical consultants, functional consultants, consultant managers, key users and client managers; and this team become an interpretive community.

Understanding is carried out by knowledge transfer. The client has the knowledge of prior applications and projects, business processes; consultant has the knowledge of system, applications and how to adopt the ERP system to the business processes. Conceptual frameworks could be used during this process.

Boundary objects and brokering are used in order to reflect the parties’ own understanding and create a shared language. Shared language provides effective knowledge transfer between client and consultant.

Knowledge creation is occurred through developing new meanings and frameworks during the interaction for client-consultant team. Depending upon the client’s manner, this process could be harder or easier.

Both clients and consultants are active. They are included to the project processes and they both contribute knowledge.

New knowledge is created through some tools such as; models, metaphors, workshops or diagrams during explaining a problem, or fuzzy issues.

Consultant might act as reflective practitioner, interpreter, storyteller, broker and translator depending upon the client’s manner and the case they encounter.

Clients influence the way of working of the consultant by their requirements. If the requirements cannot be provided by standard solutions, consultants do suitable customization.

There is sometimes balance between the dominance of the client and consultant, if the client’s manner is moderate and they have ERP awareness.
Table 24: Characteristics of Transitive Model

The transitive model delineates that some factors change the state of relationship through the implementation such as types of encountered problems, clients’ dominance and country specific cultural dimensions. The degree of how clients behave dominantly is crucial in shaping the relationship with clients. For that reason, clients’ dominant attitude is taken into consideration as a decisive dimension. This fact is what transitive model distinctively highlights comparing to existing consulting models. So, it is explained in detail below as a sub-section. Additionally, the transitive model touches upon the client – consultant relationship from cultural perspectives and claims that Hofstede’s four cultural dimensions have a considerable influence on both sides’ behavior and consultants’ stance. Beside these four dimensions, packaged nature of the ERP systems – Oracle ERP – and customization issues are analyzed as a cultural dimension, since it individually causes some problems and affects the relationship. As previously stated, cultural dimensions shape fundamentals of the relationship thereby positioned as a basis in the transitive model.

Figure 13: Transitive model of the client consultant relationship in ERP implementation

This section is organized by five interrelated sub-sections to explain different dimensions we have taken in detail. After we mention why this model is transitive and a combination of existing models; the dominant attitude of clients is explained within the ERP context in Turkey. Then we pass to practically employed ERP consultant roles to clarify how consultants act and react. Why consultants embrace those roles is stated by linking it to problem types encountered and then consultants’ contribution on the implementation, their fundamental tasks and expectations from clients are listed. Finally basis of the transitive model as the cultural dimensions that resides behind the interaction determinants are presented.
5.3.1. Client’s Dominance

The Transitive model proposes a mixed model combining four consulting models in order to explain client – consultant relationship in the ERP context. Beside this proposition, what is distinctive for the model is its strong emphasis on client’s relative dominance on consultants and high degree of control over them. In other words, some clients, especially the big companies, have a very decisive and active role in what way consultancy project is run and what role consultants would play. So this model takes the dominant attitude of clients into account and considers it as a dimension. Before the explanation, it is useful to clarify what the dominant attitude means. Basically, clients dominantly:

- Would like to stack all responsibilities on consultants’ shoulder and expect from consultants to complete all tasks.
- Resist reviewing their business processes and organizational structure.
- Demand for system exceeding system customizations for every issue.

As we stated in the previous sections, in the ideal form, a partner relationship and open interaction with clients is preferred by consultants. From the ERP consultants’ point of view, whereas some clients are co-operative and proactively involved in all steps along the implementation, the common attitude is different somehow transforms to a relationship like between a customer and his/her tailor. If we illustrate this example, clients usually stay at the demanding side expecting from consultants to do whatever they are told. Thereby, some clients in Turkey may exercise power on consultants which is derived from money they have paid for the consultancy service. Contrary to the expert, critical or interpretive model, in the transitive model clients initially position themselves “up” on consultants and think that if they paid for them, consultants should adhere to clients’ directives and demands. This is a root cause of the dominant attitude against consultants; the other one is the effects of high power distance culture where the ones who have power dictate their view and then expect compromise. Since they hire consultants it seems therefore normal to clients forcing consultants through their demands.

Customization of the ERP systems is a means which clients exercise their power and show dominance on consultants. Even though ERP systems are pre-determined systems, there is a limited space for modification to be able to compatible with the target organization. However, as it is stated in the literature review, this space is limited and altering fundamental structure expose risks to system integrity. But since clients are reluctant to initiate change across their organizations, they excessively request to change the implementing system according to existing processes. They may behave very stubborn and strict to customize the ERP instead of re-engineering inefficient processes. On the contrary side, ERP consultants are apt to apply standard ERP functionalities on the client organization and inherently expect from clients adjusting their processes in accordance with the system. Thus, this the main point where the war begins customization versus standard functionalities. It is apparently true that there is no a one-fits-all strategy answering this conflict. However, by considering the client – consultant relationship, the transitive model argues that clients may see the ERP customization behind its technical and functional consequences rather use it to make their power actual on clients. In other words, see the proof of their dominance on the implementation project.

Another reason about why clients are apt to put pressure on ERP consultants is lack of ERP awareness which refers limited information and understanding regarding how ERP systems are successfully implemented. As we explained in the previous sections, clients and ERP
consultants must share their knowledge and express their opinions to get the best set of solutions. However, this can be realized whereby a balanced relationship in which parties has no explicit power or dependency on each other. Customer – tailor type relationship, from this point, is not appropriate for a successful ERP implementation since implementing organizations must adapt to the new system by reforming their business processes.

In the situations that power is unequally distributed as leverage to clients, it is difficult to find an optimized ERP configuration and operate proper implementation which provides advantage in long term. So, how are consultants and the consulting relationship affected? In the transitive model, we advocate that the dominant attitude puts an overwhelming pressure on consultant and downgrade their motivation. Consultants suppose that they have to fight back with clients to implement ERP standards and to get users accepted the new system. So, we may see a continuous conflict and tension between two sides rather than a close relationship and consensus in a time. Consequently, if a battle starts between clients and ERP consultants, the degree of interaction decreases, knowledge exchange and new knowledge creation cannot be actualized and the relationship turns to a state in which clients demand something and consultants do it. This result refers ERP consultants in Turkey context are generally the side who compromise clients’ power and accept their control.

Why consultants prefer accepting clients’ power is because clients control the budget, namely the one who pays money. Consultancy firms do not want to cut their revenue resources. Also since the competition in the consultancy market is tough, firms especially the big, reputable ones become a shiny reference for potential clients and further projects. One other reason is that system customizations provide serious revenue addition to license price and standard payments. These three rational reasons route consultants not to push for the ideal implementation, in contrast, to do what clients say even if it is risky for further steps in the implementation. This consequence makes ERP consultancy dysfunction and converts it to a buyer-seller or customer-tailor type relationship. If we look from another perspective, experiencing a relatively high power distance culture in Turkish organizations make consultants instinctively weak against power impose and accepted power by clients.

All in all, the transitive model highlights how clients power could impact on consultants and consulting relationship in the ERP implementation context. Dominant behaviors of clients must be paid attention as a determinant so as to build a sustainable, effective relationship with clients.

5.3.2. Consulting Roles in Transitive Model

In the literature review section, we explained the consulting role grid that includes nine roles which are suitable for distinct consultancy tasks in different steps. Correspondingly, we analyzed these roles in our case and embedded them into the transitive model.

**Hands-on expert role:** In our case, consultants do not often act as hands-on expert role. They do not work alone rather generally interact with the client in order to produce different types of solutions which require information about specific client processes and organization specific boundaries. From this perspective both parties are involved in the planning and decision processes. Moreover, consultants are obliged to inform the client for solution processes. On the other hand, consultants take the hands-on expert role in rare cases when specific knowledge about the Oracle ERP system is required for a solution for instance
installation of the Oracle system and setting its basic rules. If an actual task needs this technical expertise, ERP consultants work alone by neither concerning to inform clients about solutions process nor facilitating client learning.

**The modeler role:** Apart from those rare cases explained, ERP consultants in our case study organization pay attention as modelers to improve client’s capacity and learning; and during the process they let the client question their way of solution. This questioning is needed to develop the best configuration for the system implementation. Two factors are active to trigger this attention on promoting clients’ capacity and learning one of them is that due to client users would take over the system usage and maintenance, consultants must teach clients what features the Oracle ERP system has and how users operate their jobs by using it. Clients are not only observers they are very active participants and natural actors by intervening the way of solutions or change the way of consultants’ working. The other trigger is therefore clients’ undisputed role in structuring the system as well the organization for implementation. Here we can see what ERP consultants act more than as a modeler rather they are more partner with clients.

**The partner role:** According to our interviews ERP consultants think that having a partner role is ideal for both parties in terms of building a good relationship and supplementing one’s knowledge gap. In our case, even though consultants prefer acting in the partner role it is directly depended on clients’ approach to the implementation process and their intention to contribute knowledge as well as take responsibility. It is extracted that some clients are more aware of what ERP implementation requires, and then act as partners in order to contribute their knowledge of business processes and organizational specifications. Client and consultant parties build a project team and they discuss about the problems and alterations. However, some clients do not tend to act as a partner on contrary it is expected from consultants to carry out all tasks themselves. However, this view inhibits open discussion and interaction then positions ERP consultants are only outsider experts for particular tasks.

**The coach and teacher/trainer role:** These two roles are employed as a combination during key user trainings in different phases of the implementation. ERP consultants give trainings to key users regarding Oracle user interfaces and system’s internal processes and then evaluate user activities and their performance. At the end of the process, consultants give feedbacks and accordingly assist to improve his/her actual performance. During partially, consultants act coach role in ERP implementation. During the process, they provide feedbacks, advices and try to make the system better. However in our case, consultants have direct effect rather than indirect effect on the task completion and task results. Therefore, in our opinion, consultant do not perform coach role completely. Apart from user trainings, consultants have a direct effect on task completion and responsibility for each task. For this reason these two roles are taken only for user trainings and evaluation.

**The technical advisor role:** By giving technical and functional support for specific tasks, ERP consultants play the technical advisor role as well. However, these specific tasks are not isolated from the overall implementation performance. For that reason, consultants do care about the overall performance and completion of related tasks. In this point, even though consultants provide technical and functional advisory about Oracle ERP modules, they basically impact client capacity and organizational growth.

**The counselor role:** As we mentioned before consultants deal with specific tasks in the client organization. They rely on the client’s data; however they support this data by observing how
those tasks are carried out and the performance of performing new functions. Therefore, in our case, consultants do not completely play the counselor role.

**The facilitator role:** Since ERP consultants are responsible for implementing the ERP system included the specific tasks, consultants have a direct influence on task completion or performance of activities. They do process-oriented activities; however they facilitate the business processes through implementing determined tools for the client’s processes.

**The reflective observer role:** In a way, consultants play reflective observer role particularly; however they are more included in improving the processes through ERP. They have an active role therefore they cannot be considered as just observers.

Based on our observations, depending upon the client’s mindset, and type of implementation tasks; the role of consultants might vary. Thus, it is hard to say that consultants adopt and act through one type of role. They could sometimes play partner role or technical advisor. In this sense they might play low, moderate or high intervention roles. Besides, they have a significant contribution to project results; and influence on clients’ learning and capacity growth. The hands-on expert role is also applicable for some situations but generally, ERP consultants prefer having in a partner role which is suitable for the complex nature of implementation by being able to realize mutual knowledge sharing and providing solutions together for innovative problems. However, it is also known that reaching a good level of interaction is a difficult and time consuming task. To sum up, the Transitive model advocates that four consulting roles are mainly employed by consultants which are partner, technical advisory, teacher/coach and hands-on expert role. These roles are switched depending on ERP consultants’ approaches to project tasks, clients’ attitude to the new system and types of problems face with for sure. So, by considering the last factor, we continue by examining innovative, complex and simple routine problems within the Transitive model.

### 5.3.3. Problem Types

As it was explained in depth in the literature review section, there are three types of problem that consultants face with in a consultancy service. In the case of ERP implementation, it is interpreted that majority of problems fall under innovative problems due to the fact that each client is unique considering the project scope, organizational boundaries and organizational culture and other environmental determinants. An important point which is frequently underlined by ERP consultants that ERP consultancy is a consultancy service about a particular type of ERP system – Oracle Enterprise Business Suite in this case – and the final goal is clamping the system into organizations. In light of this view they do not have a comprehensive knowledge about business processes and business structure of various industries and organizations. That is why organization-specific parameters make problems innovative for ERP consultants so that they need information regarding how the implementing organization do its business. The crucial resource for this information is client members and how to gather this information is interaction with clients. Firstly, interaction is necessary for gathering problem definitions and clarifying the problem and affected systems together. Interviews show that clients are mostly confused or ill-informed about what their problem is. Consultants therefore start negotiating the problem and retrieve information and data regarding problematic systems and related systems, business processes, previous customizations, patches, system developments, affected user groups and departments. Needless to say an effective interaction requires active participation of two parties so that, if
clients have a previous IT implementation experience or previous ERP implementation, information gathering is performed through a better line. If we take a different lens, innovative problems trigger consultants’ emotions and reflections against uncertain and unknown situations since they operate business in Turkey where high uncertainty avoidance is observed. All with other technical and functional needs, we can advocate that consultants’ intention to switch to a more certain state and to feel more comfortable are background reasons for interaction initiatives.

After the problem is clarified and get a shared understanding, interaction is necessary to create new knowledge then build a tailored solution. As active producers clients also express their ideas and strive for an appropriate solutions. Both party’s active participation namely a partnership is required because of the constant knowledge asymmetry that one knows the ERP system and other knows the organizations well. Clients’ opinion is also required to discuss alternative solutions consultants present then get a confirmation about what solution is the best for client’s business strategy. On the other hand, what is an innovative problem may change depending upon consultants’ previous experience and knowledgebase. From this perspective a junior consultant may mark a problem innovative but it is a simple routine problem for a senior consultant. If we consider all these indicators so far, the partner role is suitable for ERP consultancy as interviewed consultants point out. Complex problems as well need interaction with clients in terms of learning details and determinants of the problem to get a more familiar stage and apply known techniques. But clients’ active participation in producing solutions is not necessary since ERP expertise is mainly the missing one; rather clients knowledge is wanted for understanding the problem and its content.

The partnership that we described here basically points out the interpretive and reflective practitioner consulting models. Therefore, when consultants face with complex routine and innovative problems, they act in a form of these models. Clients and ERP consultants act as equal partners and reflect their specific knowledge upon problem solutions process. Moreover, knowledge transfer is performed mutually such as clients give information about organizational processes, and consultants give feedbacks to clients in order to check whether proposed solutions and processes are compatibility with the desired strategy. Along the interaction process, consultants learn new knowledge and gain a new perspective to apply for similar further problems. On the other side, clients gain a deeper insight about the ERP system and extend its capacity.

The partner role and interaction centric relationship between clients and consultants are suitable, however not enough to bring a comprehensive description for the client – consultant relationship in ERP context since the simple routine type of problems are on the table as well. This type of problems require expertise on functionalities of the implementing ERP module, its technical structure and being able to reconfigure it according to business and technical requirements. Here is the place where consultants take the leading role and apply their expert technical knowledge on existing issues. Clients remain inactive and not involved in solution process. Limited interaction with client is enough or even no interaction occurs since the problem is based on the system itself.

Concluding these two sub-sections, transitive model proposes that all ERP consultants encounter all three types of problems mostly innovative and complex routine types but also simple routine problems for instance in the system installation step. Innovative and complex routine problems can be observed in all steps through implementation especially, requirement analysis and system design. While different types of problems are addressed by ERP
consultants, they adopt different roles that match with them. The partner role is employed and also imposed to clients in order to handle innovative and complex routine problems. Also consultants act as teachers/coaches considering clients’ capacity growth and learning. For simple routine problems namely, tasks require technical expertise consultants take the hands-on expert role. Along the implementation steps ERP consultants deal with these various problems and switch between roles accordingly. After we discuss, consultancy roles and models, the next sections is dedicated to illustrate a more explicit picture about ERP consultants such as their responsibilities, expectations and contributions.

5.3.4. Consultant Profile

In this case study, interviewed ERP consultants define an ERP consultant as a person who has knowledge of ERP systems / applications and systems analysis as well as who is able to build an understanding of client’s organizational/business processes. Consultants, as a bridge, analyze the requirements of the client; design and reshape the ERP system in compliance with the client’s business processes and the ERP system constraints. Consultants also must deal with problems occur along the implementation process and provide information about ERP modules, its technical structure and user interfaces to the clients. By taking part in these main activities, consultants are expected to excel the clients’ current state and business efficiency whereby the ERP system. In addition, providing alternative solutions, detecting clients’ defects, fulfilling their requirements and managing the entire relationship have a big significance. Reference to our findings in this case, the transitive model lists some fundamental tasks of ERP consultants, which are;

- Business process analysis, running the ERP design, configuration and applications.
- Performing enhancement and customization demands of the client.
- Determining supplementary requirements through matching the ERP solution and client’s business processes.
- Understanding the problem and possible solutions, finding the most appropriate one, applying the solution and then explaining it to the client. If their expertise about the ERP systems is not enough itself, they apprehend the problem and find possible solutions together with clients.
- Facilitating the current work flow through right analysis and appropriate solutions.
- Testing the results of their design
- Designing appropriate reports in accord with client’s requirements.
- Getting in touch with the key users and other project participants in each stage of the process.
- Training of key users about the ERP system; user interfaces, work flow, embedded business logic and technical features.
- Documentation of each step.
Consultants sometimes encounter with unexpected cases which clients must be responsible for taking decisions. In these cases, consultants usually step back, address the responsible person and facilitate decisions by limited support rather than actively taking decisions. In fact, this is affirmative role balancing the relationship, since ERP consultants have knowledge about the system itself. If the consultants are in confusion or under pressure regarding the issues which totally belong to clients, consequences of this ill-defined role negotiation might impair this relationship.

Another point is that what consultants expect from client. We also list these expectations that basically represent the expected client characteristics:

- Mastership of subjects and details of business processes. Clients must be able to distinguish strategic and non-strategic business processes as well as determine which of them have shortcomings or blind spots which engender problem in the future.
- Being open-minded and open to critiques and innovations.
- Having strong communication skills; being considerate, responsible and rational.
- Placing reliance on consultants, being cooperative, and without having prejudices or at least being able to change them in a time.
- Internalizing the project as a whole and paying importance to consensus.
- Seeing consultants as team players not people who are hired to take all tasks and responsibilities over or people who are bests to blaming.
- Single-minded, in a word to know what he/she wants
- Having ERP awareness. Namely, having knowledge about what an ERP system is, why they want to implement and what is needed to get benefits from it.
- Not imposing their power to exploit consultants just because they pay for the project.
- Willing to participate to the project, complying with teamwork, expressing the requirements clearly and not to change their own decisions very often.

If parties can discuss their roles and allocate tasks according to these roles, ERP consultancy service is carried out successfully and can make explicit contributions on the implementation. We have listed some main contributions that ERP consultants must provide their clients. It is argued that focusing on these contributions results better consultancy service and sustainable relationship with clients. Those contributions are:

- Putting innovation into practice, providing the best fitted ERP system design for the client organization, clarifying the responsibilities of clients, and increasing productivity of work.
• Enhancing and standardizing the client’s business processes; integration of relevant data and information systems as well providing effective reporting.

• Providing time and resources effectiveness; producing solutions for the current and future problems.

• Enable the clients to acquire a vision in terms of their experiences.

The factors we have listed are more related to the content of ERP system, implementation tasks and actions. This analysis enabled us to see how the ERP consultancy should be, and partially what the clients’ manner should be. Furthermore, there are some factors related to the image of consultancy manner and completes the consultancy picture. These factors are physical appearance, communication skills, presentation, speech and interpersonal skills. These are very significant to express consultants’ ideas and advices correctly then impress the clients. Besides, consultants always need to have self-confidence and they should be well-supported with knowledge of their expertise. They should especially pay attention to the intimacy with the client but protect their distance; otherwise they might be exploited by the clients. Moreover, consultants should be patience, have analytic thinking in order to find convenient solutions, and build good relationship with the clients.

5.3.5. Cultural Base

Cultural dimensions that we have examined construct a basis for the basic ERP consultancy roles and role negotiation; clients’ dominant behaviors and how consultants react against it; basically shape the roots of client – consultant relationship and how both parties interact. In this sense, we have analyzed four dimension of Hofstede in the previous sections such as; individualism, power distance, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. Throughout these analyses, we investigate the influence of Turkish business culture on the client – consultant relationship. The transitive model contends that consultants in our research setting mostly behave in accordance with the collectivist culture. They show sometimes individualistic characteristics, however they believe in being a part of a team and they work concerning the group/team’s well-being. A supporting standpoint is that clients also expect from consultant teams to work within harmony. If consultants behave collectively, they earn client’s trust in this way. Thus, basically it is perceived that consultants must have no conflict of interests with each other in front of clients. What is more, they defend each other’s interest and cover their back when they are in a tight corner. This attitude makes them steady and creditworthy in the client’s mind rather than behaving merely individual and concerning their self-interests.

Collectivist Culture

According to Hofstede (1984), as we explain, Turkish business culture has a disposition to be moderately collectivist. For this reason, clients’ organizational culture might also be collectivist and in parallel, ERP implementation teams and project participants consist of clients and consultant together that make them a hybrid community. ERP consultants in this collectivist circumstances feel as a part of client organization depending on the clients’ attitude. This situation is two-sided which in one hand could be very beneficial in order to improve client-consultant relationship. In this way knowledge transfer and creation might be easier and strong relationship could be built if everyone would act proactively. On the other
hand, the emotional tendency feeling as a part of the client organization could be misused by
the client and erode consultants’ objectivity and ability to look from out of the box.

That is why consultants must keep the professional distance with clients while building a
strong and close relationship. Otherwise, it is argued that clients might take the advantage of
this relationship, and request exceeding and constantly changing demands which is perceived
by consultants as extremely exhaustive. This analysis indicates that collectivist culture has a
significant impact our research context. However, that does not mean that consultants behave
completely in collectivist nature. They have also individualistic attitude. In this sense
transitive model argues that collectivism and individualism should be balanced in a way in
order to achieve good relationship results. Consequently, in the basis of the transitive model,
collectivist culture has significant influences; however we cannot rule out the individualistic
nature either.

**High Power Distance**

The level of power distance in the client organizations has considerable impacts on the client
– consultant relationship. If we look at this relationship, high power distance culture may lead
clients to impose their power on consultants and see them like their subordinates whom they
do not co-operate with. From this perspective, the relationship between clients and ERP
consultants start with an initial imbalance where consultants are positioned down but clients
are up on them. This is basically contrary to the nature of consulting relationship however has
been experienced by ERP consultants in Turkey. Initial positions of parties remain up-side
down, if we compare this situation with the expert model. As we mentioned in the client
dominance section, client organizations which have the high power distance disposition take a
dominant role in the relationship that obstructs open interaction and discussion of issues in a
democratic environment. It is not easy for ERP consultants to insist on implementing ERP
standards and critically think on encountered problems also sharing and creating new
knowledge together. In this point, we can propose in the transitive model that innovative and
complex type of problems might not be solved effectively by providing add-value to client
organizations. By using this cultural power, clients demand excessive customizations on the
ERP system in order to fit the system into existing business processes in other words replicate
their legacy systems in the new system.

The high power distance engenders these stated shortcomings. However, on the other side, we
can state that ERP consultants can use this culture as an advantage on non-manager client
users. If consultants can somehow have good relations with client managers or supervisors,
non-manager users may tend to accept the ERP system and consultants’ guidance easily.
Thus, it might turn to an advantage for consultants in terms of accelerating users’ acceptance,
taking quick decisions. Regardless of who uses it as an advantage, high power distance is an
obstacle for building a strong relationship between clients and consultants and aligning the
ERP systems with the client organizations.

**Masculinity**

If we analyze masculinity in transitive model, we can say that masculinity level of both
clients’ and consultants’ determine some characteristics of the client-consultant relationship.
From the consultancy side, we observed that the consultancy organization shows both
masculine and feminine characteristics. For instance some low masculine characteristics are;
demanding friendly atmosphere and giving much importance to human affairs influence the client-consultant relationship in a good way. Moreover, individual earnings are important but consultants do not tend to have a harsh competition with their colleagues. They do not want any competition negatively effect on the team harmony and good relationships. This also leads focusing on the project and relationship with clients rather than considering their colleagues as rivals. Herein we can see the influence of the moderate feminine culture as it is stated in Hofstede’s study results for Turkey. Accordingly, the low masculine attitudes help to improve the quality of service; however, consultants make so much effort on satisfying the clients. If we put a different light on it, consultants perceive some clients having highly masculine behaviors like conservative and show masculine attitudes.

In this case, especially female consultants change their behaviors and their physical appearance. For instance, if the client’s organization regards religious values, the female consultants need to wear close dresses and they should have an edge with the male clients. Moreover, some clients pay regard to male clients more. In this sense, the female consultants must prove themselves. This manner could prompt them to play the role of masculine character. As we observed form the case study, consultancy organization places importance to equality of woman and man; hence client’s manner is significant for this factor as well. As a result masculine and feminine attitudes alter in the transitive model depending upon the client’s manner or consultancy organization nature if it has strict masculine or feminine nature.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Another dimension of the transitive model is the ERP consultants’ degree of tolerance against uncertain and novel situations. This model analyzes how high level of uncertainty avoidance influence on consultants’ behaviors and relationship with clients. ERP consultants, in our research context, feel uncomfortable under unknown and uncertain situations, therefore, tend to make it more familiar and structure according to the known facts. However, as we have explained through this study, implementation of ERP systems has an uncertain nature and lots of blind spots which cannot be predicted until they actualize. Among a bunch of variables, ERP consultants feel stress, anxiety and fear when they face with unfamiliar problems, unclear problem definitions.

Even though these negative feelings are experienced, the transitive model argues that high degree of uncertainty avoidance has positive contributions on consultancy service and relationship with clients. Since emotions are crucial source for motivation, they are useful triggers make ERP consultants more focused on their work as long as they control these feelings. For example, facing with an innovative problem increases consultants’ intellectual curiosity and encourages them to search for new functionalities or modify their regularly used techniques for handling issues. Also the degree of interaction with clients usually rises up so as to make the issue more certain, get information and opinion from clients about the problem and solutions alternatives. Thus, we can point out that uncertainty avoidance can contribute building a balanced and interactive relationship between two sides. In this point it is important to underline that we may come up with these arguments only if ERP consultants are able to mobilize their emotions for the benefit of the consultancy service. Otherwise, the fear of uncertainty may exacerbate the situation then undermine the implementation process.
5.4. Summary of the Analysis

In this research, we have analyzed the client-consultant relationship from consultancy aspect explained the state, manner and characteristics of the ERP consultancy while they are interacting with clients. To make our analysis easier to understand, we summarize the analysis section in this heading.

Based on our interpretation we can state that consultants switch her/his manner depending upon the client’s approach. They might have a relationship as doctor-patient or partners. Consultants could use their expert knowledge and analytical competences; rhetoric, image, storytelling and interpersonal skills to sustain the relationship. On the other side, clients put their specific knowledge about their business processes and organization to keep the balance in the relationship. As long as ERP consultants and clients earn trust of each other, partnership occurs within their relationship. Most of the consultants prefer the partner role in their relationship. However, it is an ideal situation and most of times remains only the desired. For this reason clients’ contribution is vital for the well-being of the project. In reality, clients might behave differently, and these behaviors could be a problem for the client-consultant relationship. In this sense, consultants state that most of the clients have; unawareness of the project scope, resistance to change, abnegation of responsibilities, and the approach of consultants must do what client demands due to the fact that clients pay for the project. Some clients have lack of motivation and prejudices against consultants. Moreover, few of the clients have reluctance to give proper information. These factors impact the efficiency and motivation of the consultants, in addition the relationship. Both clients and consultants therefore should find a way to make their relationship stronger and find a compromise for the issues they encounter.

Most of the consultants we interacted think that there are some factors which really make positive contributions to the client-consultant relationship such as; mutual trust, client’s knowledge of ERP system, the use of common language, degree of control in the project (dominance of consultant), objectivity / openness, creativity, exploration of new ideas, curiosity about expertise, feedbacks by colleagues about client, long term social interaction, and discussing the problems comfortably. There are some factors half of the consultants think that they have positive contribution, but the other half do not agree. These factors are; social activities with the client, horizontal hierarchical structure of client organization and public reputation of client firm. Moreover, most of the consultants agree that time pressure has no positive influence on the client-consultant relationship.

All the points we mentioned in this section are very significant factors in order to understand and improve ERP consultancy within the client-consultant relationship in Turkish business environment. This analysis and findings could be a guide for the ERP consultants in terms of their relationships with the clients. Needless to say, these analysis and findings cover only one case study; however we believe that it is an initial step to understand the ERP consultancy characteristics in Turkish business culture; accordingly the strengths and weaknesses of the ERP consultancy. Additional researches are required in order to make the details of this relationship more specific and understand this relationship from different ways. In our research we mostly focused on the ERP consultancy aspect. Therefore, elaborated studies are necessary to make contribution to this field.
6. Discussion and Results

The origin of this study is the fact that relationship always matters. The relationship between clients and consultants are considered as a critical success factor for ERP implementations. It is one of the key points that changes the direction of the projects and enables all parties to benefit from the implementation results. From this point of view, three research questions are built to investigate this scheme and it is intended to make a modest contribution to improve the current literature. Three research questions are aimed to fulfill which are:

- What are the main characteristics of the client – consultant relationship in ERP implementation in Turkey?
- To what extent are the existing consulting models compatible with the ERP consultancy?
- How can culture affect the client-consultant relationship through ERP implementation?

These questions are investigated from main perspectives and their sub-views. We first look from compatibility of the current theories which model the consultancy service and the relationship between clients and consultants. These models are the expert model, critical model, reflective practitioner model and interpretive model presented by Nikolova, Reihlen and Schlapfner (2009) and Devinney and Nikolova (2004). Then we try to find out determinants which have effects on the relationship and figure out how these determinants are interrelated. For this aim, problem types faced along the implementation like simple routine, complex routine and innovative, general consultancy roles and what roles ERP consultants employ are explained. In this sense, it is advocated that problem types which faced during the implementation undoubtedly have a role determining what roles ERP consultants adopt and switch among them during the implementation. Additionally, types of problems are a set of drivers that resides behind the consulting relationship models. In other words, consultancy roles, problem types and consulting models are interrelated dimensions influence on the state of the relationship.

We drew our boundaries to narrow our focal area down and be able to get a better insight regarding the dynamics of the relationship. Accordingly, we have conducted a single case study in an ERP consultancy firm in Turkey. Moreover, we focus on the consultancy point of view so that collected our data from ERP consultants who have different level of experiences. This research setting is an important factor to examine cultural dimensions that we adopted for this research.

Hofstede’s four cultural dimensions which present general cultural profiles of countries are employed as a perspective to explain how ERP consultants behave and build their relationship with clients and why they act or react in that way. In that sense, we have analyzed uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, individualism, and power distance dimensions. Profiles of ERP consultants are examined whether these dimensions are practically internalized and we have presented how and to what degree they influence on the relationship. Consequently, our findings has pointed out that these dimensions have explicit and implicit effects on side’s behaviors, pre-judgments and positions throughout the interactions. As an example, the characteristic of high power distance is a threat against improving the dialog and interaction between clients and consultants. Since, high power distance cultures and organizations draw clear cut boundaries between who has the power and who does not have; the interaction between client managers and ERP consultants as well as non-manager users and consultants is
decreased. ERP consultants may basically feel uncomfortable when they disagree with client managers because to disagree with them is more difficult than non-managers or making mistakes is harder to compensate. Uncertainty avoidance on the other side has effects on fostering consultants to get frequently in contact with clients and ask them for opinions. These two examples show that different dimensions may have opposite effects on the relationship. Moreover, collectivist characteristics may increase the harmony within the implementation project team includes project holders from both side. However, consultants may feel closer to the client organization than their own firms. This attitude may mislead consultants’ objective perspective and inhibit thinking critically. Lastly, consultants carry both feminine and masculine characteristics and reflect these profiles in different cases. Feminine culture reveals itself as satisfying the client from many aspects such as: with appearance, image, rhetoric, good service, expert knowledge and having good relationship. Being modest is always required in order to have good relationship with the client and achieve company’s goals for the project. Masculinity shows itself as unequal distribution of male and female roles in the consultancy service. In other words, some client organizations have a tendency to underestimate female consultants. For this reason, female consultants sometimes prefer taking masculine attitudes to take control of the clients.

On the other side, if we take a critical view on this present study, it is useful to give a place some critiques on Hofstede’s research. Basically, it is criticized as ethnocentric, out-dated and politically influenced study (Jones and Elony, 2007, p.413). First of all, the time that research was conducted coincides with cold war, the communist insurgence and right after the World War II. Dimensions uncertainty avoidance and masculinity might be directly affected by these factors (Sondergaard, 1994 and Newman, 1996 cited in Jones and Elony, 2007, p.413). Also that is why it is seen as out-dated and representing perspectives from past. Another factor that Hofstede is criticized is cultural homogeneity. These cultural dimensions simply assume that countries are homogeneous communities that can be marked by one type. But it is stated that (McSweeney 2002; Myers & Tan, 2002; Nasif et al., 1991; Redpath, 1997 cited in Jones and Elony, 2007, p.413) countries consist of various communities with different cultural characteristics and values. Hofstede’s research has also been criticized by lack of instrumental utility. It is advocated that (McSweeney, 2002; Schwartz, 1999 cited in Jones and Elony, 2007, p.414) survey method is not sufficient to extract cultural characteristics and disparity of countries.

In light of these critiques if we take cultural homogeneity issues into account we can say that cultural dimensions of the transitive model may not be enough to comprehensively represent all consultants’ views and behaviours. There might be some gaps which fall into none of those four dimensions and some cases might occur in which the same consultants act in different ways. These differences might be derived from clients’ or the consultancy firm’s organizational culture and relevant context. By considering time passed after Hofstede’s research countries might be changed in a degree and currently measured differently. This may bring risks against the transitive model in terms of trying to reflect out-dated issues on a present phenomenon. However, Hofstede’s cultural dimensions are not taken for granted and applied to the ERP consultancy field without any interpretation. During the interviews we try to interpreted which cultural dimensions are experienced to the extent as measured by Hofstede and how it is connected with the consultancy practice.

Besides Hofstede’s dimensions, the packaged nature of ERP systems is taken into account as a cultural dimension since pushing standard ERP functionalities to client organizations and limited allowance for customization is a characteristic feature of the ERP systems. The
constant conflict between customization versus using standard system functionalities affects the relationship with clients.

After we all consider cultural dimensions, consultant roles, consulting models and their basics, this study sees a different situation with regard to positions of clients and consultants. If we look from the consultancy aspect, clients have a strong dominance on both consultants and the direction of the project. Some clients hold financial resources as an advantage, also by having a high power distance culture they strictly try to control consultants even if it is contradictory to why they hire ERP consultants. This aggressive attitude firstly stimulates consultants to fight back and take a defensive position as well. Then it mostly ends with compromising to clients’ demands. However, this aggressive attitude erodes the relationship and downgrade consultants’ motivation in completing project tasks. Clients’ control and dominance over consultants and the project is mainly exercised on customization demands and passing all responsibilities on consultants’ side. That is apparently negative for the well-being of the relationship.

Finally, we have found out by this research that none of consulting models represents the client-consultant relationship within the ERP consultancy concept on its own. And we realized that the characteristics from each model might change during the relationship, depending upon the client’s manner and project scope. Therefore we formed a new model called ‘Transitive model’ that presents the characteristics of four models in transition in one model within the cultural factors. In a manner of speaking, ERP consultancy in Turkish business culture has not constant characteristic and strict boundaries. Thus, transitive model was built in order to present it properly. However, we know that this model needs to be examined with the future researches from many aspects and improved in order to accept it as a generic model.

The results provide contribution to the academic literature in terms of client-consultant relationship in ERP area. Besides, we believe that consultants and managers could gain a different point of view about the client-consultant relationship. Through these results they could evaluate their behaviours and shortcomings; by this way they could take actions in order to improve this relationship. On the other side, these results could be a guide for the clients in order to understand the consultants and their manner in this relationship.

Yet, this is a single case study. Therefore these results might not cover all the cases in ERP implementation processes. The results could be good reflection of the consultants’ state in the relationship, however it is hard to say that these results are valid for every consultant and consultancy firms. Every consultancy firm has different organizational culture, strategy and the way of taking actions. These factors could impact the consultants’ behavior in the relationship. For the validation of the findings, there must be multiple case studies with the different angles.

6.1. Future Research

The future research suggestions presented in this paragraph tries to give recommendations to cover limitations of this study and expand what we know about client – consultant relationship in ERP context. In order to have a more comprehensive insight a multiple case study would be an advantage in terms of accessing ERP consultants who have experience in diverse industries and client organizations. Concerning with a large sample, researchers might
investigate how other ERP systems such as SAP, Infor etc. influence on consultants’ work style and their relationship with clients. Also some ERP vendors would be chosen which focus on mid-size ERP systems to analyze any possible differences between big firms and smaller ones. This research takes big organizations implementing ERP into consideration and ERP consultants’ interaction with big company’s employees. In this point, mid-size or small firms might have different attitudes against ERP consultants. At the same time, consultants might employ different techniques to communicate with them.

If we consider country cultural dimensions, putting international clients into account might show how ERP consultants build and sustain their relationship with clients who are members of a different culture. In order to narrow the cultural dimensions down, further studies should take clients’ organizational cultures into their focus and examine how consultants could adapt to different organizational cultures while running multi projects. The location of the case study might be changed to other countries to gather how this relationship is managed in different cultural contexts.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, this study takes off from the view that client-consultant relationship is a critical factor needs to be examined by its relevant aspects and modeled corresponding to ERP implementation field. What it has been investigated here is the degree of compatibility of the current consulting models with ERP implementation and how related cultural factors have effects on the relationship. Many previous studies pointed out consultants’ importance in terms of knowledge transfer, ERP system selection, implementation and system adaptation and so forth. The basic problem is actually simple that lack of understanding, communication and cooperation between clients and consultants cause serious roadblocks against the well-being of projects. Current consulting models claims that they cover relationship issues in a degree that also construct a basis for this study. However, there is a scarce of studies focused on the client – consultant relationship through ERP implementation. So specific problems are still relatively uncovered. That is therefore the main motivation behind our research and it is aimed to understand consultancy relationship determinants and take a step to answer the unfulfilled questions.

A single case study with an ERP consultancy firm located in Istanbul/Turkey is conducted for this aim and beside current consulting models, cultural dimension discussed in detail before is employed to interpret the phenomenon from different aspects. A comprehensive literature review regarding existing models, roles and cultural dimensions is followed by semi-structured interviews and an interpretive questionnaire. Then it is resulted with a proposed model deals with the dynamics of the client – consultant relationship and models ERP consultancy from consultants’ perspectives. This study so that makes some contributions in terms of giving insights regarding how consultants think about their clients and how they approach to issues along implementation both technical and non-technical ones.
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**Appendix A- Informed Consent Form for Master Thesis**

**Study Title or Topic:** Client-Consultancy Relationship in ERP Implementation from Consultancy Aspect: A Case Study in Turkey

**Researchers:** Aylin Kasapoglu, Master Program in Information Systems, Linnaeus University
Deniz Kizilca, Master Program in Information Systems, Linnaeus University

**Purpose of the Research:** Understanding the client-consultant relationship from ERP consultancy aspect during ERP implementation in Turkish business culture.

**What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:** We will interview with the consultants in order to receive information about the client-consultant relationship, how it is performed, what kind of situations you encounter, the techniques you use, the way of your manner and the clients’ manner. Furthermore a questionnaire will be conducted in order to ask questions about your tasks and your expectations about processes.

**Risks and Discomforts:** We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research. For instance; giving your personal information to third parties and sharing the company’s private information with third parties without permission.

**Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:** As researchers, we will have a deep understanding of client-consultant relationship from the ERP consultancy aspect. You as a consultant could see the ERP consultancy concept and relationship with the client from another point of view. You could learn some tips about strengthen this relationship. This research might be an opportunity to see the consultant’s strengths and weaknesses.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question or choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with the researchers or Linnaeus University either now, or in the future.

**Withdrawal from the Study:** You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers or Linnaeus University. Should you decide to withdraw from the study; all data generated as a consequence of your participation will be destroyed.

**Confidentiality:** All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and, unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only the researchers will have access to this information.
Questions about the Research: If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Aylin Kasapoglu, MIS Student, by telephone (0090) 5554991917, or by e-mail (akaca09@student.lnu.se), or Deniz Kizilca, MIS Students, by telephone (0090) 53270033523, or by e-mail (dkif09@student.lnu.se).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I consent to participate in ‘Client-Consultancy Relationship in ERP Implementation from Consultancy Aspect: A Case Study in Turkey’ conducted by Aylin Kasapoglu and Deniz Kizilca. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

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Source: York University, 2011. Sample Informed Consent Form. [Online], Available at: http://www.yorku.ca/research/documents/HPRCInformedConsentFormTemplate.doc