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# Conditional Accountability within Youth Mental Healthcare in the Netherlands

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ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN

MASTER'S THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

Professionals have increasingly been ‘called to account’; professionals have increasingly had to demonstrate, explain and justify their work to the wider public. Several studies have indicated that the way and extent professionals are being called to account, in the form of standard procedures and protocols, norms, pre-determined targets, record keeping, ranking systems etc. are harming professionals, their clients and society in general. Researchers have voiced the need for ‘intelligent’ forms of accountability. Such forms of accountability are able to communicate professional conduct to the wider public but do not damage it. In this light, Vriens, Vosselman and Gross (2016) propose a potentially new form of intelligent accountability, that is, accounting for conditions. This intelligent form accounts for the conditions required for professional conduct. The goal is to create an instrument that can assess the conditions for professional conduct. A theoretical framework that ties characteristics of professional conduct to conditions for professional conduct, is used as the basis of this desired instrument. This research has taken this theoretical framework and evaluated the completeness, suitability and usefulness as a first step to create such an instrument by applying the framework within the youth mental healthcare in the Netherlands. The characteristics of and conditions for professional conduct from the framework have been evaluated by means of a document analysis and interviews with professionals in the field. An evaluation of using the current framework and how it could be improved in order to come to an instrument that can account for conditions for professional conduct have been presented in the conclusion and discussion.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Concerns Regarding Current Forms of Accountability and a New Form of Accountability

Professionals are increasingly being called to account for their actions (O'Neill, 2002, Vriens, Vosselman & Gross, 2016). Professionals, such as lawyers, accountants, nurses, psychologists and doctors are more frequently being asked to demonstrate and justify the quality of their conduct to the public. Calling professionals to account is meant to decrease misconduct (Vriens et al., 2016). Many researchers, however, are noticing problems in the way current professionals are increasingly being called to account (Bovens, 2007; Roberts, 1991, 2009; O'Neill, 2002, 2013). Mainly a common form of accountability, referred to as calculative accountability causes alarming concerns (Vriens et al. 2016). Calculative accountability focusses on results, standard procedures, protocols and norms. It requires precise compliance to procedures and protocols, thorough record keeping and provision of information in specified formats. Success is measured in reaching pre-determined targets and ranking systems. Work and performance is regulated and prescribed in detailed instructions (O'Neill, 2002). Despite accountability being necessary, the calculative measures mentioned earlier are not without their limitations.

The most important problem seems that such calculative accountability measures do not fully capture professional work (Vriens et al., 2016). These calculative accountability measures are easy, cheap and simple to make visible to the public. However, they provide a decontextualized account. This 'de-contextualization' is one common problem but calculative accountability is also said to create alienation, decreased professional responsibility, instrumental behaviour, perverse incentives and a lack of empathy (Vriens et al., 2016). Such calculative measures often create large volumes of administrative work and clashes with the 'soul' of professionalism (Freidson, 2001). Calculative accountability measures are therefore disturbing the aim of professional practice and damage professional pride and integrity (O'Neill, 2002).

When calculative accountability renders professionals to be inefficient at their job, the effect is felt wide spread. Professionals namely play a critical role in our society. "Professionals and professional service firms are key advisors, analysts, defenders and developers of major institutions such as markets, organizational forms and business practices, that underpin our economies." (Muzio, Brock and Suddaby, 2013, p. 2). Professionals are widely seen as experts who possess authority and who fulfil important societal values. Clients are seeking out

professionals to benefit from their specific skill set and expert knowledge. If professionals are no longer trusted, not only will the clients be highly likely cease to seek professional help but also the societal value is jeopardised (Koehn, 1995). The issue of public professional accountability therefore concerns the professionals, their clients and society in general. The question that arises is: How can trust be ensured to trustworthy professionals and how can this trustworthiness be conveyed to the wider public?

As part of their research article, Vriens, Gross and Vosselman (2016) propose, in conjunction with existing forms of accountability, the adoption of a new form of 'intelligent' accountability, namely: conditional accountability. This form of accountability focusses on the conditions for professional conduct. Specifically, conditional accountability assesses the goals and infrastructure influencing the work of professionals. It can be noted that conditions for professional conduct lay within behaviours that encourage enhancement without being constraining. When professionals declare and convey that their working conditions are adequate to conduct their profession successfully, clients, colleagues and society can reliably place trust in these professionals. The opposite is true as well, when professionals declare that their working conditions are insufficient, that they are not able to do their job well, clients, colleagues and society can refuse to place our trust. This information can then be used to improve the conditions that are hindering their work.

### **1.2 Problems of Accountability within Youth Mental Healthcare in the Netherlands**

Calculative accountability and its negative repercussions appear to be existent in the field of youth mental healthcare (YMH) in the Netherlands. In 2015, the Dutch government passed the responsibility of YMH to the municipality. The aim was to create a healthcare system that was more effective, affordable, and efficient by bringing healthcare closer to the people who use it. This new way of organizing YMH, however, has proven to be challenging. Since then, many municipalities have lost time to unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy (RTVOost, 2017). Aside this decentralization, another obstacle is the financial cut in budget, making YMH problematic to organize appropriately (van Kempen, 2017). Concerns are raised about the financial pressure that is laid on the municipality (Jeugdzorg Nederland, 2016).

Providers of YMH are the victim of the deficient ways of YMH being organized. The number of tasks for professionals have increased, in addition to becoming more time consuming and demanding. There are reports of late payments caused by continuing administrative burden. Providers have contracts with dozens of municipalities, often with different invoicing requirements, payment terms and treatment codes. Municipalities are strict according to the

providers; invoices are rejected by the slightest mistakes, resulting in time-consuming consultation. (Vriesema, 2017) Moreover, professionals are constantly facing the pressures of financial cuts, high administrative costs and regulatory burden, resulting in less time for mental healthcare. Ironically, it is the combination of time and attention to healthcare that clients require to start their recovery (van Essen, 2017).

Situations like the ones previously outlined are examples of how calculative accountability measures appear to be present in the field of YMH in the Netherlands, harming the work of professionals and jeopardise the corresponding societal value these professionals are expected to fulfil. It is desirable to analyse the current situation of YMH in the Netherlands and devise ways to improve accountability measures to more ‘intelligent’ forms of accountability (O’Neill, 2002). A possible method to improve the situation is a conditional approach to public professional accountability. This approach appears to be a suitable and potentially effective solution as conditional accountability looks at the conditional goals and infrastructural context. It considers the conditions that are set for professionals to carry out their work (Vriens et al., 2016). It can help by identifying the organisational problems the municipality and professionals currently face regarding public professional accountability in YMH.

In order to realise conditional accountability as an intelligent form of accountability Vriens et al. (2016) have set a goal to devise an instrument that can correctly and specifically assess, judge and disclose information about the conditions for professional conduct. This instrument is to become a device that can be used as an intelligent accountability measure for professionals. Starting point is a theoretical framework developed by Vriens et al. (2016) which combines ‘conditions for professional work’ with ‘characteristics of professional work’. This theoretical framework needs to be empirically evaluated and refined in order to come to a well-developed and operational instrument.

### 1.3 Research Goal and Question

The goal of this research is to contribute to devising this instrument that can assess, judge and disclose the conditions for professional conduct as an intelligent form of accountability, namely conditional accountability, by evaluating the completeness, usefulness and suitability of the current theoretical framework, which is the basis of the instrument.

To following *research question* is asked:

Is the theoretical framework complete, useful and suitable as the basis for an instrument to assess for conditional accountability?

To evaluate the completeness, usefulness and suitability of the current theoretical framework, it needs to be applied to an appropriate case. The chosen case in this research is the field of youth mental healthcare in the Netherlands since calculative accountability problems seem to be present in this field and hinder professionals in their work. The completeness is assessed by taking an open and inductive approach. By using an open and inductive approach new concepts can be found that are not in the current framework. The suitability of the framework refers to if the framework is relevant for professionals in the field. This is evaluated by examining if the concepts and relations between concepts from the framework are relevant for the professionals working for YMH in the Netherlands. This evaluation requires a deductive approach since it evaluates the existing concepts in the model. The usefulness refers to the practicality of using the framework and assessing if this framework can be used as a form of accountability. An evaluating will be given on using the framework together with some possible improvements that can help developing this framework into an instrument to assess conditional accountability. Applying the theoretical framework is done by means of a document analysis and interviewing professionals in the field.

The results of this research can then be used for further improvement and more specific development of the instrument. A quantitative research carried out by master student E. Sluijter will follow up this research. She will use the results of this research to develop a questionnaire to assess conditional accountability for professionals within YMH in the Netherlands.

This research paper is structured as follows: chapter two of this research will explain the theoretical foundation, what is currently known and the state of the instrument. Chapter three will explain the methodology used in this research. Chapter four contains the results of the document analysis and chapter five the results of the interviews. These results are compared and integrated in chapter six. Chapter seven is the discussion and conclusion.



## **2. Theoretical Background**

This chapter presents the theoretical background that this research builds upon. It starts with providing a short description of what accountability entails (2.1). Then, the downsides and issues of existing forms of accountability are outlined (2.2). This leads to the desire of more ‘intelligent’ forms of accountability (2.3). This is where the main focus of this thesis lies, a possible new form of intelligent accountability, namely conditional accountability will be explained (2.4). This chapter ends with the current state of conditional accountability and what this research tries to contribute into making it an operational form of intelligent accountability (2.5).

### **2.1 Accountability**

Accountability has its origins closely related to what we now understand as accounting or bookkeeping. It meant to make ‘a count’ of the properties that someone possessed and to reliably keep track. Nowadays ‘accountability’ and ‘accountable’ does not refer to bookkeeping or financial administration alone. It has moved from financial bookkeeping to more social fields and emerged into more discursive definitions (Castiglione, 2012). In current political and scientific discourse, accountability is often used as a conceptual umbrella that covers a number of concepts, such as transparency, equity, responsiveness, responsibility and integrity. It comes close to ‘responsiveness’ and ‘a sense of responsibility; a willingness to act in a transparent, fair and equitable way (Bovens, 2007). Such broad concepts of accountability are important for our understanding but make it difficult to fully comprehend. Therefore, a narrow definition provided by Bovens (2007) is useful. This definition describes accountability as follows: “a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face consequences” (Bovens, 2007, pp. 448-450). This definition is used when accountability is mentioned in this research. It is a relationship where the actor shows, explains and justifies his or her work to the (wider) public.

### **2.2 Different Forms of Accountability and their Deficits**

Different forms of accountability exist. The first form is called calculative accountability by Vriens et al. (2016). This common form of accountability is mainly problematic (Power, 2000; Messner, 2009; Joannides, 2012; Kamuf, 2007). Calculative accountability entails work that follows procedures and rules or working to achieve pre-determined targets or standards (O’Neill,

2014). Although this form of accountability is usually easy, cheap and easily disclosed to a wider public, it is also said to ‘decontextualize’ work. This means that professionals are forced to make decisions that are detached from context specific situations. These decisions are in most cases not sufficient, as most professional’s actions require context-specific interpretations. Besides ‘decontextualization’, calculative accountability can also incentivize instrumental behaviour. This happens when a professional gets preoccupied by achieving that certain target, ignoring the importance of a specific situation. This may cause substandard professional performance as one is following predefined rules and or targets which deviate from the context specific judgement that is needed from professionals. Other problems that are related to this are alienation, decreased professional responsibility and a lack of empathy. These are all caused by the lack of connection to the profession one was originally passionate about (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 2; Koehn, 1995, p. 991). An example of a calculative accountability measure could be the use of a mortality rate for hospitals. The norm might be that hospitals are not allowed to have a mortality rate higher than a certain percentage. What can happen is, in order to keep this percentage low, hospitals might refuse seriously ill people. This is of course not desirable for our society (Vriens, et al. 2016).

A second form of accountability is called narrative accountability. With this form, there are no pre-defined targets or rules but an account is given by explaining and informing about one’s actions to others. It is similar to telling a story instead of showing figures and/or numbers. An example of the narrative form is of a doctor explaining the diagnosis to his or her patient. Although this form of accountability is adequate for creating trust between the actor and the accountholder, it struggles with conveying its account to a wider public. Additionally, it is difficult for outsiders to truly understand the complicated information that is told by the professional. It thus makes it impossible to rightly assess the information being told. The narrative form may therefore be less ‘distorted’ than the calculative approach but also not sufficient as a public form of accountability (Vriens et al., 2016, pp. 1-2).

### **2.3 Intelligent Forms of Accountability**

With the current forms of accountability it seems we are caught within a dilemma. “On the one hand, we need some form of public accountability to make sure that trust in professionals is warranted. On the other hand, the current forms of accountability may either harm professional conduct and/or may not be able to provide the information to satisfy a public.” (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 2). Messner (2009) raises the question whether the increase of accountability is always desirable from an ethical point of view: “Specifically, the extant financial and management

accounting practices embody a rather restricted form of accountability that falls short of our mutual responsibilities as more than economic subjects.” (Messner, 2009, p. 918). Moreover, Tsoukas (1997) warns that providing more information may not always be better as more information can lead to less understanding and can undermined trust. O’Neill (2014) indicates the need for new forms of intelligent accountability by which the forum can reliably place, or refuse to place trust in professionals.

## **2.4 Conditional Accountability**

A new possible form of accountability is the conditional approach. As the context and conditions are very relevant to the profession that is carried out, this form of accountability looks at the contextual conditions for professional accountability. Because this is a new form of looking at accountability there is not much research done on this topic. Vriens et al. (2016) set out the basis for looking at the conditions for professional accountability. They base their idea on authors on professionalism and authors on organizational theory which resulted in identifying two general influencing conditions: goals and infrastructural arrangements. These conditions are in turn, also affected by the profession, the organization a professional may work for and also its broader societal environment. Conditional accountability ties the conditions for professional work to an ideal-type definition of professionalism (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 5).

### **2.4.1 Ideal-type Definition of Professionalism**

Vriens et al.’s (2016) ideal-type definition of professionalism consists of three characteristics: (1) the application and further development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences (2) ‘intensive technology’ and (3) the dedication to a particular societal value (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 3). This ideal-type definition does not cover ‘everything’ of what professionalism entails. Instead it is chosen to support and help to think about the dilemma of public professional accountability (Vriens et al. 2016). Nevertheless, the three characteristics are based upon and mentioned by other authors who define professionalism (Freidson, 2001; Koehn, 1994, 1995; Banks, 2004; Suddaby, Gendron and Lam, 2009; Spence and Carter, 2014). Also, this ideal-type definition helps explain the logic of accounting for conditions and what the requirements are of accountability for professionals.

The first characteristic quite simply means that professionals need to attain specific knowledge, skills and experiences, usually through many years of study and practice (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 3). The foundation of knowledge and skills is theoretically and scientifically based and is carefully developed and defined (Koehn, 1995). Besides the specific knowledge, skills

and experiences, professionalism requires ‘improvisation’ or ‘intuition’. This is explained in the second characteristic.

This second characteristic is called ‘intensive technology’, it is derived from the idea of Thompson (1967). It means that professionals often need to use trial-and-error to diagnose and treat unstructured problems. Diagnosis of unstructured problems and getting feedback from different clients or patients requires adjusted treatments depending on the specific context. A professional should be able to translate his or her knowledge and skills to the particular patient to solve a particular problem. This need for discreet knowledge and skills makes professional work difficult or impossible to standardize or rationalize (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 3). Christensen, Grossman and Hwang (2009) describe a business model which suits the process of ‘intensive technology’. They refer to this business model as ‘Solution Shops’. These shops are structured to diagnose and solve unstructured problems. The value is delivered by the professionals: “experts who draw upon their intuition and analytical and problem-solving skills to diagnose the cause of complicated problems.” (Christensen et al., 2009, p. 24). Solutions are usually sought by an iterative process; through cycles of hypothesis testing in order to attempt to diagnose and solve the problem.

The third characteristic of the ideal-type definition of professionalism is the dedication to a particular societal value. This value can be health, education, safety, justice, etc. It is important to know that this dedication is meant for this value alone and thus not for another value, like for example economic gain or something else. “This value therefore is comparable with an ethical value; it is valued for its own sake, not just any value.” (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 4). Koehn (1995) considers this value to be the most important characteristic. As without this dedication, there would be no trust in professionals. No trust means that clients will not seek professionals for help (Koehn, 1995, p. 991). This reasoning shows that professionals gain their legitimacy by contributing to a societal value.

#### **2.4.2 Goals that Condition Professional Work**

Goals influence the work of professionals. Goals determine what is important and influence the work that is carried out by professionals. This seems very simple, but setting goals can be deceiving. Setting the wrong goal can result in working for the wrong value. Instead of working for a societal value, goals can be set on maximizing profit (market goals) or maximizing predictability and reliability (bureaucratic goals). As Muzio et al. (2013) point out: “Professional identities are increasingly framed around logics of efficiency and commerce which have displaced traditional logics of ethics and public service” (Muzio et al., 2013, p. 700).

Different authors on professionalism stress the importance of attaining the right goals. Freidson (2001) stresses that goals related to profit maximization and bureaucracy should not be the main focus of professionalism as they do not coincide with the logic of professionalism. Focusing on profit maximization may lead to a decrease in attention to quality, and may lead to pursuing expertise for the wrong reasons, namely economic gain, instead of the profession itself and the related societal value. Likewise, focusing on bureaucracy, predictability and reliability can come at the cost of the context-specific knowledge that is needed. The only real, and right goal is the realization of the societal value (Vriens et al., 2016; Freidson, 2001; Koehn, 1995). Now it must not be misunderstood that market or bureaucratic goals are wrong per se, they can be valuable goals, however they should not be the main thrive for professionals. “The more they enter the profession, the more they lead to problems in pursuing professional goals.” (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 5).

In summary, market and bureaucratic goals may hinder the fulfilment of professional conduct for three important reasons, aligning with the three characteristics of professionalism. (1) They can harm the application and development of professional knowledge and skills as profit incentives may distract professionals from attaining this goal. (2) They can hinder professionals’ ‘intensive technology’ they focus on standardization and norms instead of discretion and flexibility. And (3) market and bureaucratic goals may make it more difficult for professionals to realize the fulfilment of its societal value. All in all, market and bureaucratic goals are deemed constraining professionals in practicing professional work (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 6).

### **2.4.3 Infrastructural Arrangements that Condition Professional Work**

The second set of conditions for professional work are the infrastructural arrangements. This set of conditions consists of three aspects that can directly influences professional work. The first aspect is the way in which work is structured, the second are the practices and policies to select, appraise, monitor, rewards and develop professional work, called ‘performance management systems’ and the third is the technology that the professionals use and are surrounded by to do their work (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 6).

#### **Structure**

The first aspect of the infrastructural arrangements is the way in which professional work is structured. This means, the way a process is broken down into sub-processes and how these are then coordinated with each other. Within organizational theory, structure is usually divided into

three characteristics. (1) The degree in which work is formalized: to what degree work is determined by formalized rules and procedures. (2) The degree in which work is specialized: to what extent work is broken down into smaller sub-tasks. And (3) the degree in which work is centralized: the amount of people who possess the authority to make decisions within the organization. Professional work as ‘intensive technology’ needs an organic structure to properly operate, in contrast to a mechanic structure. Mechanic structures are characterized by high degrees of standardization, specialization and centralization. Organic structures have low degrees of formalization, specialization and centralization. This means that professional work is aided by a structure where there is a low amount of fixed procedures and rules, a low division into smaller sub-tasks and where authority rests with the professionals instead of with only one or a few people within the organization (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 7).

### **Performance Management Systems**

The second aspect of the infrastructural arrangements that influence professional work revolves around all practices and policies that are being used to monitor, reward, sanction, motivate and develop professionals and their performance. These policies and practices set goals for individual professionals and monitors and judges their performance. In this sense, its closely related to accountability; an actor that is being judged on his or her actions. Vriens et al. (2016) argue that these practices should be in line with the ideal-type of professionalism. The goals that are being set, should be (1) realizing the application and further development of specific knowledge, skills and experience of professionals. (2) It should be made sure that professionals can work in an ‘trial-and-error’ based manner, where feedback from feedback-objects is important. And (3) where all work is first and foremost dedicated to the contribution of that particular societal value (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 7). “Professionals know what their work entails, better than non-professionals” (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 8). Therefore, it is best when professionals themselves get the authority to apply the practices and policies that set their goals and monitor them. However, as seen within the healthcare in the Netherlands, through the increase of market forces, competition, bureaucratic organizations and state control, many ‘managers’ gained authority. This has resulted in calculative accountability; a calculative way of monitoring. This form of accountability leaves little room for professionals to fully explain their actions as it is mostly measured by numbers and metrics. This makes it ‘easier’ to understand for non-professionals but inappropriate for explaining the full context (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 8).

### **Technological Means**

The third aspect of the infrastructural arrangements that influences the work of professionals simply has to do with all the ‘technology’ a professional uses and is surrounded by. This includes all the equipment they use, the housing, the physical lay-out of the space they work in, the IT that supports their work, etc.. All these technological means influence the work of a professional and should therefore be taken into account when assessing conditional accountability (Vriens et al., 2016, p. 8). If professionals do not have access to the right tools it will most certainly hinder them from reaching the full potential of their work. A proper working and easy-to-use IT system can support the work of professionals in many ways, but a system that takes away time, for example through bugs or complications can cause frustration and hinders the quality of work. Another example is the physical lay-out and housing a professional works in. If the office has poor conditions, such as an unpleasant climate or a lack of light, it hinders professional work.

### **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

The covered literature can be put into a framework to assess for conditional accountability. This framework will at the same time be the basis for the instrument.

**Table 1 Theoretical Framework**

|            |                |  | Ideal-type professional conduct  |                                     |                                    |
|------------|----------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|            |                |  | Application<br>development<br>of specific<br>knowledge,<br>skills and<br>experiences | Secure<br>‘intensive<br>technology’ | Dedication<br>to societal<br>value |
| Conditions | Goals          | Bureaucratic<br>- Uniformity<br>- Standardization<br>- Efficiency/cost                             |  |                                     |                                    |
|            |                | Market<br>- Focus on client<br>- Focus on profit<br>- Competition                                  |  |                                     |                                    |
|            | Infrastructure | Structure<br>- Specialization<br>- Centralization<br>- Formalization                               |  |                                     |                                    |
|            |                | Performance management<br>systems<br>- Accountability<br>- Development<br>- Reward<br>- Punishment |  |                                     |                                    |
|            |                | Technology<br>- ICT<br>- Equipment<br>- Housing  |  |                                     |                                    |
|            |                |  |  |                                     |                                    |

(Vriens et al., 2016, p. 10)



## 2.5 How to Account for Conditions

Accounting for conditions provides a judgement about the conditions that enable professional conduct to the wider public in order to help outsiders in their decision to place or refuse to place their trust. Accounting for conditions starts with the ideal-type definition of professional conduct and seeks to show that the conditions are enabling. That means providing a judgement about the conditions that hopefully enable professionals to (1) apply and develop specific knowledge, experience and skills, (2) grant secured ‘intensive technology’ and (3) contribute to a particular societal value. Conditional accountability does not replace other forms of accountability but can be a valuable addition alongside other forms of accountability such as calculative and narrative accountability.

Vriens et al. (2016) provide different ways of how accounting for conditions can take shape. First of all, distinctions can be made on how to provide a judgement. This can be done in a simple or complex manner. A simple manner would be a general expression of whether the conditions are enabling or disabling the professional to do his or her work. A more complex judgement can address all the cells from the theoretical framework. Another distinction can be made by who provides this judgement. Vriens et al. (2016) provide a few options, but state that the professionals themselves are most appropriate when it comes to judging their conditions. This is because the professionals are most informed about their own working conditions and if it enables or hinders them in their work. Therefore in this research, professionals themselves were asked to judge their working conditions and if they were hindering or enhancing their professional conduct. Through interviews it is possible to ask specific questions and to address all the cells from the framework.

The current model is a theoretical model and needs to be empirically evaluated. “In particular, empirical work is needed to elaborate the set of conditions and to make and validate manageable procedures for producing an account of professional conditions.” (Vriens et al. 2016, p.16). This research contributes to the development of an operational instrument to assess for conditional accountability by evaluating the current theoretical model. This evaluation is done by assessing the completeness, suitability and usefulness. The completeness refers to if the model is complete or is missing important concepts that either define professional conduct or are conditions for enabling professional conduct. The suitability refers to if the characteristics of and conditions for relate to and what they mean for professionals in the field. The usefulness concerns using this theoretical framework as the basis of an instrument to assess conditional accountability.

It may well be noted that the conditions and their relevance are different for different professions. The only way to answer the research question and to evaluate the current theoretical framework is by applying it to a case. The case in this research is the YMH in the Netherlands and the results are therefore limited to this specific case. However, it is not impossible to find improvements that can contribute to creating a general instrument. Especially an evaluation upon using this framework and the way of providing the judgements of professionals can help to find improvements for a general instrument to assess conditional accountability. Even specific information and learning about the conditions of professionals in the field of YMH can also be valuable information when accounting for the conditions of other professions.

### 3. Methodology

This chapter contains the methodology of this research. First, the overall research goal will be restated and further explained (3.1). Then, the chosen research methods and data collection will be elaborated (3.2). It is then explained how the data is analysed (3.3). This chapter ends with the research ethics (3.4).

#### 3.1 Overall Research Design

The goal of this research is to contribute to creating an operational instrument to assess conditional accountability. This contribution is made by evaluating the completeness, suitability and usefulness of the current theoretical framework. This is done by discovering what the concepts in the theoretical framework mean for professionals in the field. For that reason, a qualitative approach is chosen for this research. Qualitative research places an emphasis on entities, processes and meanings. It seeks answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and how a meaning is given to processes (Vennix, 2011; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Symon and Cassell, 2012). A qualitative approach is therefore more appropriate than a quantitative approach. Quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables and not processes (Vennix, 2011; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Symon and Cassell, 2012 ).

The *completeness* is assessed by taking an open and inductive approach. By using an open and inductive approach new concepts can be found that are not in the current framework. The *suitability* of the framework refers to if the framework is relevant for professionals in the field. This is evaluated by examining if every concept from the framework is relevant and what the concepts and relations between concepts mean for the professionals working for YMH in the Netherlands. This evaluation requires a deductive approach since it evaluates the existing concepts in the model. The *usefulness* refers to the practicality of using the framework and assessing if this framework can be used as a form of accountability. An evaluating will be given upon using the framework together with some possible improvements that can help developing this framework into an instrument to assess conditional accountability.

The results of this research can then be used for further improvement and more specific development of the instrument. A quantitative research carried out by master student E. Sluijter will follow up this research. She will use the results of this research to develop a questionnaire to assess conditional accountability for professionals within YMH in the Netherlands.

### **3.2 Research Methods and Data Collection**

In order to fulfil the research goal and evaluate the current theoretical framework, it needs to be applied to a case. In this research, the work of professionals within the youth mental healthcare in the Netherlands were analysed. This case is chosen as calculative accountability appears to be hindering professionals in performing their job.

#### **Interviews**

According to Vriens et al. (2016), professionals themselves are most informed when it comes to judging their own working conditions. They are experts in their field and can therefore provide a suitable judgment on whether they are operating under the right conditions or not. Therefore in this research, the professional themselves were the data set and were asked to assess whether their conditions are enabling or hindering them in carrying out their work and what could be improved in their opinion. Interviews are a good method as it allows to first take an inductive approach to evaluate the completeness and then take a deductive approach to evaluate the suitability. It furthermore allows the professional to provide meaning to the different concepts.

In this research seven professionals were interviewed, five female and two male professionals. All, except for one were fully independent working professionals, meaning they were not working for a company at that time but working for themselves. One professional was partly working for an institution and partly working on for an independent organisation. All seven professionals were helping both youth and adult clients. They all had more than 15 years of experience in the field. Six of them had an academic education and one had a higher professional education. All professionals interviewed were working for basic care at the time of the interviews.

#### **Document analysis as a pre-research**

Before evaluating the theoretical model by doing the interviews, an initial evaluation of the theoretical model in the field of the selected case was done to evaluate the relevance of the model. If the concepts in the model turned out to be irrelevant, for instance, if the selected case did not concern professional work or if the conditions were not relevant, the interviews would be irrelevant as well. This initial evaluation also helped to create a better understanding of the field as a preparation for the interviews. A document analysis was a good way to perform this small pre-research (Bleijenbergh, 2013). Through a document analysis, it was relatively easy to gain a better understanding of the field. By selecting articles from practice, the theoretical

model is evaluated differently than by theoretical articles. The document analysis was at the same time a way to evaluate the suitability, completeness and usefulness of the framework.

For the document analysis, different articles were selected (displayed in Appendix C) to examine if and how the conditions influence the work of professionals. The articles contained examples from practice and were selected on relevance, source, date of publishing. In total, 31 articles were gathered and examined in the document analysis. Six research articles from varied sources, 18 articles from magazine 'De Psycholoog' and seven news articles from different newspapers.

### **Interview Topic List**

The interview roughly consisted of three parts (see Appendix C for the topic list). The first part was about the ideal-type definition of professional conduct. First, an open and inductive approach was taken to evaluate the completeness of the three characteristics. This was done by asking what professional conduct meant for them, their motivations and what the difference is between a professional and a neighbour, family member or friend who gives advice on mental health (Appendix C) without showing the model to the professional. Explaining the characteristics of professional conduct from the theoretical model was the second part of the interview. This was thus a deductive approach to evaluate the suitability of the characteristics. It was asked if they could relate to the three characteristics and what it meant for them. When there was an agreement on the three characteristics of professional conduct the interview could continue to the third part. This part was about the conditions. Here also, first, an inductive approach was taken to evaluate the completeness of the theoretical model. This was done by asking the following questions: *'If you could make any wish, what would you change to improve the field of YMH.'* And/or *'what is the biggest problem you are currently facing with working in the field of YMH'*. By taking this approach the biggest, most frustrating and urgent problems of professionals could be discovered without the respondents being influenced by the conditions mentioned from the framework. After taking this inductive approach, the conditions from the framework were explained and a deductive approach could be taken to evaluate the suitability of the conditions. This was done by going over the different conditions and asking if these conditions were relevant in their work and if so, how they influence their work. This led to an explanation of the conditions and how it influences professional conduct in their field.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

When performing a qualitative research, several methods can be used to analyse data. Three common methods are open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Boeije, 2005). With open coding, the researcher starts with the data and creates codes from this data. With axial coding the researcher starts with created codes from theory and then looks at the data. Axial coding is used to discover the meaning of important concepts and if possible provide examples to describe the concept. This method can be used to see if the codes are complete and if the gathered data implies that new codes should be created. It can also be used to distinguish important concepts from less important concepts and reduce the amount of codes. Selective coding is used to further refine and develop core categories and systematically relate them to the other categories (Boeije, 2005, pp. 85-105).

In this research axial coding was chosen to analyse the data. This means that in this research the framework is used as the foundation for creating codes to discover their meaning and provide examples to describe the concept. However, attention was paid to patterns outside the framework as well to examine if codes were complete and if new codes should be created. Axial coding also allowed to discover which codes seem more important than others by looking which codes were mentioned most frequently. An operationalisation of the core concepts in the theoretical framework was made to create the first codes (Appendix A). To help the analysis of data, reference codes (B1, B2, B3, M1, M2, M3 etc) were added to the framework to refer to the different relations from the framework (Appendix B). Codes created from the document analysis are shown in Appendix D. The analysis of the interviews was done in Atlas.ti. The list with the core concepts and the amount of created codes for each concept from the interviews is shown in Appendix F.

The results of the pre-research and interviews are two different methods and are treated separately. This allows to compare the two results and discover possible differences. After the separate analysis, the integration of the two results are discussed and presented in chapter six.

### **3.4 Research Ethics**

During this research it was made sure that the participants were treated well and with respect. Participation was voluntarily and participants were able to withdraw from the research at any time. Information about the research goals were openly shared before and during the interviews and the researchers were available at any time to answer questions about the research. Before the interviews, participants were asked their consent for participating and recordings of the interviews for the purpose of this research. Anonymity of participants is guaranteed, the names

of the participants are not mentioned in this research. Confidentiality is guaranteed, participants were sent the first transcript of the interview and asked to check for any confidential information. Information that was confidential was not used in this research. Recordings of the interviews were deleted and were not made public or shared beyond the researchers. Transcripts are edited to secure the anonymity of the participants and confidentiality of information. Transcripts are kept safely and are not made public or shared outside the group of researchers. After the interviews, participants were sent a document with the results and applications of the findings as well as a copy of this research paper. Lastly, a professional relationship was maintained between participants and the researchers in order to avoid an harm, exploitation or any adverse effects throughout this research.

## **4. Document Analysis: The Case of Youth Mental Healthcare in the Netherlands**

This chapter includes the results of the document analysis. This document analysis was meant as a pre-research to gain a better understanding of the case and simultaneously answer the research question: to evaluate the usefulness, suitability and completeness of the current theoretical framework. Therefore, in this document analysis, the theoretical framework was applied to the field of the Dutch YMH. This chapter starts with the characteristics of professional work (4.1). After the characteristics, this chapter covers the conditions for professional conduct and how they influence the three characteristics (4.2). In the end of this chapter a summary is given (4.3).

### **4.1 The Three Characteristics of Professional Conduct**

The theoretical framework (Table 1) connects every condition of professional work to the three characteristics of professionalism. It is therefore necessary to examine the relevance and suitability of the ideal-type definition first (the columns of Table 1). Literature on professional psychology was used to find examples of each of the three characteristics of professional work. Rudolfa, Eisman, Rehm, Bent, Nelson and Ritchie (2005) developed the ‘cube’ model of core competencies. This ‘cube’ model is widely cited and recognized as credible amongst professional psychologists (Fouad, Hatcher, Hutchings, Collins, Grus, Kaslow, Madson and Crossman, 2009). Building on this cube model, Fouad et al., (2009) created competency benchmarks to understand and measure the competence needed in professional psychology across different educational levels. Assuming the competencies of psychologists remain the same across different countries and cultures, this literature is deemed as a reliable basis to give meaning to the characteristics of the ideal-type definition of professionalism within the field of psychology.

#### **1. The application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences.**

The first characteristic is quite similar for most professions. Psychiatrist and psychologists, like most other professions, require specific knowledge, attained through years of study, obtaining certificates, following education, obtaining experience through internships and lifelong learning in the work field to uphold the standard of quality (Rudolfa et al., 2005; Fouad et al., 2009; Vriens et al., 2016). All professionals need to have at least a certified bachelor’s or master’s degree in order to work as a professional in YMH. This degree means that students successfully



passed a minimum of three years of study and thus attained specific experience and knowledge. After this period of studying, it remains important to continue learning and developing specific skills and knowledge as a professional. This can be done through research, training, working in the field and reflecting on the work. It is thus important that professionals create the space and time to continue learning and improving while they are working. This could be provided by the company or through one's own initiative, within or outside working hours.

## **2. 'Secure intensive technology'**

The notion of 'intensive technology' as described by Thompson (1967) closely relates to the work of professionals working for YMH. It means that "a variety of techniques is drawn upon in order to achieve in some specific object; but the selection, combination and order of application are determined by feedback from the object itself." (Thompson 1967, p. 17). in the case of professionals in YMH the 'object' itself is usually the client or patient. Furthermore, psychologists are expected to constantly reflect on their own influence, the influence of others, as well as the interactions between oneself and others with regards to the entire process of their work (Fouad et al., 2009). Professionals working in YMH perform a large amount of diagnostic research. A 'feedback object' that needs to be listened to are the parents, because they know their children the best. A YMH professional can help the parents in the form of support or a treatment. It is likely that the specific mental issue of a child is not clear. The professionals therefore need specific knowledge on different research methods. The decision on which method is most appropriate for the child and what is exactly needed to be researched needs to be decided together with the parents. This is usually done by asking specific research questions, drafted together with the parents and requires time, careful thought and attention. In such a way, parents and the professional can figure out what the mental problem is and find a suitable solution to treat the child in the best possible way (Kenter Jeugdhulp, n.d.).

## **3. Dedication to a particular societal value**

The dedication and contribution to a particular societal value can be considered as the most important as it creates legitimacy and trust (Koehn, 1995). This contribution is often seen as the moral duty of professionals, expressed in professionals' oath or moral code (Vriens et al. 2016, p. 4). This characteristic is also expressed through the competencies for professional psychologists described by Fouad et al. (2009). One of them is the concern for the welfare of others. This is described by Fouad et al (2009) as: "Independently acts to safeguard the welfare of others" (Fouad et al, 2009, p. 9). A competence needed by a psychologist in practice is

formulated as follows: “Continually monitors and independently resolves situations that challenge professional values and integrity” (Fouad et al., 2009, p. 9). This competence is specifically concerning professional values and ethics of psychology and the ability to independently resolve issues that challenge that value. Taking the example that the value of professionals working in YMH is to ‘safeguard the welfare of others’. There might be a situation where a professional is challenged by the company or by the parent of a patient to differ from this ultimate value. For example, the company wants the professional to take a cost-saving approach which is less in quality or can possibly even harm the patient but is financially more beneficial for the company. Taking this approach will not fulfil this ethical value and thus the professional finds him or herself in a situation that challenges the fulfilment of this value.

Another example might be that a parent wants his or her child to get a diagnosis of dyslexia in order for the child to get extra time for making exams, all the while the child does not actually have issues with dyslexia. A professional could see this as an easy way to earn money or ‘help’ the parent according to the parent’s wish. Earning money in this way however, does not contribute to that societal value as it does not safeguard the welfare of others.

## **4.2 Conditions Influencing Professional Work**

The theoretical framework ties the characteristics for professional work to the conditions for professional work (Table 1). The first condition influencing professional work that will be looked at relates to the contextual goals conditioning professional work (Table 1, row 1 & 2). Then, the infrastructural arrangements that influence professional work will be addressed (Table 1, row 3,4 & 5).

### **4.2.1 Bureaucratic goals**

A typically problematic goal, as explained in the previous chapter is bureaucracy; the focus on predictability and reliability can come at the cost of the context-specific knowledge that is needed (Vriens et al., 2016). Bureaucracy in this research refers to three characteristics: (1) uniformity: treating every client the same way, (2) efficiency/cost: focus on efficiency and cutting costs, at the risk of reducing the quality of work, and (3) standardization: working according to fixed procedures, rules and norms.

Of the examined articles, many address problems related to bureaucratic goals that hinder professional work in YMH. Most codes acquired belong into this category. A summary is given of the problems that are related to the three characteristics of professional work.

**Bureaucratic Goals influencing professional conduct (B1, B2 & B3)**

The first characteristic, *the application and development of specific knowledge and skills* in the field of YMH is hindered by bureaucratic goals through the excess of rules, standard procedures and administration. This requires extra time which cannot be spend on the application and development of specific knowledge and skills (Busato, 2017). Working according to bureaucratic rules also restrains professionals from personal growth. A bureaucracy is made to simplify and trivialize work, to trust the rules of the system and therefore does not stimulate creative, individual thinking. This in turn causes people to be less motivated and feel less responsible (Petersen, 2017). It can also cause frustration when bureaucratic rules do not suffice. People can deliberately counterwork or protest by doing less work or less quality wise (Vink, 2017). At the same time, the focus on cost and efficiency causes some institutions to fire higher educated professionals and replace them by younger and less specialized professionals that are lower in cost (Schalwijk, 2017).

The second characteristic, *'intensive technology'* is also heavily hindered by bureaucratic goals. The goal of a perfect bureaucracy is to standardize work and build in mechanisms to defend itself against external liabilities. Deviation is seen as irrelevant and educational specialization causes trouble for a bureaucracy. Processes and protocols need to be standardized and include quantitative measurements to judge the work of professionals (Schalwijk, 2017; Petersen, 2017; Vleugels, 2017). This seems to be the total opposite of what *'intensive technology'* entails, where diagnosis, flexibility, custom work, feedback and iterations are important. A bureaucracy therefore does not seem to be a suited way of organizing the work of a professional and this shows through the problems addressed in articles from practice. It is shown that patients are not treated appropriately because of standard procedures that do not fit the patient (Woudwijk, 2016). Also, sometimes diagnoses are incorrect or there is no proper diagnosis at all, only standard process work. It is said that more space for passion and enthusiasm is needed for professionals within YMH but that bureaucratic goals constrain this (Busato, 2017). Professionals become passive because they are taught to trust the rules of the bureaucracy (Vink, 2017). This dependency causes a lack in variation possibilities to solve problems (Kramer, van Amelsfoort and Kuiper, 2017).

Most problems, if not all, also directly or indirectly influence the third characteristic of professional work, which is: *the dedication to a societal value*. Bureaucratic goals have a negative effect on the quality of work (Busato, 2017). The time spend on bureaucratic measures takes away the time spend on mental healthcare. The goal becomes to live up to the rules, efficiency and costs (Vink, 2017). This rationalization process undermines the true purpose of

professional work; contributing to YMH (Kramer et al., 2017). Furthermore, special care, from a purely bureaucratic point of view, is considered of less important because it has higher costs. (Vleugels, 2017). These cases show the problems of prioritizing the ‘wrong’ societal value.

#### 4.2.2 Market Goals

Another common problematic issue regarding goals, is the focus on market forces and competition. The focus on market can come at the cost of quality and can distract from fulfilling the particular societal and ethical value (Vriens, et al. 2016, Freidson, 2001).

#### Market goals influencing professional conduct (M1, M2 & M3)

Articles from the document analysis mostly show how market goals influence the third characteristic of professional conduct: *the dedication to a societal value*. A focus on market goals can distract professionals from pursuing the most important value, which is for example, to safeguard the mental healthcare of children. Especially more complex and heavier treatment, which are usually more expensive like psychoanalyses are threatened to get dropped (Busato, 2017, Schalwijk, 2017). This is partly caused by insurance companies who decide about healthcare (Schalwijk, 2017). The government needs to intervene here and make sure that there is a duty of care. Another author mentions that a focus on price, comes at the cost of care, the quality and the innovation of care (Woudwijk, 2016). Furthermore, market forces might never work in the field of healthcare because its principles are not met; care is not a transparent service and there is no fair competition (Busato, 2017).

An example from a magazine shows how bureaucratic and market goals can hinder professional work and how it frustrates them. It is a story about a psychologist that has worked for the youth department of mental healthcare for eight years and graduated as a psychotherapist and how the current healthcare systems restricted her in doing her job well. She got assigned a client, who was referred to as a client with ‘a lot of trouble’. The institution she worked for had just set a new policy where they were only allowed to provide a maximum of ten sessions. She knew this client did not fit this kind of model and needed a lot more than ten sessions. Even worse, providing ten sessions would only make matters worse as it would be another negative experience for the client. After calling with her manager asking for an exception, she was told they cannot allow more than ten sessions. She told her manager that it would then be better for the client to send him to another institution which could provide more than ten sessions. The manager disagreed and told her that she should accept the case, as the company needed more clients (Kindermans, 2017).

### 4.2.3 Structure

The way professional work is structured can heavily influence professional conduct (Table 1, row 3). Structure in this research refers to the way in which work is specialized, centralized and formalized.

Specialization means that the process is divided into smaller sub-tasks. An example for professionals in YMH could be that diagnosis, treatment and aftercare are separated and performed by different people. This way of working is likely to cause problems as it created opportunities for misunderstanding between the different people. Furthermore, because the work of professionals in YMH is an iterative and diagnostic process, there is no fixed sequence of steps, rather a process where one has to go back and reflect on steps taken earlier in the process. It is therefore advised to have low level of specialization (Vriens et al., 2016; de Sitter, 1998).

Centralization refers to who has the authority to make decisions. Questions that can be considered to ask are: ‘Are professionals allowed to make critical decisions regarding the specific context, or is there a management director who decides what professionals have to do?’. Professionals usually know their work the best, and have what Koehn (1995) calls: ‘Scientia’, which roughly means passion for their profession as an end goal. That passion is expressed through performing the profession in itself, not as a means to pursue something else. Scientia makes professionals contribute to that particular value for the sake of that value. When someone else decides over what a professional has to do, especially someone from outside the field and without the specific contextual knowledge, it could harm the quality of work by making the wrong decisions (Vriens et al., 2016).

Formalization refers to the way in which work is fixed to formalised rules and procedures. As mentioned in chapter two, because professional work closely resembles what Thompson calls ‘intensive technology’, it is very difficult, if not impossible to, standardize professional work. This is because work requires specific contextual knowledge and problems are never completely the same. When a professional within YMH is only required to provide ten sessions, as a fixed rule, it could very likely harm the process (Vriens et al., 2016).

### Structure influencing professional conduct (S1, S2 & S3)

From the document analysis structure clearly has an impact on professional work. One recurring problem regarding structure is the way YMH is decentralized to different municipalities. The idea is to bring YMH closer to the patient, but the new way of working caused some issues

concerning the work of professionals. Professionals need to deal with different municipalities, different contracts and different ways of working. This requires a great amount of time. The contracts professionals need to understand can be complex and can take immense time to plough through (Riemens, 2017; Vriesema, 2017). All the time that goes into dealing these difficulties and adjusting to the different ways of working, takes away time for the professional to actually do their job. In this way it influence the first and third characteristics of professional conduct: applying and developing specific knowledge (1), skills and experiences and contributing to a societal value (3).

This issue deals with the structural arrangements of how work is organized. Although the idea and the intention seems to be legitimate: decentralizing work to bring care closer to the people. Results from the document analyses show that decentralizing in this way seems to have a negative effect on the work of professionals looking. This however, does not mean the theories of Thompson (1967) and de Sitter (1998) are wrong. It most likely means that the way it is decentralized is wrong. There are many ways of decentralizing and one needs to consider carefully which way will have the best possible positive impact on the work of professionals (Achterbergh and Vriens, 2010).

Kramer et al. (2017) addresses bureaucratic ways of organizing in healthcare and their implications on the work of professionals. Based on the ‘sociotechniek’, which is a field focused on improving the work of human beings and the organization by changing and improving the work processes. It is known that dividing tasks results in seeing your own work and neglecting the tasks connected to it. Professionals can lose sight of the end goal; which should be the societal value. Furthermore, the way bureaucratic organizations work is through standardized protocols. These are a simplification of reality, something which endangers the security of ‘intensive technology’, the second characteristic of professional conduct. Although some standardization can take place, no patient is the same and thus requires a unique approach, diagnosis and treatment. Bureaucracy also limits the possibility to develop and to solve problems as it is organized to follow prescribed rules (Kramer et al., 2017).

#### **4.2.4 Performance Management Systems**

The way which human resources and performance management systems are designed also has an impact on the work of professionals (Table 1, row 4). This refers to how work of professionals is being selected, monitored, motivated, judged, punished, developed, etc. Vriens et al. (2016) provide three issues in which performance management systems influence professional conduct: (1) the degree to which these practices contribute to professionals goals,

(2) the degree to which these practices are designed and taken part by the professionals themselves and (3) the form of these practices, for example narrative and calculative (p.7).

### **Performance management systems influencing professional conduct (P1, P2 & P3)**

Problems related to human resource managing systems are shown in the way professionals are being judged, evaluated and paid. When professional are not paid accordingly to their level of skills, number or difficulty of tasks this can lead to a decrease in quality of their job performance. (Cooke and Zhan, 2013). This effects the first characteristic of applying specific knowledge, skills and experiences.

The second characteristic, ‘secure intensive technology’ can also be affected by performance management systems. Clients evaluate professionals and treatments by using metric measurements which could cause a rather platonic relationship between the professional and the client. Evaluation could instead be done through conversation or a more open way of measuring (Schalwijk, 2017). Different management measures have different effects on the perceived trust and autonomy of professionals. Personal observation, which is evaluating and measuring of activities by shadowing ones work, is perceived as very disturbing and as a big violation of one’s autonomy (Vink, 2017). This shows how measurements systems greatly influence the way work is being perceived by professionals. Furthermore recruiting the ‘right’ people in terms of juniors and experts has an influence on the quality of work carried out (Cooke and Zhan, 2013).

One example of how performance management systems influence the contribution to a societal value is when salary is determined by the profit made of the institution professionals are working for. This prioritizes the wrong value: profit over the societal value (Cooke and Zhan, 2013).

### **4.2.5 Technological means**

Lastly, what is needed to be considered when accounting for conditions are the technological means (Table 1, row 5). These consist of a broad range of things that influence the work of professionals, either positively or negatively. Technological means are for example, IT support: communication tools, online portals, programs for creating reports, accounting programs, software but also tools, materials, equipment, housing, lay-out of physical space etc.

### **Technological means influencing professional conduct (T1, T2 & T3)**



These technological means can have a severe influence on the work of professionals. When the needed materials are not available or not sufficiently working it most definitely harms professional conduct. What has been noticed from the document analysis is that the work of professionals is more and more supported by ICT systems. These ICT systems should positively impact the work of professionals and not hinder them. When professionals need to work with different kinds of ICT systems, for example with every client. This can result in more administration and less time for the client. Then, the support that is supposed to be delivered can be turned into a drawback; creating tons of administrations which is wasting time and energy. Within YMH in the Netherlands this problem occurs through the decentralized way YMH is organized. Professional that are working for different municipalities work with different contracts and IT systems. This results in hours lost to administration (Kindermans, 2017). Hours which could also be dedicated to contributing to the societal value of providing healthcare. It thus also has an indirect negative effect on conducting professional work. Professional work could furthermore ‘simply’ be improved when technological means are improved (Cooke and Zhan, 2013).

### **4.3 Summary**

The results of the document analysis showed that for almost every relation in the theoretical model an example was found from practice by analysing the articles. Only for the conditions market goals and technology no effect on ‘intensive technology’ was found. This does not directly mean that this relation does not exist but that this relation was not found in the articles analysed. Reflecting on the completeness, usefulness and suitability. Every condition found in the articles effecting professional work could be placed in the model. This means the framework is considered complete based on the document analysis. All relations except for two were found in the documents, the framework can therefore be considered suitable, except for two relations based on the document analysis. However, the lack of finding examples of how market goals and technology influences ‘intensive technology’ could be due to the limited amount of documents analysed. Reflecting on the usefulness, the framework is useful for organizing how conditions negatively influence which area of professional work. It is useful for pinpointing exactly which condition has a bad influence on which area of professional work. Because the framework is very broad, every condition influencing professional work could be placed somewhere. It is also useful to discover which condition seems to cause the most problems.



## 5. Interview Results

This chapter includes the results of the interviews. It starts with the ideal-definition of professional conduct (5.1). Then the conditions are discussed and how they influence the three characteristics of professional conduct (5.2) In the end a summary is given (5.3).

### 5.1 The Three Characteristics of Professional Conduct

The instrument is built upon the ideal-type definition of professional conduct. Therefore, every interview started with reviewing the three characteristics of professional conduct. As explained in the methodology section, first an inductive approach was taken. The interview started with open question to see what the professionals themselves formulated when asked what being a professional means. The aim is to discover if the three characteristics are suitable, what it means for professionals in the field of YMH and if this definition is complete.

#### 1. The application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences.

This first characteristic concerns professional knowledge, skills and experiences. Examples are education, graduation, internships, work experience, knowledge, techniques, methods, using theory and abstract thinking (respondents 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7). It also includes keeping up to date with the professional literature, knowledge, instruments, methods, etc. (respondents 1 and 3). Several professionals mentioned that personal development, further education, life-long learning is an important aspect of professionalism (respondent 5). It is very important to keep learning, keeping up to date with the professional knowledge (respondent 7). One respondent about continuous learning says: *“Further education and attending courses are a big part of professionalism. If you’re not learning, you are standing still”* (respondent 4). Another aspect is the cooperation, with colleagues, peer-to-peer learning. This can be done through courses, conferences, congresses, training, meeting and talking with people. It is a good way to learn and share different theoretical frameworks, examples from practice, new theories, books, etc. (respondent 5). One professionals described professionalism as a systematic and competent way of thinking about behaviour, how it came to be and how to change it, justified from a professional framework. This requires years of attaining specific knowledge (respondent 2).

#### 2. “Secure ‘intensive technology’”

The second characteristic is called ‘intensive technology’ and was also mentioned by professionals as an important aspect. It entails custom treatments, adjusting to the client and providing personalized interventions (respondents 1 and 4). Helping a client is not a pre-determined path, differs per client and changes along the way (respondent 7). This characteristic

goes beyond the first characteristic as it is about *applying* the studied theories and methods in new context. This requires creativity, practical and solution-based thinking, interpreting the results and experience (respondent 3). Different professionals describe this characteristic in their own way. One respondent talks about talking from within, talking with experience or “*verstehen*”. “*Feeling the profession in your bones. Becoming one with the professional, mixing it with your personality*” (respondent 2). Another aspect of ‘intensive technology’ is knowing oneself, recognizing what effect the professional self has on the process (respondent 5). According to professionals this characteristic is a crucial part of the job. Only knowing about theories and methods is useless when someone is unable to apply them or unable to create a professional relationship with the client. Building this relationship is crucial. There has to match between the client and the psychologist, this almost goes without saying. (respondent 3). The attitude of the professional is also important. Clients need to be and feel heard, seen, respected and able to decide in the process. This also means to incorporate feedback from the client. This can be done by asking questions to the client such as: “What did you think of this consult?”, “Is it going better, are you moving forward?”. There has to be a certain amount of autonomy and authority for the client. For example, deciding together with the client when the process is finished (respondent 6). This aspect of professionalism goes beyond the book and is only through practise that one can learn these skills (respondent 7). There is no protocol for this type of work, or it means adjusting the protocol to the unique situation (respondent 6).

### **3. Dedication to a particular societal value**

The third and last characteristic can be considered the most important (Freidson, 2001). It entails the societal value professionals are expected to contribute to for the sake of that value. Professionals were asked about their motivation for doing their work and choosing the path they choose. The things that professionals mentioned were helping the client (respondents 2 and 5), helping in the development of children (respondents 5 and 7), making people happy so that the people around them become happy as well (respondents 3 and 6) and empowering clients so that they can move forward (respondent 1). These are all things that contribute to the society and motivates the professionals who were interviewed. Professionals explain that they do this because they care about people, have a certain vision, that they are passionate about this profession, that they like to help people or that they want to help the society in this way (respondents 2,5,6 and 7).

## **5.2 Conditions Influencing Professional Conduct**

The conditions for professional work influence the possibility to realise the three characteristics of professional conduct. The results of the document analysis show how the conditions influence the three characteristics.

### **5.2.1 Bureaucratic Goals**

The first condition in the theoretical framework are bureaucratic goals. Bureaucratic goals in this thesis are described as goals that are set to maximize the predictability and reliability of services and products. The dimensions are uniformity, standardization and efficiency/cost. Bureaucratic goals are not problematic per se but should not dominate the professional field either. Focusing too much on predictability and reliability may for example come at the cost of context-specific discretion; the ‘intensive technology’ characteristic of professional conduct (Freidson, 2001; Vriens et al., 2016).

#### **B1: Bureaucratic goals influencing the application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences.**

Bureaucratic goals create large volumes of administrative work (respondents 2 and 3). A professional showed piles of documents resulting from bureaucratic goals that tries to make work predictable, reliable and regulated (respondent 3). The paperwork takes away time from applying and developing new specific knowledge and experiences, in other words: working, helping and talking with clients. This excess of paperwork thereby endangers the first characteristic of professional conduct. Bureaucratic goals also makes communication slow due to the adherence to specific rules and hierarchies. One professional explains about being sent from pillar to post when she has questions about ICT for example (respondent 1). This inefficient form of communication hinders the work of professionals. Alarming is that the many regulations, categorizations and different ICT systems make situations complex and is enforcing the creation of bureaucratic goals even more (respondent 2). One respondent indicated that bureaucratic goals are increasing every year (respondent 6).

#### **B2: Bureaucratic goals influencing ‘intensive technology’**

Pursuing bureaucratic goals mainly influences the second characteristic of professional conduct. Reliability and predictability is created through the standardization of procedures and processes. These are set to ensure the quality of services and make them comparable but as theory prescribes, standardization is likely to clash with the notion of ‘intensive technology’ (Freidson, 2001, pp. 127-218). Professionals did also mention this during the interviews. Psychologists

need specific feedback from the client or parent to properly perform their profession. Even clients with the same illness, say ADHD, all require a different procedure due to their different situation. It is impossible to fully capture professional work through using standard working lists, labels and categories.

An example of standardization is that psychologists are only allowed a set number of minutes per ‘product’, for diagnosing and the treatment itself. The professional psychologists address that many times they exceed this set number of minutes, especially the diagnosis : *“I am allowed a maximum of 15 hours to diagnose... 15 hours is nothing. It is impossible considering the indirect time it takes as well.”* (respondent 1). Usually, more time is needed to provide the necessary quality to help the client. It is very difficult to set a fixed number of minutes per client due to the ‘intensive technology’ professional work requires. Problematic is that professionals do not get rewarded for extra hours they spend on helping the client and need to register how much of their time they spend, how much is left and on which product and report it to the municipality. Another way of standardization is by the creating labels and categorisations. However, an excessive amount of categorization and labelling causes complexity. *“For example, there is a municipality that has 28 different building blocks for treatments: specialised care, basic care, short treatments, long treatments, level A, level B, level C, etc. Is that necessary? Is it researched that these are helpful distinctions? It is not reasonable, because everyone is lost. It has become too complex.”* (respondent 2).

Reliability and predictability can also be created through uniformity. Uniformity in products and services ensures that people outside and inside a bureaucratic system are treated equally. A known downside however is that this can be dehumanizing. Professionals explained this in the interviews. When uniformity goals are taken to far there is a danger of seeing the client less as a person and more as an object, for example a depression (respondent 2). Within a bureaucracy a client is not referred to as a person but as product (respondent 3). Too much uniformity is therefore not in line with the notion of ‘intensive technology’ which is about the human side of professional conduct.

### **B3: Bureaucratic goals influence the dedication to a societal value**

The third characteristic of professional conduct is also hindered by the existing bureaucratic goals. This influence is more indirect in the sense that bureaucratic goals frustrate professionals to the point that they consider quitting in the field of YMH. Main point of frustration are the large amounts of seemingly unnecessary administration. The professionals interviewed have

either themselves thought about leaving this field or know colleges that stopped or consider stopping. This of course, puts the fulfilment of the societal value at risk.

An example of how work is currently organized which frustrates professionals and puts the fulfilment of the societal value at risk are the public tenders. Using public tenders are a way for municipalities to create efficiency and cut down on costs. However, professionals mention that public tenders are very bureaucratic procedures with large volumes of paperwork (respondents 3 and 6). Documents contain laws and regulations from the EU which are not relevant for ensuring the mental health of children in the local situation. The professionals interviewed explain that attending a public tender takes an immense amount of time and work. On top of that, all the work that is required to attend makes it is very difficult to compete with the established institutions who have more people employed (respondent 5).

### 5.2.2 Market Goals

The second condition that influence professional conduct are market goals. Market goals in this thesis, were described as goals that are set to *maximize* profit. The dimensions are focus on client, focus on profit and competition. Just like bureaucratic goals, market goals are not problematic per se but should also not dominate the field of professionals. When market goals are prioritized, the societal value is likely to be jeopardised (Feidson, 2001; Vriens et al., 2016).

#### **M1: Market goals influencing the application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences.**

According to Freidson (2001), maximizing profit can come at the cost of the first characteristic when specialized knowledge and skill of disciplines become proprietary and kept secret to others in order to gain competitive advantage and/or earn personal wealth. Professional knowledge, techniques and skills should be publicly available in order to be tested, validated and practiced by others.

The extreme case of patenting knowledge to maximize profit was not identified during the interviews. However, professionals expressed that sharing knowledge, intervision and cooperative learning is important to develop new knowledge and skills but indicated that competition can make working together complicated. Luckily, from the interviews it was observed that competition does not lie within the nature of the professional psychologists. The professionals interviewed expressed that they did not feel a strong sense of competition between

the self-employed psychologists. This is partly because of the establishment of a cooperative created by and for self-employed professionals.

The cooperative was created out of an obligation for the self-employed professionals to be able to communicate with the municipality as one voice. This has proved to be a useful and successful move. It made it easier for professionals to find each other and to work together. Due to cooperation in the cooperative, independent psychologists experience less competition amongst each other. Some bigger institutions are seen more as competitors. The drawback from the cooperative is that it requires extra time and effort, it also increases the bureaucracy.

### **M2: Market goals influencing ‘intensive technology’**

Results from the interview do not show that market goals directly have a negative impact on securing the second characteristic of professional conduct. What became clear however is that the notion of ‘intensive technology’ is a reason why competition does not work in the professional field. YMH field is concerned about people and not with products in a market. Choosing a psychologist is not as straightforward as choosing over two smartphones (respondent 3). There has to be a reciprocal feeling of trust between the client and professional in order for treatments to be effective. Another reason is that the market is not completely free causing market forces not to operate like they would in a free market. One respondent says that some institutions created special arrangements with municipalities to get better prices (respondent 5). This denies market forces to work freely and creates an unfair competition for the self-employed psychologists. Market forces furthermore result in more bureaucracy according to one professional. Competition requires professionals to differentiate and create specializations which lead to more categorization and bureaucracy (respondent 2). It puts pressure on professionals to think about marketing and sales which distracts from contributing to the societal value. Professionals evaluate that since the introduction of market forces, there has not been a positive effect on the quality and efficiency of mental healthcare. The introduction of competition did not realise the desired effects (respondent 6).

### **M3: Market goals influencing the dedication to a societal value**

The biggest influence of market goals is on the third characteristic of professional conduct. Respondents say that money seems to be the main driver looking at the way YMH is organized (respondent 3). The focus seems to be on the short term gain instead of the long term goals, vision and improvements. Professionals affirm however that organizing budgets is challenging for municipalities. Any goal which is not focused on contributing to the societal value should

be considered a secular goal. Although a focus on profits and clients are important, they should not be prioritized above this ethical value (Friedson, 2001; Vriens et al., 2016). Respondents indicated this as well. Market forces provide a perverse incentive according to one professional: they are generally focused on personal gain instead of societal gain. For example, clients with minor issues could be prioritized above a client with urgent needs in order to earn money quickly (respondent 6). Market forces provide the wrong incentive in the way that professionals benefit when a client has more sessions even when this is not necessary for the client. A focus on the clients could also be harmful as professionals should be focused on contributing to the societal value and not the wants of a specific client. *“When for example a school calls and they have a dossier about a child that needs an intelligence test. I will say no, because I am not an institution that does intelligence tests.”* (respondent 4). Professionals need to be ethical enough to withstand this perverse incentive. Which generally may be believed by their years of education, obtaining certificates, years of experience and taking ethical oaths. Market forces nevertheless causes professionals to be dependent on contracts with the municipality and insurance companies. Even when a professionals would not sign the contract because of unreasonable demands, another professional presumably will take the job.

### 5.2.3 Structure

Structure is defined as the way in which professional work is broken down into sub-processes and how these tasks are coordinated back together. Structure is divided into three dimensions: formalization, specialization and centralization. According to theory it is expected that a low degree of formalization, specialization and centralization aids professional conduct (Vriens et al., 2016).

#### **S1: Structure influencing the application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experience.**

The first characteristic, the application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experience, is almost always affected by the way work is structured. The first dimension, centralization refers to the degree in which decision authority rests with only one or a few members of the organization (Vriens et al., 2016). There has been a vast decentralization process since the implementation of the youth act in 2015 which greatly changed to way professionals work. This new way of organizing YMH made the local municipality responsible for YMH in their region. In spite of it being supported as a beneficial idea it requires some time to be properly implemented. Respondents say communication is usually slow and officials often



do not possess the required knowledge about YMH yet (respondent 5). The knowledge and competences varies amongst different workers. Working together with the municipality is new and requires time to improve. Currently, every municipality organizes things differently which is causing a number of complications. Another issue is that every municipality uses their own software, labels and categorizations making it extremely complicated working for different municipalities. A big wish of professionals is that some things, like software systems, labels and categorisations were organized centrally. This would decrease the complexity drastically (respondent 6).

### **S2: Structure influencing ‘intensive technology’**

Formalization or standardization refers to the degree in which work is determined by rules and procedures, similar to standardization within a bureaucracy.

### **S3: Structure influencing the dedication to a societal value**

The dedication to a societal value can also be influenced by the way work is structured. An issue concerns a postal code policy that lets professionals work for only a specific area. One respondent explained a situation where helping a client that desired her specific help nearly got declined by living just outside the area (respondent 2). Another way in which the third characteristic is impacted is by the way work is split up in different sub-tasks. General practitioners and the special ‘social district teams’ act as gatekeepers and perform the first diagnosis to direct the client to the right mental healthcare provider. Ideas about the social district teams are mixed. Most professional interviewed did not engage much with the social district teams. Most professionals interviewed say nearly all clients come in either direct or from the general practitioner, hardly anything or from the social district teams. The social district teams seem to be more relevant to specialized care where treatments are multidisciplinary. In this multidisciplinary process professional express the usefulness of someone who is in charge and has an overview of the situation. This task requires knowledge across different fields, coordinative and communicate abilities and should therefore be a person that is highly educated and competent according to professionals (respondents 3,4 and 7)

## **5.2.4 Performance Management Systems**

Performance management systems refer to the practices and policies used to select, assess, appraise, monitor, reward, sanction, motivate and develop professionals and their performance



The dimensions are accountability, development, reward and punishment. (Vriens et al., 2016). Vriens et al. (2016) provide three issues in which performance management systems influence professional conduct: (1) the degree to which these practices contribute to professionals goals, (2) the degree to which these practices are designed and taken part by the professionals themselves and (3) the form of these practices, for example narrative and calculative (p.7).

### **P1: Performance management systems influencing the application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences**

The way in which professionals are monitored, assessed, reward, punishment etc. influences the first characteristic. Professionals use standard procedures with questionnaires, evaluations and reporting. ROM (Routine Outcome Monitoring) is a mandatory tool for professionals used to evaluate effectiveness of treatments by assessing the state of the client over the course of the treatment process. Professionals say using ROM takes up a considerable amount of time. Professionals can see that using ROM is not a pleasant experience for the clients. Clients need to agree with the privacy policy, which in many cases they do not (respondent 1). Before using the ROM method, they evaluated and assessed in their own way, which they say was adequate. Documenting and reporting is necessary but only in a certain way and to a certain extent. Current form can get dysfunctional as it takes time away from working with the client. “.. *half of the week I’m justifying what I did in the other half. That’s how it feels*”. (respondent 2) Professionals experience an increase in the amount and extend documenting and reporting over the years. This way of monitoring is costly, both money wise and time wise. According to a respondent it is better to write a short and clear report after every set amount of hours instead of writing extensive reports every time (respondent 2).

### **P2: Performance management systems influencing ‘intensive technology’**

A problem that has to do with the second characteristic is that current questionnaires used for evaluations are not accurate according to professionals. This difficulty lies in the nature of the work of psychologists according to one professional. It is very difficult to measure success of a treatment through these questionnaires. “*How can you quantify psychology? How can you quantify the subconscious? How can you quantify motivation? That is a problem of psychology.*” (respondent 3)

### **P3: Performance management systems influencing the dedication to a societal value**

Respondent reported several issues concerning the rewards of professionals in the field of YMH. One issue has to do with the IT systems that are used for declaration. Bugs in the systems cause a delay in payments understandably frustrating professionals. Another issue is that there was a change in the payment procedure. This procedure changed from receiving a salary every month to getting paid after the complete treatment process is finished. A complete treatment process from start to finish can take up to one and a half year or even longer. When this model changed professionals could not receive any compensation before the end of their first treatment. This forced some professionals to disastrously have to close down their practice. Another issue is that some professionals state that rewards are too low. Their salary has stayed the same over the last five years. This makes professionals feel not appreciated for the work they are doing. Professionals are furthermore not rewarded for administration, documenting, reporting, development, consultation with colleagues. Independent professionals also have to pay and are responsible for their own development in for example education and ICT. Even though the professionals interviewed are self-employed, it feels as if they are employers at a company. Independent psychologists are not able to enjoy the freedom and flexibility of being self-employed due to large amounts of administration and due to the dependence of signing contracts with insurance companies and municipalities. Regarding punishment, professionals experience an increase in legalization: clients are more easily filing complaints (Respondent 2). Another punisher is the municipality. Professionals need to report the number of clients they help and how many hours they used per client. When this is not being reported, professionals can receive punishments in the form of warnings or fines (respondent 1).

### 5.2.5 Technology

#### **Technology influencing professional conduct T1, T2 and T3**

Technology refers to all the technological means necessary for performing professional work. Dimensions are ICT, equipment, housing and others (Vriens et al., 2016). It was clear that technology has an influence on professional conduct. Resulting from the interviews, ICT is a prominent frustration amongst all professionals interviewed. Although working with ICT can and should be beneficial, currently it is hindering the work of professionals. Frustration is caused by the constant changes, the manifold of systems available and the time and energy it takes to learn and get used to these software programs. When bugs in the system occur, the bureaucratic processes are not efficient in fixing these bugs quickly. The manifold of software systems is caused by it not being organized centrally and due to the free market. Different developers are constantly creating new systems and apps. These providers do not work together

(respondent 6). The independent professionals have to pay for these systems themselves which in some cases is a waste of money as these systems do not work correctly. All these problems related to the technological means influence professional conduct in a negative way. Mostly the first and third characteristic are hindered as it takes time and energy away from actually performing their job and contributing to the societal value.

### 5.3 Summary

The results of the interviews have shown different examples of the relations than the results of the document analysis. Regarding the suitability of the framework, every relation from the framework was relevant to the professionals working in the field of YMH. Some relations seemed to have a bigger impact than others. For example, bureaucratic and market goals were very explicitly mentioned. Technology in the form of ICT was mentioned often as a hindering condition as well. The completeness was evaluated by taking an inductive approach. The topic list of the interviews was created in an open and inductive manner. This allowed for new ideas and concepts to come up. However, every issue mentioned by the professionals fitted inside the model. There were some issues that regarded the broader context, such as laws and regulation and personal coping which do not include the model. These do not include the conditions of professional conduct but should also be taken into account. The usefulness of the framework is evaluated by reflecting on using the framework and evaluating the usefulness of the results. The framework allowed for a very structured way of asking questions about the conditions for professionals. The answers could be easily categorised in the different boxes of the framework. This made it easy to ask for follow up questions. For example: 'How does this technological difficulty influence the application or development of specific knowledge?' The framework was a useful tool to keep track of which conditions were talked about and which were not mentioned during the interviews.

## 6. Summarized and Integrated Results

In this chapter the results of the documents and the interviews are integrated and compared. Only the most compelling and representative examples are provided of each conditions from the theoretical framework.

### Professional Conduct

1. The application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences.

A typical example of this characteristic is education. To acquire a degree, the student needs to develop specific knowledge, skills and experiences and also be able to apply the knowledge, skills and experiences.

1. 'intensive technology'

The ability to apply knowledge, skills and experiences in a new context. When a new problem occurs, the professional needs to diagnose the problem and think of an appropriate treatment. For this purpose, feedback from a certain feedback object is needed.

An example from the interviews is that every client is different and therefore needs to be treated differently even though it concerns the same mental illness. Feedback is needed from the client and parent of the client to diagnose the problem and think of a fitting treatment together. This makes this type of work difficult, if not impossible to standardize.

2. Dedication to a particular societal value.

This concerns the motivation and intention of a professional to do his or her job. This should be the dedication to a particular societal value.

An example is that professionals are motivated to do their work because they care and contribute to the mental well-being of their clients.

### Bureaucratic goals

Bureaucratic goals influence the first characteristic through the time that goes into administrative work and through the slow communication that bureaucratic goals create. Most professionals explain they spent 50% or more of their time on administrative work. One professional explains that 30% of the time are billable hours, working for and with client. The

other 70% is spent on other work such as administrative work, marketing, attending public tenders, etc..

*“X: If you look at your time spent. Of let’s say 10 hours, what percentage of time goes into working with clients and what percentage into everything else?”*

*Y: I think 30/70 while it should be 70/30.*

*X: 30/70, wow.*

...

*X: That includes marketing etc.?*

*Y: Yes, that is part of the 70%. If you work for an organization it has to be 70/30 or even 80/20. Time for the client and 20% overhead. Right now, I’ve got 70 overhead and only 30 percent of billable hours.” (respondent 6)*

This research found three ways that highlight in which bureaucratic goals influence the second characteristic of professional conduct, which is ‘secure ‘intensive technology’. The first one is standardization. Professionals explained they get only a certain amount of hours for working with their clients. This is also a form of calculative accountability as professionals have to report on how much time they have spent on what part of the treatment and how much is left. Professionals mention however that that standardization of hours is not possible. The treatment of client’s needs to be flexible. It is impossible to estimate how much time is needed for a client beforehand. The second point is that bureaucracies cause professionals to work with products instead of people. This is caused by the uniformity bureaucracies try to create. A goal in a bureaucracy is to treat everyone in the same way, while professionals need to adjust their treatments to the client. The last point is that creating labels and categories becomes too complex. Professionals have mentioned that there is an excess of labels and categorizing in which they lose the overview.

Results from this research showed that bureaucratic goals also influence the third characteristic of professional conduct. One example from the interviews is that professionals mentioned that they themselves, or they knew colleagues that considered to stop or stopped working for YMH due to frustration that was caused by the way work is organized and the piles of administrative work. This puts the fulfilment of the societal value at risk. The documents showed that bureaucratic goals can lead to disengagement when the goal becomes to live up to the rules instead of the dedication to mental healthcare. This is also a form of calculative accountability. Being pre-occupied with the standard rules and procedures can cause alienation, a decrease in responsibility, perverse incentives and more (Vriens, et al. 2016).

## Market goals

The introduction of market forces in YMH has providers of mental health needed to attend in public tenders. This research showed that public tenders are long and difficult processes with a lot of ‘unnecessary paperwork’ and unfair demands (respondents 3, 5 & 6).

Professionals benefit from working together and sharing knowledge. Competition hinders this and therefore harms the first characteristic. There was no clear impact on secure intensive technology. However the fact that professionals need secure intensive technology makes creating a competitive market difficult if not impossible.

Both the document analysis and the interviews show that the biggest impact market goals have is on the third characteristic. When market goals, such as making profit or doing what the client wants, the societal value can be at stake. If the main motivation is to earn money, this could damage the ethical societal value. This is when making a profit is placed of higher importance than helping the client. This distinction is not always easy to make, as of course earning money is necessary and making profit and helping the client can and should ideally go hand in hand. Problem arise when making profit is chosen above contributing to the societal value and harms this value (respondents 2 & 6).

## Structure

Since the introduction of the youth act there has been a vast decentralisation. Since then, the municipalities have become responsible for organizing YMH in their area. This fragmentation caused too become complex, especially for high specialised mental care. Mainly because this type of specialised care requires professionals from across the country (TAJ, 2017). Also for the independent professionals who were interviewed it caused an increase in administration. Also the cooperation was difficult with municipalities when workers did not yet possess the required knowledge. This change in structure takes time to successfully implement. (respondents 1,2 and 5)

## Performance Management Systems

Professionals work was shown to be damaged by accountability measures, mostly in the form of excess reporting and documenting. “... *documenting is very good, so I’m trying to document everything, but it is very dysfunctional at the same time because it requires a lot of time. Documenting is good, but you have to make sure that you don’t go too far with wanting to document everything.*” (respondent 2).

Another problem had to do with the system used for invoicing. A problem is that only when a treatment is finished professionals can send an invoice. This caused professionals having to wait for payments for long periods of time (respondents 1, 3 & 5).

### **Technology**

Technology can influence professional work in many different ways as well. In this research case ICT used for invoicing was the main point of this condition. Bugs in systems caused frustrations, and delays in the process with liquidity. These ICT systems are expensive and professionals had to work with numerous systems, making work needlessly complex (respondents 1, 2 ,3, and 6).

## 7. Conclusion & Discussion

In this chapter, first, the research question will be restated and answered (7.1). This answer is based upon the results of the document analysis and interviews. After answering the research question, evaluations from using the current framework are presented together with some general improvements that can help to create it into an instrument that can account for conditions (7.2). This chapter will also cover the limitation of this research (7.3) and possible areas for future research (7.4). The last paragraph is the researcher's reflection (7.5).

### 7.1 Suitability, Usefulness, Completeness of the Theoretical Model

The goal of the research, as stated in the introduction, is to contribute to devising an instrument that can assess, judge and disclose the conditions for professional conduct as an intelligent form of accountability, namely conditional accountability by evaluating the completeness, usefulness and suitability of the current theoretical framework as the basis of the instrument.

The following *research question* was asked:

Is the theoretical framework complete, useful and suitable as the basis for an instrument to assess for conditional accountability?

The suitability is assessed by evaluating if every concepts and relation (the conditions influencing the characteristics of professional conduct) from the framework resonates with the work of professionals in the field of YMH. The results from the document analysis and qualitative interviews show that the concepts resonate and that every relation either directly or indirectly influences professional conduct. This framework is therefore considered suitable for professionals within the field of YMH in the Netherlands.

However not every relation was as evident. Some relations were more predominant than others. It was found that bureaucratic goals mostly have a negative influence on the second characteristic of professional conduct: securing 'intensive technology' (B2 from the framework). This is because a bureaucracy tries to standardizes work processes. Professionals, among which psychologists, however require 'intensive technology'. They need to be flexible and able to improvise by getting specific feedback from the client. This type of work is therefore not able to standardize. B1 (bureaucratic goals influencing the application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences) and B3 (bureaucratic goals influencing the dedication to the societal value) are indirectly affected by the time that goes into the administrative work resulting from bureaucratic measures.



Market goals mostly influence the third characteristic of professional conduct: ‘dedication to societal value’. Market goals are necessary and unavoidable but should not be prioritized above professional goals (Vriens et al., 2016). Finding a balance between market, bureaucratic and professional goals is challenging. Focusing too much on market goals is likely to decrease the dedication to societal value. The other characteristics were also affected. An example of relation M1 (market goals influencing the application and development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences) from the framework is that a cost reduction strategy can jeopardise the quality of work. Relation M2 (market goals influencing secure ‘intensive technology’) was only observed through the qualitative interviews and showed that competition and ‘intensive technology’ do not go well together.

A couple of conditional elements clearly had an effect on professional conduct but did not directly influence one of the three characteristics specifically. One example of this is from the technological condition from the framework. Technology in this thesis was mainly concerned with ICT used for invoicing. This form of ICT has an effect on professional conduct but does not influence one of the three characteristics directly. It does not influence the application and/or development of specific knowledge and skills, it neither has to do with securing the ‘intensive technology’ or the dedication to a societal value. It is however an important condition for their work and caused frustration amongst professionals when this form of ICT does not work as it is supposed to. This can be said about rewards as well. Reward for work is (of course) necessary but does not directly influence one of the three characteristics of professional conduct. It can be said that rewards and technology are necessary condition for any type of work, not specific to professional work.

The framework is evaluated upon its completeness by taking an open and inductive approach during interviews and document analysis. During the interviews, first open questions were asked to discover new characteristics of professional conduct and conditions for professional conduct. During the document analysis also, first an open analysis was performed to discover possible new conditions or characteristics. However, no new concepts were discovered during this research; neither for the characteristics of professional conduct as for the conditions. All codes created were able to be placed inside this theoretical framework. The theoretical framework is therefore considered complete. There are however aspects outside the conditions for professional conduct that influence professional work. Some are also mentioned by Vriens et al. (2016) in their article and concern the broader institutional context, the specific

professional field and personal coping of conditions. These are aspects that do not include the direct conditions for professional conduct but should be considered as well.

The theoretical framework is useful for finding and addressing problems within the conditions professionals are working for. The framework allows to find these problems quickly and accurately: which conditions influence which characteristic of professional work. It offers a new form of accountability but can simultaneously solve calculative accountability. This is because it looks at how bureaucratic goals, infrastructure and accountability measures are organised. When the characteristics of professional conduct are taken as the basis of organising professional work, the conditions for professional work can be improved.

## **7.2 Possible Improvements and Evaluations from Using the Theoretical Framework**

The current instrument looks at conditional goals and infrastructure. The conditional goals consist of bureaucratic and market goals. Both these goals are expected to have a negative impact on professional conduct. It therefore focuses on the problems and has a rather negative outlook on the conditions for professional work. A possible improvement is to add another, more positive conditional set of goals to the instrument. These goals can be called ‘professional goals’. Professional goals could be defined as goals that are set to ensure the three characteristics of professional conduct. When adding this third conditional goal, the instrument can assess which of these goals are prioritized by asking about the working conditions for the professional. It can therefore assess if the ‘negative’ goals market and bureaucratic are too dominant or not. Balancing these three goals is a challenging but important task. Adding professional goals to the instrument could help to balance these three goals. Freidson (2001) and Vriens et al. (2016) suggest that professional goals should be prioritized. If outcomes are similar based on professional goals, market and or bureaucratic goals may enter as secondary goals to determine the decision. Furthermore these professional goals should be the starting point for creating the infrastructure which could make professional conduct more affordable and accessible (Christensen et al., 2010; Vriens et al. 2016).

Another addition to the framework are the specific codes (B1, B2, B3, M1, M2, M3 etc. ) in the boxes of the framework (Table 1). This simple but useful addition can help with analysing data and focusing on the specific relations from the framework. It also helps with conveying knowledge as it structures information and gives a name to what relation to which relation is talked about. In this research the codes B1, B2, B3, M1, M2, M3 etc. were used, but other codes or names can be used as well.

It became apparent that there is a significant difference between the conditions of different professionals. For example, professionals working for an organization or within specialist care work under different conditions or experience the same conditions differently as their work is different. Also the laws, regulation and the professional associations are broader conditions that have an influence on the work of professionals. Besides the broader conditional context, the difference in personal coping also has an influence on the relations from the framework. Every professional has its own way of dealing with the conditions and have different opinions regarding these conditions. This aspect is not included in the framework but should also be considered when using this framework.

The theoretical framework has some redundancies. Situations where hindering problems relate to multiple areas of the framework. For example bureaucratic goals and structure are usually highly correlated. As an organization with bureaucratic goals is very likely to be structured as a bureaucracy: with high amounts of centralization, specialization and formalization. Other examples of redundancies are that a focus on market goals can have an impact on how technological means are designed. When there is a focus on reducing costs, technological means may also be insufficient. Just as in the case of YMH, technological means are used for invoicing. Problems regarding invoicing therefore relate to both technological means and rewards from performance management systems. It showed that in practice, problems often relate to multiple conditions. The conditions should not only taken as separate conditions but as a coherent entity as well.

Lastly, when accounting for conditions, it is important that terms and concept from the framework, such as bureaucracy, structure and ‘intensive technology’ are explained so that both parties have the same understanding. In this research it was found that most concepts were fairly easy to understand for professionals. The idea of ‘intensive technology’ was very familiar for professionals. Bureaucracy and structure are concepts that professionals understand and have ideas about. However, it is then especially important that such concepts are explained so that there is a shared understanding and both parties discuss the same idea. It is suggested that before using the instrument enough time is taken to explain the different concepts and elements of the framework.

### **7.3 Limitations of this Study**

As any research, this research also has its limitations. This study took a qualitative approach to evaluate the completeness, suitability and usefulness of the theoretical framework. In order to evaluate the theoretical framework, it had to applied to a specific case. The results of this

research are therefore limited to this case. However, it is still valuable for other cases. Especially the evaluations on using this framework and the way of providing the judgement of the conditions. Future studies can learn from the evaluation of the theoretical model and first attempt at conditional accountability. A qualitative study in this field furthermore allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the data into the meanings of the different concepts and relations. However, the dataset of documents and interviews were therefore also limited in quantity. Many examples were found for the different relation from the framework but many more could be found when doing a researcher with a bigger sample size. The goal was however not to find many examples but to find out the meaning of the different concepts.

A second limitation in this research is that a rather homogenous group of people were interviewed. All professionals interviewed are self-employed and working in general care. It is apparent that a significant difference exists between the conditions of different professionals with different contexts. The results of this research were related to this specific group and even limited for this group due to the small sample size. However the aim of this research was to discover the meaning of the concepts in the model for professionals in YMH and to see if the framework is suitable to use for conditional accountability and not to generalize.

A third limitation is the way in which the interviews were taken. Due to the inductive and open approach, the time limit of the interviews and broadness of the theoretical framework, there was less focus on specifically which condition influenced which characteristic of professional conduct. Focusing on the specific conditions and how they influence a specific characteristics was done in the analysis but was limited due to how the interviews were designed. The design of the interviews however allowed for a broad and general view of the theoretical model.

Another limitation is that this research did not pay attention to what the best way of conveyed and disclosing accounting for conditions is. This research took a narrative approach to convey the conditions based on the relations from the framework but a calculative approach or combination of the two can be used as well.

#### **7.4 Possible Areas for Future Research**

Conditional accountability is relevant to be further researched as it can potentially be a new form of intelligent accountability and can simultaneously be helpful to solve the complications caused by calculative accountability. This is because it looks at how bureaucratic goals, structure, accountability measures and conditions influence professional conduct. Many areas

of conditional accountability could be researched in order to improve this as an intelligent form of accountability. As mentioned earlier, one area is further refining the current theoretical framework in the field of YMH in the Netherlands. This research has evaluated the current theoretical model and provided some possible improvements. It also provided some examples of what the different concepts mean for professionals in this field. These results can be used to more specifically measure conditional accountability. Other professional fields can be examined as well. Other areas of future research can examine how other forms of accountability should be adopted together with conditional accountability to create an intelligent form that is practical and effective and easily conveyed to the wider public.

### **7.5 Researcher's Reflection**

This master's thesis can generally be divided into two parts. One part and main purpose of this thesis was to evaluate the theoretical framework as a potential instrument to assess conditional accountability. The second part was using the framework as the instrument: gathering information about the case. Applying the framework to the case of youth mental healthcare in the Netherlands gave a glimpse of how complex this case is. The more and longer I got into the case, the more I realised how much more there is to know. This research only covered a small and limited aspect. Challenging was evaluating what the best way of conveying accounting for conditions is. A narrative approach was taken, explaining about the conditions and how they influence the characteristics. This was challenging as the theoretical framework is very broad and consists of many relations. This resulted in a rather extensive results sections. Such a 'complex' judgement is therefore best combined with a 'simple' and general judgement so that it easy to understand for a wider public. This was tried through providing a summary of the results. The second and main part of this thesis was the evaluation of the theoretical framework as the foundation of the instrument. The theoretical framework covers many conditional aspects and revealed important problems regarding the conditions for professional conduct. However, to help identifying which conditions are enabling professional conduct, professional goals as a condition could be added to the theoretical framework. This could increase the value of using accounting for conditions as it can help to solve issues regarding calculative accountability that are caused by the conditions professionals may work under.

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## **APPENDIX A Operationalization**

### **Professional Conduct**

#### **Characteristic 1:**

Application of specific:

- a. Knowledge: using of information, through for example reading books or learning theories.
- b. Skills: applying learned activities, e.g.: talking to clients, applying methods or writing reports.
- c. Experiences: using past experiences in the present.

Development of specific:

- d. Knowledge: reading books or learning theories.
- e. Skills: learning new methods, activities.
- f. Experiences: attaining new experiences.

#### **Characteristic 2:**

##### **Secure Intensive Technology**

Iterative process: No standard procedures but going back and forth between steps in the process. Sometimes cooperation is needed between different fields of expertise as well.

Working with people: Successful treatments require personalised and custom adjustments.

The ability to apply knowledge, skills and experiences in a new context. When a new problem occurs, the professional needs to diagnose the problem and think of an appropriate treatment. For this purpose, feedback from a certain feedback object is needed.

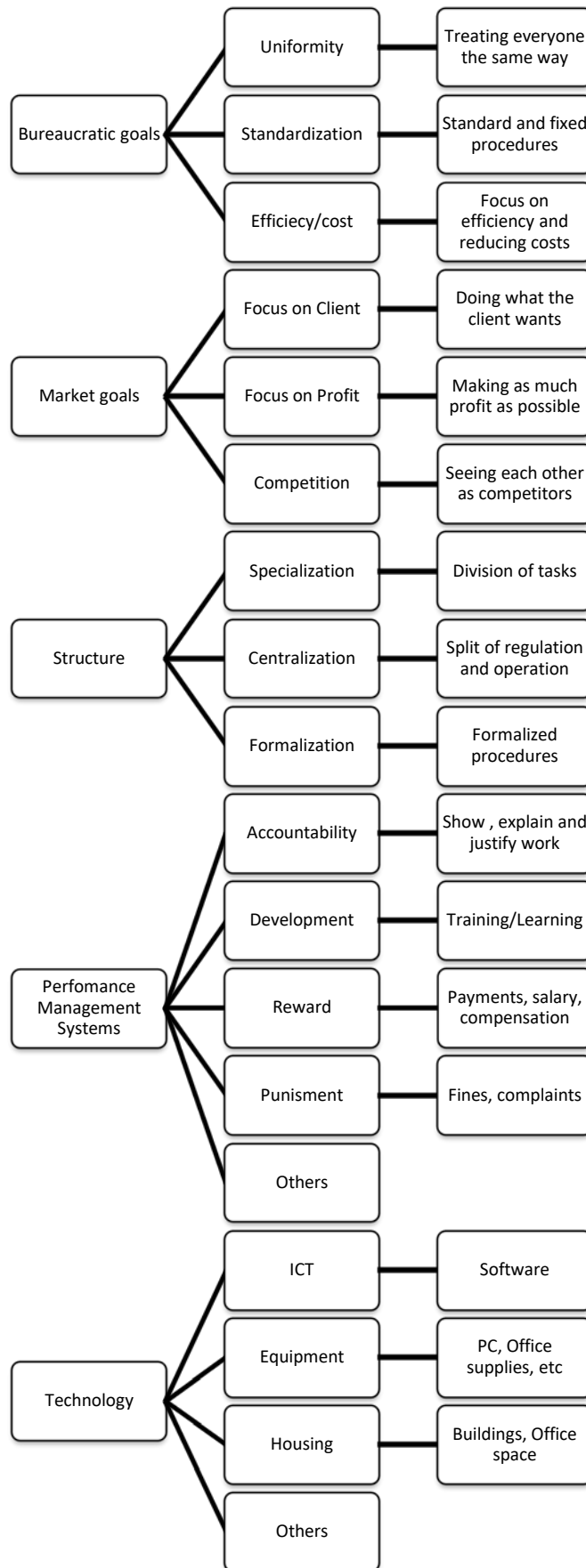
#### **Characteristic 3:**

##### **Dedication to Societal Value**

Motivation: Why professionals do what they do.

Societal value: A value that benefits society and is expected from society.

Ethical value: The dedication to a value for the sake of that value and not something else.



**APPENDIX B Theoretical model used for analysing**

|                            |  | Ideal-type professional conduct  |                               |                              |
|----------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                            |  | Application development of specific knowledge, skills and experiences. | Secure 'intensive technology' | Dedication to societal value |
| Conditional Goals          | Bureaucratic goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uniformity</li> <li>- Standardization</li> <li>- Efficiency/cost</li> </ul>                          | B1   | B2                            | B3                           |
|                            | Market goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on client</li> <li>- Focus on Profit</li> <li>- Competition</li> </ul>                               | M1   | M2                            | M3                           |
| Conditional Infrastructure | Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specialization</li> <li>- Centralization</li> <li>- Formalization</li> </ul>                                  | S1   | S2                            | S3                           |
|                            | Performance management systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accountability</li> <li>- Development</li> <li>- Reward</li> <li>- Punishment</li> </ul> | P1   | P2                            | P3                           |
|                            | Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ICT</li> <li>- Equipment</li> <li>- Housing</li> </ul>   | T1   | T2                            | T3                           |

**APPENDIX C Sources document Analysis**

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**APPENDIX D Codes from document analysis**

(Sources: S#: Scientific paper, M#: Magazine *De Psycholoog*, N#: News media article)

B1:

1. Overmaat aan handelingen (M16)
2. Regels brengen schade toe aan het werk (M16)
3. Medewerkers kunnen zich niet ontplooien (M10)
4. Belemmeringen van persoonlijke groei (M10)
5. Hoger opgeleide psychotherapeuten worden ontslagen en vervangen door minder specialistische opgeleide jongere werknemers. (M12)
6. Minder motivatie en verantwoordelijkheid (M14)
7. Uit verzet en protest juist minder doen (M14)
8. Doordat er zoveel tijd kwijt is aan administratie blijft er minder tijd over voor ontwikkeling. (M2)
9. Cost reduction strategy has a negative impact on professionals. (S1)
10. Bezuiniging zorgt ervoor dat er weinig middelen beschikbaar zijn voor vernieuwing. (S6)

B2:

1. Meer ruimte voor bevoegenheid is nodig (M16)
2. Niet kunnen omgaan met externe onzekerheden (M10)
3. Afwijken worden gezien als irrelevant (M10)
4. Standaard protocollen (M12)
5. Geen diagnostiek, maar proces werk (M12)
6. Veel kwantitatieve metingen (M12)
7. Elke patiënt is anders, standaard procedures passen niet. (M14)
8. Passief gedrag wegens vertrouwen op de bureaucratie (M14)
9. Afhankelijkheid zorgt voor moeilijkheden in variatie vermogen. (M6)
10. Ingekochte hulp die niet past bij de patiënt (N7)
11. Specialisatie geeft zorgen (N5)

B3:

1. Negatief effect of kwaliteit (M16)
2. Bureaucratie gaat ten koste van de tijd en zorg (M14)
3. Het doel wordt het naleven van de regels (M14)
4. Rationalisering ondermijnt de zin van het werk (M6)
5. Minder specialistische hulp omdat er dan meer geld overblijft (N3)
6. Focus op de finances i.p.v. zorg (N5)
7. Focus on budget costs leads to opportunistic behaviour. (S1)
8. Zorgplicht wanneer budget is overschreden (S6)

M1:

1. Cost reduction strategy has a negative impact on professionals. (S1)
2. Eénjarige contracten, geen zekerheid en ruimte voor het creëren van strategische keuzes op langere termijn. (S6)
3. Bezuiniging zorgt ervoor dat er weinig middelen beschikbaar zijn voor vernieuwing. (S6)

M2:

1.

M3:

1. Psychoanalyse is te duur. (M12)
2. Zorgverzekeraars bepalen de zorg (M12)
3. Vallen patiënten met zwaardere complexe en psychische problemen met hoge kosten buiten de boot? (er is een acceptatieplicht nodig) (M16)
4. De markt werkt niet in de zorg omdat de zorg niet transparant is en er is geen eerlijke concurrentie. (M16)
5. Focus op de prijs ten koste van de zorg, de kwaliteit en innovatie. (N7)
6. Market leads to focus on profit (S1)
7. Zorgplicht wanneer budget is overschreden (S6)

S1:

1. Arbeidsverdeling zorgt voor minder mogelijkheid om te ontwikkelen. (M6)
2. Elke gemeente heeft verschillende contracten, het doorspitten van de contracten kost veel tijd die niet naar het uitvoeren van zorg gaat. (N3)
3. All levels of nurses perform the same activities (S1)
4. Hoge administratieve lasten (S6)

## S2:

1. Arbeidsdeling zorg voor verkokering van het werk. (M6)
2. Gedetailleerde protocollen zorgen voor een versimpeling van de werkelijkheid. (M6)
3. Arbeidsverdeling vermindert de mogelijkheid om problemen op te lossen. (M6)
4. Many patients and no time. (S1)

## S3:

1. Arbeidsdeling zorgt voor beperkte taakuitvoering t.o.v. het uiteindelijke doel (M6)
2. Verschillende instanties hebben verschillende werkwijze, dit kost tijd en gaat ten koste van de zorg. (N5)
3. Hoog specialistische zorg is zeer complex en vereist landelijke samenwerking. (S6)
4. Versnippering van specialistische expertise dreigt dat kinderen en gezinnen onvoldoende hulp krijgen (S6)

## P1:

1. Prescribing too many and expensive medicine. (S1)
2. Grading is and administrative formality (S1)
3. Level of skills is reflected only in pay and wage, not in tasks and activities. (S1)
4. Nurses perform non-clinical activities such as, stock, reception, security, etc. due to narrow income difference of nurses and non-clinics. (S1)

## P2:

1. Kwantitatieve metingen door patiënten om professionals te beoordelen geven geen goed beeld van de werkelijkheid en nemen de patiënt en professional niet serieus. (M12)
2. Specialized nurses are demotivated, because their expertise is not valued and rewarded accordingly as they are performing the same job as junior nurses. Junior nurses in turn may find it difficult to cope with the responsibilities and amount of work. (S1)
3. Nurses perform non-clinical activities such as, stock, reception, security, etc. due to narrow income difference of nurses and non-clinics. (S1)

## P3:

1. Persoonlijke observatie wordt gezien als het meest indringend en heeft een negatief effect op het vertrouwen en de kwaliteit van het werk. (M14)
2. Paycheck is determined by the profit of the hospital. (S1)
3. Nurses perform non-clinical activities such as, stock, reception, security, etc. due to narrow income difference of nurses and non-clinics. (S1)
4. Vertraagde facturatie (S6)
5. Geen facturatie (S6)
6. Facturatie achteraf (S6)

## T1:

1. The use of iPad's instead of pen and paper makes work more efficient. (S1)

## T2:

- 1.

## T3:

1. Het gebruik van verschillende contracten en ICT systemen kost tijd en energie die niet naar de zorg gaat. (M2)

## **APPENDIX E Semi-structured interviews.**

**Warm welcome**

**Make interviewee feel at ease.**

### **Phase 1: Professional Conduct (max 20 mins)**

Starting with open questions to discover what professional conduct means for the interviewee:

1. *“As a professional (psychologist), what does being a professional (psychologist) mean for you?”*
2. *“What is the purpose of being a professional (psychologist)?”*
3. *“What drives you as a professional (psychologist)?” “What is your motivation?”*
4. *“What are important tasks of a professional (psychologist)?”*
5. *“What does a professional (psychologist) need to do?”*
6. *“What does being a professional (psychologist) entail?”*
7. *“What are important aspects of working as a professional (psychologist)?”*
8. *“What is the difference between the work of a professional psychologist and someone, for example a friend, family member or neighbour, who gives advice on mental health?”*

**Explain the three characteristics by writing them down and link them with his or her answer.**

1. ‘Application and further development of knowledge and skills’
2. ‘intensive technology’ → Working with people, iterative process instead of a linear process.
3. ‘Dedication to a societal value’

**Ask if he/she agrees. If so, continue. If not come to an agreement, either by further explaining or by adding or removing something from the definition.**

### **Phase 2: Conditions influencing professional conduct**

9. *“What conditions do you need in order to meet these characteristics?”*
10. *“What problems often occur in your current work environment?”*
11. *“What other problems occur during your work?”*
12. *“Why do these problems occur?”*
13. *“What could potentially solve these problems, when money is no restriction?”*

**Explain our instrument by showing and pointing at the different boxes and their relations.**

1. Goals and conditions influence professional work
2. Bureaucracy related goals
3. Market related goals
4. Structure
5. HR
6. Technology

**Make linkages between their answer and our model**

**Try to fill in the gaps, the spaces that are empty by asking about these conditions specifically.**

E.g.: *“How does technology influence the ability to perform your work?” “Can you give examples of problems that occur due to a lack of sufficient technology?”*







































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*“How does structure hinder your work?”*

*“How do rewards and or punishments influence your work?”*

**APPENDIX F Codes from Interviews**

| Name  | Grounded  |    |
|---|---|----|
|  Bureaucratic~               |    | 89 |
|  Structure~                  |    | 73 |
|  Performance Managem...~     |    | 43 |
|  Market~                     |    | 33 |
|  Technology~                 |    | 29 |
|  authority of profession...~ |    | 28 |
|  Coöperation~                |    | 22 |
|  Accountability~             |    | 20 |
|  Social District Teams~      |    | 20 |
|  Intensive Technology        |    | 20 |
|  Problems Regarding Diff...  |    | 18 |
|  Specific Knowledgde         |    | 16 |
|  Societal Value Under Pre... |    | 14 |
|  Constant Change             |    | 12 |
|  Societal value              |    | 11 |
|  Leaving YMH~                |    | 8  |
|  Positive points YMH~       |   | 7  |
|  Professional association  |  | 6  |