The Evolution of Consultant Identity in the Translation of Management Ideas

A study on change in consultant identity and the factors of influence throughout a consultants' career in translating management ideas

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Preface

In front of you is my thesis entitled "The Evolution of Consultant Identity in the Translation of Management Ideas", which I have written to complete my master studies in Organizational Design and Development at Radboud University in Nijmegen. The research presented in this thesis was conducted during the period from January till September 2024.

After obtaining my bachelor's degree in 'Industrial Engineering and Management' at Saxion University of Applied Sciences, I applied for the pre-master's programme with the intention of pursuing a master's degree. After careful consideration, I chose the master's in Organisational Design and Development. Over the past academic year, I have gained many new insights from the various courses in this master's programme. This project gave me the opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge within my field of study and significantly sharpened my academic skills. The process of researching, analysing and writing was challenging but also extremely enriching.

There are several people who played a crucial role in bringing this thesis to fruition. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. H.S. Heusinkveld, for his continuous support, valuable feedback and sharing of expertise throughout the process. Without his guidance and encouragement, this thesis would not have been the same. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to all respondents who were willing to provide me with information that has been of value for both this thesis and in real life. My thanks also go to my family and friends, who have supported me through thick and thin. Their unconditional support and understanding helped me tremendously during the periods of intense work and stress.

I hope readers will find the results of my research as interesting and valuable as I did myself.

Kind regards,

Carlijn Scholten
Haaksbergen, September 2024

Abstract

This study shows that the identity of management consultants is dynamic and examines how the identity of management consultants evolves and the factors that influence this development throughout their careers in translating management ideas. While the core identity and values of consultants tend to remain consistent, there is a notable shift in their self-perception and working methods. Initially, consultants apply theoretical knowledge and methods dogmatically, without adapting them to the client's specific context. As they gain experience, they adopt a more pragmatic, flexible, and people-oriented approach. This change is due to a continuous learning process, practical experience, adaptation to new techniques and continuous skill improvement, where both internal and external factors play a role. Internally, private events, life experience, an intrinsic drive to improve and continuous training contribute to this development. Externally, consultants are influenced by client demand, imposed additional trainings, feedback from colleagues and feedback from clients. These findings show that variation in identity can occur not only between individuals, but also within an individual over time, which contributes to a deep understanding of the reasons behind these shifts.

Key words:

Management ideas; Organisational translations; Identity work; Dynamic identity; Transition of Consultant Attitude; Transition of Consultant Approach

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Chapter 1 Introduction

In recent decades, organisations worldwide have shown a growing need to implement management ideas and practices as a way to improve their performance and efficiency. These ideas, ranging from new operational techniques to change management strategies, are often seen as critical solutions to various organisational challenges (Radaelli & Sitton-Kent, 2016; Sturdy et al., 2019). The processes by which these management ideas are accepted, translated and implemented within organisations are the subject of growing academic interest (Reay et al., 2013; Van Grinsven et al., 2020). An important aspect of this implementation process is the concept of 'translation', in which management concepts and practices are adapted to specific local contexts. However, this process is often complex, with cultural, political and technical factors influencing adaptation (Ansari et al., 2010). The extent to which these management ideas are effectively implemented depends largely on the individuals responsible for translation, also known as translation agents, such as consultants (Reay et al., 2013).

Much is already known about the role of translation agents in translating and adapting management ideas. Studies have shown that these agents play a crucial role in translating management ideas into working practices by framing, interpreting and adapting them to the specific needs of organisations (Reay et al., 2013). Their actions and decisions can significantly influence the success of implementation. At the same time, there is increasing attention to the concept of 'identity work', in which individuals actively shape their professional identity based on social interactions and professional experiences (Brown, 2015). This also applies to consultants, whose identities are constantly evolving throughout their careers (Van Grinsven et al., 2020).

However, what has not yet been sufficiently explored is how and why these identities change at the individual level over the course of a consultant's career, and how these changes affect management's idea translation practices. In a time of rapid change, driven by factors such as digitalisation, globalisation, and evolving business needs, understanding how consultants' identities shift and influence their work is crucial for organisations seeking to implement management ideas effectively (Mueller & Whittle, 2011). Understanding these dynamics is important to better explain variation in translation practices and the impact of identity changes on the success of management implementations. The lack of in-depth research on the mechanisms leading to identity changes, and how these changes affect the translation of

management ideas, represents a major knowledge gap in the current literature (Mueller & Whittle, 2011; Van Grinsven et al., 2020).

The aim of this study is to better understand the dynamics of identity change among consultants in their role as translation agents. Hence, this research focuses on how consultants' identities develop over the course of their careers and how these changes affect their translation practices. By addressing this gap, this study aims to provide insights that will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the intersection between identity work and management translation practices. It focuses on the following research question: *'How and why does consultant identity change throughout their career in translating management ideas?'*.

To answer this research question, this study uses the theoretical concept of identity work. Identity work describes how individuals actively shape and adapt their identities in response to social and professional contexts (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). This theoretical framework provides a lens for exploring how a consultants identity evolves throughout his or her career and how this evolution impacts on the translator's role as a translation agent. This choice is made because identity work provides a dynamic and context-sensitive approach, which is more appropriate for examining the fluid and evolving nature of consultants' roles compared to other, more static identity theories such as social identity theory (Brown, 2015). Additionally, Lean Management, a widely used prescriptive approach to process improvement applied in various industries, serves as the empirical context of this research. The prescriptive view of Lean Management is an appropriate empirical tool as it has been applied in various industries for quite some time (Benders & Van Bijsterveld, 2000). This makes it an appropriate context to explore how consultants form their identities and adapt their working practices as they progress in their careers. In this context, semi-structured interviews are conducted with consultants specialising in Lean Management. This method is particularly well-suited for exploring identity work, as it allows consultants to reflect deeply on their experiences, offering insights into how their identity evolves in response to professional challenges. This method allows for in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of consultants and how their identity work evolves at different stages of their careers.

This research contributes to the academic literature by examining consultants' identity change as a dynamic and contextual process, as opposed to viewing identity as static. It argues that consultants' identities are constantly changing throughout their careers and that these changes

have a significant impact on their translation practices. The findings enrich the understanding of how consultants shape and adapt their identities to new challenges and contexts, affecting their ability to translate and implement management ideas effectively. Moreover, this research will propose a model that identifies the main factors that influence consultants' identity changes and explains the factors that lead to variations in their translation practices. In addition to this scientific contribution, this research also has practical implications for consulting firms. By better understanding how identities change, consulting firms can more effectively tailor their training and development programmes to consultants' needs, which will contribute to the successful translation and implementation of management ideas.

The structure of this study is as follows. First, Chapter 2 sets out the theoretical framework by reviewing the relevant literature on the concepts of management ideas and their translation, as well as a dynamic perspective on identity work. This is followed by Chapter 3, the methods section, which describes the methodological choices made in this study. Chapter 4 then describes the findings of the study, followed by the discussion in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2 Theory

2.1 Management ideas and their translation

Management ideas – also known as 'management concepts' or 'management practices' – are continuously offered as possible solutions to various management problems. However, there are different views on management ideas. While they are embraced by authors of management books, gurus and consultants on the one hand, they are also criticised on the other for 'for not being promising or innovative at all' (Benders & Van Veen, 2001, p. 33). The change in how management ideas are viewed can be compared to the clothing industry. As Abrahamson (1996, p. 257) says: 'A management fashion is a relatively transitory collective belief, disseminated by management fashion setters, that a management technique leads rational management progress.'

As perceptions of management ideas change over time, so does their practical implementation. In this practical implementation of management ideas, the concept of translation plays an important role and has been the subject of considerable interest in recent decades (Outila et al., 2021). Translation can be defined as the process by which a general management concept is conveyed and reinterpreted in a new context (Morris & Lancaster, 2006) and the translation performance is the application of different translation rules in decontextualising practices in source units and conceptualising representations of practices in receiving units (Røvik, 2016). According to Røvik (2016), there are three modes of translation, each referring to a style of intentions and translation performance. Firstly, there is the reproducing mode, in which organisations seek to gain a competitive advantage by emulating the innovations or best practices of others in a systematic manner (Røvik, 2016). Subsequently, there is the modifying mode, in which translators are cognizant of the challenges inherent in maintaining the essential elements of the source practice while adapting the knowledge construction to the context of the receiving organization (Røvik, 2016). Finally, there is the radical mode, which is characterised by a significant divergence from the source context when creating the recipient version. This is often observed in situations where organisations seek to develop new products, processes or services that are novel both to themselves and to related organisations (Røvik, 2016).

Within the translation process, intermediaries or knowledge entrepreneurs, such as gurus, consultancies and business schools, provide a steady supply of ideas, suitably packaged for managers actively seeking innovation (Abrahamson, 1996). Based on the modes of translation and translation rules, these actors make their own translation of a given idea, allowing ideas to

be interpreted in different ways and to different degrees. Since these actors play a major role in the translation process, they are most interesting to study in terms of their identity and influence. The variation in how management ideas are translated is influenced by several factors. One key factor is the organisational culture. Organisations with a culture that supports innovation and learning are more likely to use the modifying or radical modes of translation, as described by Røvik (2016), while more conservative organisations tend more towards the reproducing mode. The role of key individuals within the organisational structure, such as leaders and managers, is also pivotal, as they can introduce their own experiences, biases and objectives into the translation process (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996). Furthermore, consultants and other individuals engaged in the transfer of knowledge play a pivotal role in the translation process. They act as intermediaries, offering bespoke management ideas to organisations and adapting these ideas to align with the specific context and needs of the organisation in question. This results in discrepancies in the implementation of analogous concepts across organisational contexts (Benders & Van Veen, 2001). Moreover, the source of the management idea and the credibility of the intermediaries or knowledge entrepreneurs disseminating the idea can lead to variations, as different actors may interpret and package the same idea in different ways (Benders & Van Veen, 2001). In addition, external pressure factors, such as competition, customer demands or technological changes, influence the manner in which a management idea is translated. Organisations facing significant external pressures may be more inclined to adopt radical translations of management ideas in order to differentiate themselves and gain a competitive advantage (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996).

The manner in which management ideas are translated is contingent upon a multitude of factors, including the organisational culture and external pressures that shape the context within which it occurs (Røvik, 2016; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). However, the individuals and groups involved in the translation process also exert a significant influence, as their personal and professional identities inform their interpretation and adaptation of management ideas (Abrahamson, 1996). This underscores the importance of identity work, a concept that provides a dynamic lens for examining how individuals shape and develop their professional identities within evolving organisational contexts. In this view, translating management ideas is not merely a matter of strategic adjustments; it also entails identity construction.

2.2 The dynamic perspective of identity work

The term 'identity work' is used to describe the processes by which individuals actively shape, repair, maintain, reinforce or revise their identity. This is done with the aim of developing a sense of coherence and distinctiveness (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). This process is seen as a crucial part of how people make meaning of themselves in relation to their environment. Initially, Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) describe how people engage in this process to construct and maintain their identity. Watson (2008) then points out that identity work takes place within the interplay between personal and social identities in different contexts, with individuals trying to maintain a relatively coherent and distinctive sense of self. This concept is further reinforced by Brown (2017), who notes that this process is permeated by emotional and social considerations, thereby contributing to the complexity of identity work. While these sources highlight the dynamic nature of identity work, it is also acknowledged that certain aspects of identity do, in fact, remain relatively stable. Ashforth et al. (2008) argue that although individuals continually adapt their identity in response to changing circumstances, certain fundamental values and self-images tend to remain relatively stable. This indicates a tension between the processes of change and continuity within identity work. Pratt et al. (2006) support this view, suggesting that identity constructions are often based on long-term personal and professional experiences that provide a stable foundation for self-perceptions and behavioural orientations. This stability is particularly important in understanding how consultants maintain their professional identity, even as they translate various management ideas. Although identity work may lead to subtle shifts in self-presentation and self-concept in specific contexts, the underlying identity components remain robust, serving as a stable frame of reference for individuals (Ashforth et al., 2008).

Golant et al. (2015), on the contrary, emphasise the constant movement in both individual and organisational identities, with this movement requiring constant identity work to balance flexibility and self-consistency. Thereby, according to Golant et al. (2015), there is a need for individuals to continuously adapt their identity to personal growth and changing circumstances without losing the core of their identity and this continuous identity work enables individuals to achieve a sense of coherence despite the dynamic contexts in which they operate. For consultants, this process is particularly relevant, as they must continuously adjust to the shifting demands of different organisations and industries while maintaining their core identity.

Building on these insights, Ibarra (1999) emphasises the experimental nature of identity work, especially in the early stages of professional development. She argues that individuals, such as consultants, often adopt provisional identities as they adapt to new professional roles and use these identities to explore different aspects of their professional selves. An important aspect of this process is how individuals develop and adapt their professional identities to new contexts. Although professional identity is usually stable, according to Ibarra (1999), it requires experimental development. Initially, individuals may adopt a provisional self to bridge the gap between their current skills, self-concepts, expectations around attitudes and behaviour in new roles. These temporary identities help them experiment with different aspects of their professional identity and image while adapting to new environments. Over time, these identities are shaped by (1) the observation of role models – ranging from senior colleagues to other professionals in the field, (2) experimenting with provisional selves, and (3) evaluating these experiments based on own standards and feedback from colleagues, managers and other stakeholders, giving people insight into their professional selves. Professional identity is especially adaptable and changeable in the early stages of a career. This perspective shows that identity work is not only a process of adaptation but also of experimentation and learning, with feedback and experience playing a crucial role in the development of professional identity. For consultants, this is essential as they often work in new and changing environments where they must constantly adapt their professional identity. The findings of the recent research conducted by Silva et al. (2023) lend further support to the proposition that identity formation is a dynamic and contextual process, where identity shifts from a beginner form of identity work to a veteran one. Additionally, Day et al. (2006) mention that personal and professional identities are intertwined and influence their work and well-being. They argue that although core values and beliefs provide stability, changes in circumstances such as biographical events or changes in the work environment can lead to instability in identity formation. This highlights the constant tension between stability and flexibility inherent to identity work.

Although identity work has been described in this current literature as a dynamic process in which individuals attempt a consistent self-image in relation to their professional environment, there remains – as also mentioned in Chapter 1 Introduction – a lack of understanding of how consultants as individuals develop and adjust their identities in the process of translating management ideas and this study aims to contribute to this knowledge gap by investigating the internal and external factors that contribute to identity changes in consultants, with a specific focus on translating Lean Management.

Chapter 3 Method

3.1 Research design

To answer the research question, '*How and why does consultant identity change throughout their career in translating management ideas?*', a qualitative research approach was used. This method allows for an in-depth exploration of the context in which decisions and actions take place, providing insight into the motivations, reasons, and actions of individuals by placing great emphasis on direct interaction with individuals, either through conversations or by reading their written material, to comprehend their thoughts and reasoning, which is crucial in explaining their behaviour (Bleijenbergh, 2016; Myers, 2020). The study is conducted from an interpretive perspective, with the aim of gaining a thorough understanding of the subject rather than testing existing theories (Myers, 2020). This perspective is in line with the constructivist paradigm, in which knowledge is actively constructed by the researcher rather than passively received. In this paradigm, the researcher and the subject of study are interactively linked, resulting in findings that emerge as the research progresses (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). An abductive research strategy was used in which comparisons were made between the inductive codes and existing literature at three different stages of coding (Myers, 2020; Vila-Henninger et al., 2022). This iterative process focuses on the integration of research data with existing theory. Prior to data collection, concepts related to the translation of management ideas (Røvik, 2016) and dynamic identity (Ibarra, 1999; Silva et al., 2023) were considered. These conceptual frameworks guided the data analysis, leading to insights that contribute to the existing literature and provide a basis for further research.

3.2 Sampling

As previously stated in Chapter 1, the decision was made to focus the study on consultants. This because consultants play an important role in translating management ideas into practice (Abrahamson, 1996) and because little research has been done on the supply side of the management fashion market, with consultants being an important group of model suppliers towards practice (David & Strang, 2006). In the context of this thesis, the following sampling criteria were employed in the process of identifying respondents. To investigate the transition from novice consultant to more experienced consultant (from 'beginner' to 'veteran' in terms of Silva et al. (2023)) and the internal and external factors involved, it was necessary to conduct interviews with consultants at different stages of their careers. The interviews were conducted with respondents who had limited experience in the consulting industry (less than five years)

and those who had extensive experience (more than ten years). This was done for the purpose of comparison.

The choice is made to focus on a single management idea, Lean Management. This for the reason that the use of a single management idea allows for a coherent arrangement of well-developed techniques, enabling large groups of consultants to approach well-defined situations in a uniform way (Visscher, 2001, as cited in Heusinkveld & Benders, 2002). Lean Management can be described as a typical management idea. This since it is labelled, that it has a prescriptive view on the aspect of logistics management and that it has been implemented for a long time in organisations in different sectors (Benders & Van Bijsterveld, 2000). Given that this management idea has been on the market for a long time, it is a particularly useful empirical context for this thesis and provides the basis for examining whether and how the fluctuating identity of consultants over time affects the way the management idea is translated. Accordingly, respondents engaged in the practice of Lean Management as consultants were identified as a key source of information. Furthermore, ten respondents from two consulting firms and two self-employed individuals were approached to ensure that their identities were not associated with a specific organisation, but rather were attributed to the individual in question. In order to select the most relevant respondents to answer the research question, a purposive sampling approach (Myers, 2020) was employed using the aforementioned selection criteria. Respondents were selected using online platforms, including LinkedIn and the websites of Dutch consulting firms, and were contacted through these platforms as well as by email. An overview of the selected respondents and their job title, gender, age, educational background and years of experience is shown in Appendix I.

3.3 Data collection

For this research, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 different respondents. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they provide a consistent structure to the interviews while leaving room for follow-up or new questions (Bleijenbergh, 2016; Myers, 2020). The data collection process comprised two distinct phases. In the initial phase, two preliminary interviews were conducted, after which the interview guide was adapted. Which changes were made and why they were made are mentioned in Appendix II. The remaining 10 interviews were then conducted in the second phase. The focus of this study was on management consultants and the perceived changes in their identity over the course of their professional careers. The study also aimed to ascertain how these changes in identity affected

the way in which they implemented management ideas. For this reason, the interviews initially covered the following topics: a general introduction, the personal background of the respondent, identity over time, the translation of management ideas, the influence of identity on this translation, and a general conclusion. Each of these topics consisted of a number of in-depth questions for which protocols have been drawn up. These protocols were designed with the idea that each of the interviews would be conducted in the same way if respondents had asked counter questions. The interview guide is shown in Appendix III.

The sample data collection comprises 12 interviews, with an average duration of 50 minutes. The interviews were conducted in two ways: physical interviews and remote interviews conducted via the online platform of Microsoft Teams. The decision as to whether the interview would be conducted in a physical or online environment was made based on the respondent's preference. Research indicates that interviews conducted via image calling yield qualitatively similar data to those conducted in person (Janghorban et al., 2014). It has been observed that respondents tend to share more candid information in a familiar environment, which enhances the depth and richness of the data (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Weller, 2017). Furthermore, non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and hand gestures, remain sufficiently visible, thus maintaining the effectiveness of this method for observing non-verbal communication (Seitz, 2016). Image calling facilitates the accessibility of a diverse range of respondents, allowing for the recruitment of a more representative sample without geographical limitations (Archibald et al., 2019). Moreover, it offers cost efficiency and flexibility, which facilitate the organisation of interviews and increase willingness to participate (Sullivan, 2012). During the course of this study, the aforementioned advantages facilitated the recruitment of consultants, who were located in various locations, including clients' offices or homes, for the relatively brief interview duration. Additionally, an audio recording was made of each interview, which reduced the necessity for taking notes and enabled accurate transcription, thereby enhancing the reliability of data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Langley & Abdallah, 2011).

It should be noted that all interviews were conducted in Dutch. This because it is the respondents' mother tongue, enabling them to speak freely without the potential hindrance of a language barrier. As the study is written in English, the researcher translated the quotes. While every effort was made to ensure accuracy, it is possible that the meanings of the original words were adjusted slightly.

3.4 Data analysis

After conducting the interviews, the process of data analysis began. During the data collection, the interviews were recorded with the consent of the respondents. These recordings were used for verbatim transcriptions. As Rahmani & Leifels (2018) argue, grounded theory in the form of abductive research is a viable approach, making this analysis based on Strauss and Corbin's (1998) grounded theory approach. The verbatim transcripts of the interviews were analysed using open, axial and selective coding, following the guidelines for data analysis in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2015, p. 43; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For data analysis, the coding program Atlas.ti is used. This software increases efficiency and allows work to be organised in a structured way and replicated more reliably at different levels (Bleijenbergh, 2016).

3.4.1 Open coding

In the first step, the transcripts were read and open codes were assigned. Open coding is the initial analysis of the transcripts in which the content, such as a sentence or paragraph, is summarized in short codes. The codes are descriptive and serve to identify, name and categorize the phenomena observed in the text. This process involved labelling and naming components that are theoretically important or significant within the social contexts being studied (Myers, 2020). As outlined by Vila-Henninger et al. (2022), the process of abductive coding begins with the identification of overarching themes derived from the transcripts. Subsequently, a deductive codebook is constructed in alignment with the selected theoretical framework. The process of coding commences with a preliminary round of inductive coding. Subsequently, the theoretical lens is applied to this data set in order to ascertain its alignment with the existing theory. The application of this methodology yielded 548 open codes after inductive coding. The open codes are descriptive, stay as close as possible to the respondents' wording, and help identify and categorise different phenomena observed in the text.

Subsequently, the codes were subjected to a review through the lens of the theory, resulting in a reduction of the total number of codes to 240 codes which were deemed to be pertinent for further analysis. Examples of what was deleted include ‘Change towards doing what you really enjoy leads to more fun and energy in work’ and ‘Change in approach towards standardisation’. This for the reason that these codes were too focused on the individual and were only named with the respondent in question or the codes applied to the organisation in question rather than the individual level. In addition, the codes relating to specific steps in the working method were

removed, as they were not relevant in interpreting consultants' attitudes and were too specific to properly describe the working method.

The theoretical lens was employed to investigate how different actors express their own identity in relation to a certain point in their career (beginner vs veteran) and the impact this has on their working practices, as these identities are examined through an analysis of how they are expressed discursively. These 240 codes were used for comparative analysis between the approaches to translation outlined in Røvik (2016), the identities and factors identified in Ibarra (1999), and the social identities discussed in Silva et al. (2023). This is to determine how consultants translate management ideas and whether beginner and veteran identities make a difference in the way respondents implement management ideas, providing input for the following phases of coding and a basis for new insights.

3.4.2 Axial coding

Axial coding, the second step of data analysis, involved interpreting categories and their properties. The primary objective of this phase was to refine conceptual constructs that can potentially illuminate the interactions between descriptive categories. Related codes were grouped to minimize redundancy and focus on topics of theoretical significance (Myers, 2020). The open codes were refined and clarified through constant comparison of the data, emerging codes, and the theory on identity work. These open codes were then clustered into axial codes, which resulted in a total of 26 axial codes. Examples of these codes are: ‘Reasoning from theory’, ‘Improved communication with customers’, and ‘Customer demand becomes more complex’. These codes describe the change in approach of beginner consultants in comparison to more experienced consultants and relate to beginner attitudes and ways of working, the change to a new and more people-oriented way of working, and the factors involved. During this second step, axial codes were iteratively redefined to cover the content of the open codes as best as possible. To illustrate, the term ‘people-oriented’ was redefined as ‘people-oriented approach’ to ensure clarity regarding its function as an approach. Similarly, the terms ‘holding a managerial/supervisory position’ and ‘learning from making mistakes’ were redefined as ‘holding a position with more authority’ and ‘learning by doing’, respectively, to facilitate the inclusion of multiple quotes under a single heading.

3.4.3 Selective coding

The final step in the process was selective coding, where a theory is formulated to generate inferential or predictive statements. This process involved specifying explicit links between individual interpretive constructs. The aim was to develop a comprehensive inference system that covers the entire area under investigation (Myers, 2020). In this step, the axial codes were combined to selective codes. In this research, this phase led to 5 aggregate dimensions ('Dogmatic approach', 'Continuous change in approach', 'Pragmatic approach', 'Internal influences for change in approach', and 'External influences for change in approach'), which provide knowledge about the fluctuation in consultant identity on the way these consultants translate management ideas. The final structure of the coding stages is shown in Appendix IV.

3.5 Research criteria

The quality of qualitative research should not be assessed using traditional measures such as reliability and validity due to the interpretive nature of this research method (Myers, 2020). Instead, quality is assessed using four essential criteria: creditability, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Credibility is concerned with whether the evidence provided is an authentic representation of what happened *(*Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, credibility is promoted through member checking, where the researcher checks their interpretations of the data with the participants to ensure accuracy and authenticity. This is done through member checking. Transferability refers to whether the applicability of the findings has been considered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, transferability is achieved by providing a detailed description of the research context ('sampling') so that others can assess whether the findings are relevant to their own situation. Dependability refers to whether the researcher's bias is minimised (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, dependability is ensured by keeping a research diary (Appendix II), which records the research events and the decisions made, allowing for transparency and accountability. Finally, confirmability concerns whether alternative explanations were considered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within this study, confirmability is ensured by transcribing interviews verbatim, making all steps in the research process transparent and reflecting the researcher's influence on the data. The application of these criteria ensures the quality of qualitative research in a way that does justice to the interpretative nature of the method and provides valuable insights based on participants' perspectives. Section 5.6 discusses methodological choices and their quality during the conduct of the research.

3.6 Research ethics

During this study, established research ethics are taken into account. Prior to each interview, respondents were asked for their informed consent for the interviews and relevant information, the request to record the interview, the request to transcribe and process the interview, and the request to publish the results in the Radboud repository. This approach aimed to promote a relatively informal atmosphere conducive to the active sharing of personal experiences, as suggested by Wiles (2013), while ensuring that interviewees felt safe and comfortable by providing all the information necessary for informed consent (Myers, 2020). It was also crucial to ensure scientific integrity, which required the researcher to be open and honest at every stage of the study and to avoid any misrepresentation (Myers, 2020). In addition, the importance of informed consent was emphasised, with consent being sought from the partner organisations to conduct the study, as well as from each respondent prior to the interviews (Myers, 2020). To further promote a sense of safety and comfort, respondents were informed of their ability to withdraw from participation or ask questions at any time during the research process (Wiles, 2013), and they were guaranteed anonymity within the study by changing identifying information (Payne & Payne, 2004, as cited in Myers, 2020).

Chapter 4 Results

From the data analysis, five core concepts are central to this research, which both confirm and add to existing theory. These core concepts are: 'Continuous change in approach', 'Dogmatic approach', 'Pragmatic approach', 'Internal influences for change in approach', and 'External influences for change in approach'. The following paragraphs will address the five different dimensions.

4.1 Continuous change in approach

The findings indicate that a significant proportion of the consultants report that their core values remains largely unchanged throughout their careers. As respondent 3 asserts, "*At the core, I believe that I remain fundamentally unchanged as an individual*" (I3R54). This assertion is corroborated by respondent 5, who asserts, "*I do not believe that there have been any significant changes in the way I present myself throughout my career as a consultant*" (I5R42) when questioned about alterations in the manner in which they present themselves throughout their careers as consultants and how their core values evolve. While the management consultants' core values remain the same, their attitude and approach change. This continuous learning process reflects how consultants are constantly redefining their professional identity to remain relevant in a changing environment. One respondent says: "*That's something I've learned over the years. And at the same time, I'm still in the middle of it*" (I4R64). This statement illustrates the dynamic nature of their identity work, in which they continue to develop and adapt without losing their core values. By applying new techniques and methods and continuously improving their skills, consultants continue to refine their self-image as flexible professionals who are able to effectively apply Lean Management principles in different situations. Despite the ongoing professional development of consultants, the interviews revealed two main approaches. These can be broadly categorised as a dogmatic approach for those new to the role of consultant and a pragmatic approach for those with more experience. The following paragraphs will provide a more detailed examination of these approaches.

4.2 Dogmatic approach

The approach used by consultants early in their careers can be described as dogmatic. This phase is characterised by a strong focus on theoretical knowledge and methodologies. During this period, consultants typically adhere rigidly to predetermined methodologies and guidelines, with the objective of establishing their expertise and reputation. They avoid conflict to avoid resistance and focus mainly on substantive direction, being driven to be liked by clients and

colleagues. It is at this stage that consultants are still in the beginner form of identity work described by Silva et al. (2023), with a strong tendency to rely on rigid principles in their approach to clients and projects. In their early careers, consultants experience a strong urge to apply their theoretical knowledge and methodologies without adapting them to the specific context of the client. This dogmatic approach is indicative of a stage in their career where their self-image is strongly tied to a strict application of Lean methods, with no room for adaptation or flexibility. Several consultants described their experiences and insights about this phase. The consultants relied heavily on methodologies: "*At the beginning of my career, I was mainly involved in the content*." (I6R108). Therefore, this dogmatic approach refers to the use of the reproducing mode – as designated by Røvik (2015) – in which management ideas are adopted as accurately as possible in their new context.

This way of working is often combined with stubbornness and a focus on theory: "*I think in the beginning I was very stubborn and wanted to do things that way from the books. Of course, I learned a lot from Toyota and so you think if we start doing that now, it will work*." (I11R44). This rigid mindset is characteristic of the beginning phase in which consultants find themselves. Respondent 11 also mentions: "*Whereas in the early years, that was maybe more of a trick*" (I1R119), indicating that the implementation of the change process is seen as a trick that can be implemented in the same way for every organization and produces the same results. In addition, many consultants felt the need to do everything themselves in order to achieve success: "*When I was 24, then I really had the idea, I do everything myself*" (I4R58) and maintained an authoritarian attitude towards the client: "*I would have said ten years ago of, I decide, you do it as I say*" (I4R94). In the beginning, they were often only involved in projects in terms of content: "*At the beginning of my career, in particular, I was only involved in content*" (I6R108). In short, in the early stages of their careers, management consultants experience a strong urge to apply their theoretical knowledge and methodologies without adapting them to the specific context of the client.

4.3 Pragmatic approach

It was found among respondents that as consultants gain more experience – and are thus in the veteran form of identity work described by Silva et al. (2023), they transition to a more pragmatic, flexible and people-oriented approach to their work. This shift reflects a significant change in their identity, where they start to see themselves as adaptive problem solvers and where they adopt a more – according to Ibarra (1999) – professional identity. One respondent

states: *"The main approach remains the same, but within that it is much more situation-dependent and you look at what is really needed at that moment. So, you focus more on the needs, listen better, map out needs better and therefore have better effects. The biggest difference is that with this approach, with the new approach, you have much better support because you connect much more with the needs and with the people and that you listen to them better."* (I11R72-74). This highlights how their professional self-image evolves from a rigid expert to a consultant who values pragmatism and adaptability. They start to see Lean Management no longer as a rigid set of rules, but as a flexible approach that can be adapted to the specific context of each client. This redefinition of their professional identity enables them to work more effectively and with greater impact and is consistent with the modifying mode as designated by Røvik (2015).

In their work with clients, the focus shifts from a content-driven approach to a more needs-based approach: "*Where maybe in the past I would have been more content-driven than I am today*" (I2R96). As a result, clients take a more active attitude and take more initiative: "*If you push less on those results, people grab more space*" (I4R98). Consultants learn to adapt their methods to the specific context of the client, which is a clear reflection of their evolving identity and professional self. The process of experimenting– as designated by Ibarra (1999) – based on new experiences is an essential aspect of their development, allowing them to better respond to the needs of their clients: "*If you push less on those outcomes, people take up more space*" (I4R98). Instead of deciding for themselves what the client should do, they now ask the client to come up with suggestions: "*But now I know that it is much wiser to ask the client how they think it could work*" (I4R94). The approach to change issues is becoming more people-centred: "*Going through everything at the introduction, listening, asking what people are up against*" (I11R46) and "*I am much more concerned with what behaviour is needed*" (I11R44). Consultants find certainty in their experience rather than in methodologies: "*Not looking for your certainty in methodologies, but rather in the experience you have*" (I11R47).

In short, where consultants early in their careers have a strong urge to apply theoretical knowledge and methodologies without adapting them to the specific context of the client (also known as the translation mode reproducing), these consultants are going through a transition to a more pragmatic, flexible and people-oriented approach in their work (also known as the translation mode modifying). These changes in working methods are indicated by means of quotes in Table 1. An extended version of this table is given in Appendix IV. Within the

dogmatic and pragmatic approaches, a distinction can also be made in the attitude of consultants. This despite the fact that a number of consultants have indicated that their core identity – which they defined in core values - has not changed. These core values have not changed, but the attitude that consultants show in their beginner phase and the veteran phase does differ. These differences are shown with quotes in Table 2. An extended version of this table is given in Appendix IV. In Table 1 and 2, the reasons are also mentioned why the change from an insecure, eager and ambitious attitude to a confident attitude has taken place and why the change from a dogmatic to a pragmatic approach has taken place. These factors are divided into internal and external factors and will be briefly mentioned in the following paragraphs.

4.4 Internal factors on change in approach

As consultants accrue more experience in their field, their attitude and approach to work evolves. This change is the result of a number of influences exerted by the consultants themselves, including their involvement in private events, life itself, their parental status, their intrinsic drive to improve, their learning by doing, and their learning through self-reflection. Table 3 illustrates the frequency with which respondents cited each of the aforementioned influences. Subsequently, each of these factors is elucidated.

Table 3 Internal factors mentioned per interview

	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8	I9	I10	I11	I12
Private events							x		x			
Life itself	x	x			x				x		x	X
Parental status						x	x			x	x	X
Intrinsic drive to improve						x	x				x	X
Learning by doing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X
Learning by self-reflection	x	x			x	x						

Private events

Private events play a significant role in consultants' professional development. Experiences such as the end of a long-term relationship or family enlargement provide new perspectives and approaches. In their responses, respondents 7 and 9 indicated that personal events such as the death of a family member or the end of a long-term relationship provided them with a new perspective. Such events force consultants to reconsider their priorities and shape their professional attitudes and methodologies. These reconsiderations reflect the process of adapting identity based on personal experiences, which is consistent with earlier ideas by Day et al. (2005).

Table 1 Change in approach of consultants

	Beginners approach (dogmatic)	Why the change?	Veterans approach (pragmatic)
From content-oriented to process-oriented	• "Whereas in the first few years, that was maybe more of a trick. Changing a process. With a little bit of lean knowledge, anyone can." (I1R119) • "In which maybe in the past I would have been more directing that content too, than I am today." (I2R96) • "I started once, after I graduated as a consultant, but so at that time I had zero experience myself. Whatever I just said, that felt like a very theoretical interpretation." (I3R40) • "At the beginning of my career, I was mainly only involved in content." (I6R108) • "Where in the beginning you still lean on method because you have little experience yourself. […] That you get certainty from theory." (I11R48)	• "That bit of awareness really came with age." (I1R119) • "I think primarily an experience piece. Just bumping your head a few times." (I2R107) • "The fact that with me that human component has started to weigh more heavily over the years. That might really have to do with age. (I2R124) • "Whether something itself doesn't work, you learn that from experience. […] Then what does work, you learn that from trainings and some books." (I11R89) • "Because of a piece of life wisdom. That you take yourself with that in your approach and you can switch in the situation. Seeing what is needed at that moment. A piece of growing your own confidence in that." (I11R48)	• "I: So now more on the process, previously more on the content? R: Yes." (I2R96-97-98) • "I have been able to let go of things literally carrying out from the book and not looking for certainty in methods and things like that, but precisely in the experience you have and that if you listen, it will work out fine by itself. That you can make a good plan with that." (I11R44) • "Your approach on the main line remains the same, but within that it is much more situation-dependent, and you look at what is really needed at that moment. So more on those needs, that you listen better. That you map out better needs..." (I11R72-74)
From execution in-house to letting customers do things themselves	• "So in the past always doing everything myself and also being the holy conviction of that which is the very best thing to do" (I4R58) • "I had said ten years ago of, I decide, you do it as I say" (I4R94). • "In the beginning, I mainly did the changes myself." (I6R108)	• "I have had conversations with a colleague, to have another take the initiative, to have another take space, you have to make space." (I4R98) • "By what you experience yourself and by starting to work on yourself the moment you run into something." (I6R110)	• "But by now I know it's much wiser to then ask the follow-up question, okay. But if this is the way you think it's not going to work, how do you think it could work." (I4R94) • "Now you do that a bit more in togetherness in that. If I compared to where I started then and where I am now, a lot has changed, especially in terms of communication." (I6R108)

Table 2 Change in attitude of consultants

	Beginners attitude (insecure, eager and ambitious)	Why the change?	Veterans attitude (confident)
From being insecure to being confident	• "I was probably much more concerned then with how I would be perceived and what they would think or think of me as an outsider coming in" (I2R50). • "When I started in my career, I still had a lot of, let's say, let me put it tactfully or is this not too direct when I put it like this." (I9R49)	• "But that confidence is more a matter of experience than I would dedicate it to a personal change." (I9R51) • "This is a matter of making metres also often, gaining experience." (I10R110)	• "I think now, much more than I used to, I dare to let my own values be visible than I dared before." (I2R50) • "I did become more present with my opinions." (I9R63). "More confident" (I9R65) • You are more confident in your opinions." (I10R110)
From pretending to be different to being yourself	• "That I presented myself differently then than I do now." (I2R63) • "What I used to do with clients. When you start out, you have this idea of everyone has to like me and everyone has to like me and if I mainly just keep everyone pleasured, then all will be fine." (I9R56)	• "I find as I have grown older that it is easier to be myself." (I2R50) • This [learning confidence] grows. And you know, every consultant who knows this, they might not start encompassing it in the same words. But this is really something has to grow. Someone can tell you, but it's something else to live it." (I9R100)	• "Now I am not actually presenting myself." (I2R63) • "Nowadays, when I put myself down with a client, I start acting more like a thorn in the flesh." (I9R56) • "I dare to be a little firmer in let's say, calling out in a neat way 'you're just not right'." (I9R93)
From wanting to prove yourself to being satisfied with your current position	• "Maybe I also used to have a lot more of that proof drive to know everything or show that you know." (I2R66) • "I used to be really eager. I want to achieve all kinds of things. Going here, going there." (I10R121) • "I often used to be a bit impatient because of my drive." (I12R82)	• "The change in my family. I have become a mother in recent years." (I10R121) • "I am getting a bit older myself, so I look at things a bit differently. I have found through experience that sometimes you also have to give things a chance to unfold themselves a bit." (I12R83)	• "That [the urge to prove yourself] has also secretly gone away a bit." (I2R66) • "I don't worry so much about everything anymore. […] I don't really need to be where my current manager is. Then I think, hey, you sit at home with all that stress, I make sure I'm with the children for dinner in the evening. I find that much more important." (I10R121)
Growth in sense of responsibility	• "See, where you used to be a young dog, happy-go-lucky..." (I7R141)	• "Time just in terms of age." (R139) • "Being a parent makes you responsible for others in a different way. Surely that makes a whole different sense of responsibility." (I7R169)	• "… You now become a bit more controlled and controlled." (I7R141)

Life itself

Age and the associated life experiences bring increasing awareness and change in attitude and approach. Young consultants compare themselves to 'young dogs in the field', full of energy and enthusiasm: "*Where you used to be a young dog jumping in the field...*" (I7R141). As they get older, consultants learn to use their character traits more effectively: "*Over the years, you probably know how to use that more effectively*" (I5R45). They develop a better understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses: "*At some point, you know that about yourself a bit better*" (I5R43). This translates into better conversations about ideas from the client: "*I think now I am better able to have a conversation about that idea first*" (I6R113). Older, more experienced consultants indicate that their view of work and responsibilities has changed with age: "*That bit of awareness has really come with age*" (I1R119). So, in addition to experimenting with provisional identities based on role models, as described by Ibarra (1999), the formation of a professional identity is also influenced by the individual's evolving perception of the world as they age.

Parental status

The home situation affects how consultants work. For example, a difficult home situation and the degree of feeling safe to share that at work can affect consultants: '*I had a tough home situation with a little one. Yes, then you feel safe, do you dare to say that or not. Yes, that plays a big role.*' (I7R136). Respondents 7 and 10 indicated that having children has significantly changed their perspective on risks and responsibilities. This has led to a more cautious and thoughtful approach in their professional lives: "*If anything then has been of great influence.... I think because I have children, that I'm suddenly more afraid of certain things where I normally saw adventure.*" (I7R169). In doing so, there has been a shift from focusing only on work to what consultants find really important in the private situation: "*I don't worry so much about everything anymore. There are other things that are more important*" (I10R121). They strive less for continuous progress and are more satisfied with their current situation: "*I don't worry so much about everything anymore. Sounds really stupid, but there are other things that are more important. You have a lot more peace of mind. Now I'm like, boy am I happy in what I do. I like my work. I enjoy it a lot. I'm doing fine. I don't really need to be where my current manager is. Then I think, hey, you sit at home with all that stress, I make sure I'm with the children for dinner in the evening. I find that much more important*." (I10R121). This shift shows how parenthood adjusts their approach to work, level of ambition and their identity, which is again consistent with earlier ideas from Day et al. (2005).

Intrinsic drive to improve

A strong intrinsic drive to continuously improve drives several consultants. This drive to improve comes from a combination of self-reflection, curiosity and the desire to achieve better results for their clients. As respondent 5 states, "*Natural curiosity about how things can be done differently*" (I5R95). In addition, two respondents indicated that they themselves take the initiative to continuously educate themselves. This includes attending trainings and courses specifically aimed at professional development: "*I have been constantly challenging myself with trainings I have attended*" (I12R85). To find out which practices or methodologies are appropriate for certain situations, you learn through additional training: "*What works then, you learn that from trainings and some books. But especially in trainings, that you get new handles*." (I11R89). These trainings help them learn new techniques and methodologies that are directly applicable in their work.

Learning by doing

Practical experience is crucial for consultant development. Respondents all stressed that learning by doing helps them better understand what works in practice and what does not work. This hands-on experience is indispensable for developing in-depth knowledge and skills. Actually, performing tasks and projects provides the most valuable lessons: "*The doing. Experiencing it. That that is the strongest factor*" (I3R120). Several respondents stress that making mistakes is seen as an essential learning experience. Consultants often learn more from failures than successes, which helps them improve their approach: "*You also have to go down on yourself to learn*" (I10R116). Discovering that certain methods are not effective forces consultants to revise their approach. This process of trial and error leads to refined and more effective methods: "*Too often we saw that when we left a company again, it collapsed*" (I1R70). The consultants adapt their methods by trying out different ways of working and evaluating what works best in practice: "*You also learn for yourself from what is happening and how to approach it in a different way*" (I8R54). Experiencing that certain methods do not work and experimenting with new methods allows consultants to better tailor future strategies to their clients' needs.

Learning by self-reflection

Self-reflection is an important tool for consultants to improve their approach. By regularly evaluating their own performance, behaviour, methods, and experiments with provisional selves, they can continuously grow and adapt: "*Thinking creates awareness*" (I2R127).

Reflecting on themselves helps consultants critically evaluate their own behaviour and methods. This process of introspection leads to continuous improvement and adaptation of their approach, resulting in more effective and efficient consultancy practices. This factor, along with continuous training and practical experience, ensure that consultants constantly adapt and refine their approach, leading to a more effective and people-oriented approach in their work.

4.5 External factors on change in approach

In addition to the internal factors that come from within the consultants themselves, there are also external factors that influence the change from an insecure, eager and ambitious attitude to a confident attitude and from a dogmatic to a pragmatic approach. These factors are: a more complex client demand, the situation within the consultancy, attending imposed additional training, learning by doing larger assignments, and learning from others. Table 4 shows which respondents mentioned each of these influences. Each of these factors is then discussed.

Table 4 External factors mentioned per interview

	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8	I9	I10	I11	I12
More complex client demand	x							x				
Situation in consultancy firm		x					x		x			
Imposed additional training								x				X
Learning from others	x		x	x	x		x			x		

More complex client demand

This customer demand is increasingly complex: "*Earlier, when you talked about Lean... something in a company, you could see if a production was often down, or if there was a lot of stock. The multiple visual aspects. But most companies address that themselves first because that knowledge is already in the organisation as well. So you actually have to go much deeper into the output and into what is happening all around it and also what is happening in the organisation itself.*" (I8R57). This increasing complexity of problems combined with the availability of new tools forces consultants to constantly adapt and innovate their approach. This creates a continuous development in the methods and techniques applied: "*You see the problems and issues that have also become more complex. That creates a different interpretation, and different way of approaching things. So that way will continue to change*" (I8R52).

Situation in consultancy firm

Within the consultancy firm, several factors play a role in consultants' attitude and approach. Here, gender diversity is mentioned as having an impact on communication styles: "*What has definitely also had an impact is, and this is one of those factors that I do miss within our company at the moment, is having female colleagues. That also makes things communicate differently, also towards the customer.*" (I2R127). Furthermore, things like turnover of staff can also affect consultants: "*At the moment, we are also experiencing quite a bit of turnover, which directly affects my work. Usually I'm pretty good at leaving things at work. But I really do take this one home as well*." (I9R114).

Following imposed additional training

Consultants continue to develop by attending additional training courses required by the company. " *I attended a special auditor training course for organisation G. The company said that in order to be able to add more value to our clients, we think it is important that you attend these training courses.*". (I12R87). This contributes to their professional development and helps them to keep up to date with the latest methods and techniques.

Learning from others

Consultants learn a lot from listening to their clients and colleagues. By listening attentively to feedback and advice, they can continuously improve their approach: "*If you really work intensively with a client, you sometimes hear that you are not doing that well. Or that you are not paying enough attention to this theme. Those are also moments of realization*" (I1R126). Project evaluation and feedback from both colleagues and stakeholders are essential for consultants to grow. These evaluations provide insight into what went well and what can be improved, allowing consultants to refine their approach. Respondent 7 states that: "*I just get great feedback from my own colleagues about how I come across and how I can improve*." (I7R130). Respondent 1 adds that client feedback also influences the evaluation: "*If you really work intensively with a client, you sometimes hear that you don't do that well, or that you don't pay enough attention to this theme. Those are also moments of realization*." (I1R126).

Discussing experiences and challenges with more experienced colleagues – the veterans in terms of Silva et al. (2023) – contributes to the professional development of consultants. This consultation helps them to gain different perspectives and come up with new solutions: "*We also share quite a lot of knowledge with each other*" (I3R120). Regular evaluations and

consultation between colleagues are essential for professional growth and quality improvement of the work: "*On Mondays we do have a kind of work meeting. So then we see everyone briefly. And we really try to use that moment to share what we are doing, to help each other, to challenge each other a bit in what you are doing with clients*" (I1R32).

In addition to listening and discussing, observing is also part of the learning process for consultants. By observing managers and management teams, they learn valuable lessons about leadership and management: "*You also see how they, often you have meetings with management teams. Then that is clearly a management meeting where you are also present as an external party. There you also see how they lead their team*" (I1R126). Thereby, working with colleagues provides crucial learning opportunities. Respondents indicated that working with more experienced colleagues allows them to learn from others' approaches: *'In that project, I saw how they worked. That experience taught me a lot about how to be pragmatic'* (I8R102). This social comparison helps them improve and adapt their own approaches and provides possible provisional selves where consultants can experiment with in the future.

Based on the different components addressed in this results section, the following model can be presented to represent the evolution consultants experience in their careers - moving from a dogmatic to a people-centred approach, with both internal and external factors contributing to this transformation.

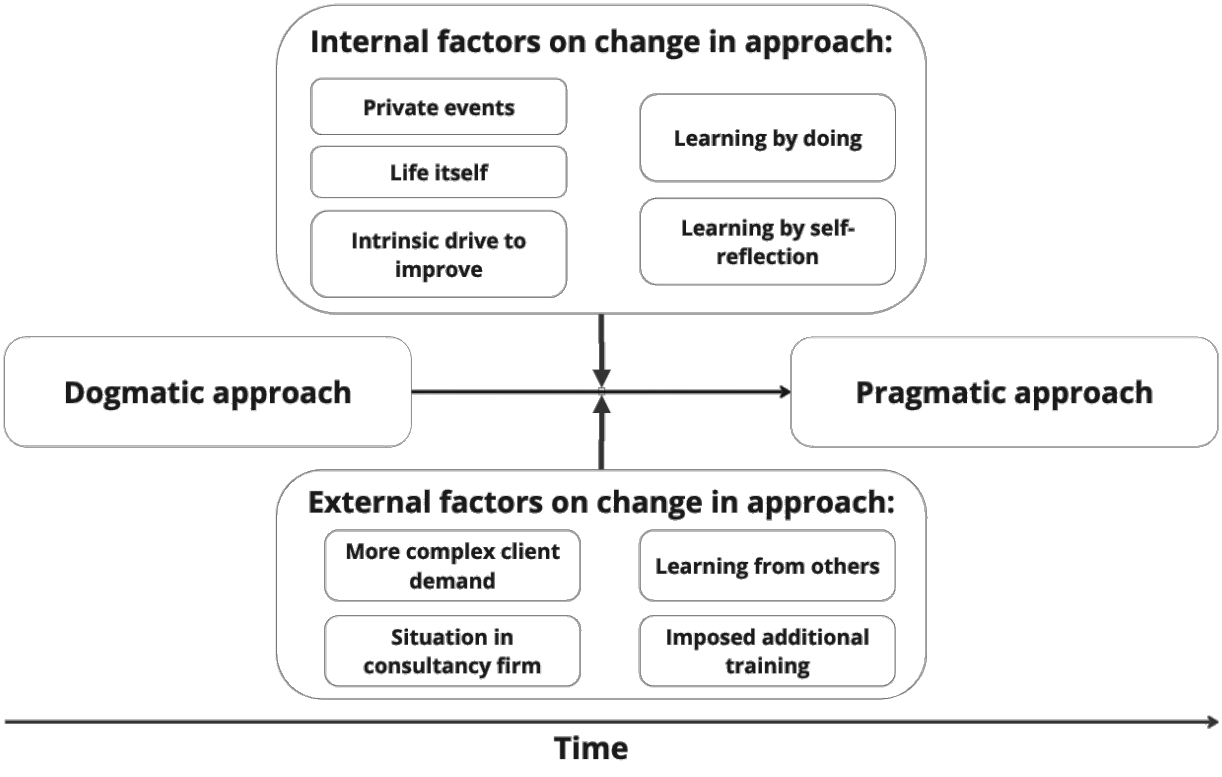

Figure 1 The evolution of consultant identity over time

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of results

The objective of this study was to address the following research question: *"How does consultant identity change and what factors influence the identity of management consultants throughout their careers in translating management ideas?"*. The results of this study show that while the core identity and values of management consultants often remain unchanged, there is a shift in the way they talk about themselves and in how they approach their work. In the early stages of their careers, the beginner consultants tend to apply their theoretical knowledge and methodologies dogmatically, without adapting them to the specific context of the client. As they gain experience, however, they move towards a more professional identity and a pragmatic, flexible and people-oriented approach. This illustrates the change that management consultants go through with their approach and awareness constantly evolving as a result of practical experience, adapting to new techniques and methods, and constantly improving their skills and strategies.

The change in the way consultants talk about themselves can be attributed to both internal and external factors. Internally, their approach is influenced by private events, life experiences, an intrinsic drive to improve and continuous training. Through making mistakes, trying different approaches and self-reflection, consultants are constantly developing their skills and methods. These internal factors contribute to their ability to make a sustainable impact within organizations and respond effectively to their clients' needs. Externally, management consultants are influenced by client demand, imposed additional training, and constant evaluation and consultation within the team and with the client. These external factors allow consultants to continually adapt and improve, resulting in a more effective and flexible approach to their work.

In conclusion, the findings of this research demonstrate that the identity of management consultants is not a fixed entity, but rather a dynamic process of continuous change and adaptation. This process is driven by a complex interplay of internal and external factors, which collectively contribute to the consultant's professional growth and development. This reveals that one person can shift within their career in how they see themselves and approach their work, and why these shifts occur.

5.2 Theoretical contributions

The insights from this study makes three contributions to the existing theory. First, there are a number of points where this research confirms existing theory. The results align with the existing literature that identity is flexible and thus not a stable given, as mentioned in Brown (2017) and Silva et al., 2023). Among others, this is evident from Tables 1 and 2, in which it is clear that there is indeed a difference in the attitudes and practices of consultants in the beginner and veteran form of identity work that Silva et al. (2023) described earlier. Furthermore, this research confirms that that the core values are what is stable in consultants' identities (Day et al., 2006; Ashforth et al, 2008), where this research shows that during the careers of these consultants, these values are only reinforced and therefore increasingly emerge in the attitudes and practices of consultants. Thereby, it is also confirmed that that personal situation of consultants affects their professional identity in the sense that ambition level and working methods change (Day et al., 2006). In addition, Golant et al. (2015) indicated that the identity of consultants is in a constant flux, which is confirmed in this study with the continuous improvement that consultants consider necessary in order to continue to meet client needs in terms of attitudes and practices. Second, the insights of this study show that there is not only variation between consultants, but also variation within an individual over time. Compared to the work of Van Grinsven (2020), which showed variation in identity between different consultants, this study goes a step further by showing that such variation can also occur within an individual throughout the career. Third and last, the insights provide an in-depth understanding of the reasons behind consultants' identity shifts. This study provides an explanation for the reasons behind these shifts on individual level in terms of internal and external factors, which makes an important contribution to the theory of professional identity development.

5.3 Practical contributions

In addition to the theoretical contribution, this research also has a practical implication. It is important for organisations to be aware of the external factors that influence the change to a pragmatic and more people-oriented attitude and working method. This offers the opportunity to incorporate these factors into a training programme, thus providing a more effective means of guiding beginning consultants in the transition from a dogmatic to a pragmatic attitude and working method towards the client. This ensures that the client's needs are given greater consideration during the course of the assignment, with the result that the client ultimately receives a superior outcome.

5.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research

It should be noted that this study is subject to a number of limitations. The study employed a qualitative research design to enhance its exploratory power. However, as Boeije (2009) indicates, qualitative data are not exact representations of reality. This is due to the fact that the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent has the potential to influence the course of the conversation in a particular manner. Despite the researcher's best efforts to mitigate potential bias during the interviews, it is possible that some degree of bias may have still been present. Secondly, the results of this study are contingent upon the respondent's capacity to articulate experiences in an efficacious manner (Boeije, 2009). This study is based on the self-perception of consultants at a specific point in time and their retrospective assessment of their attitudes and practices at the early stages of their careers. For future research that aims to gain a deeper understanding of the results of this study with regard to consultants' identity work and changes in their attitudes and practices over time, it would be valuable to collect real-time data, possibly in the context of longitudinal research. Thirdly, continuous improvement forms part of the Lean Management approach. Consequently, it is possible that consultants adopt this mentality. Given that continuous change is included in the results section of this study and therefore forms part of the change undergone by consultants, it is possible that the results of this study may differ in a different empirical context. It would therefore be interesting to conduct follow-up research among consultants working with a different management approach.

5.5 Methodological reflection

As previously outlined in section 3.5 of this study, the research criteria were described so that the quality could be determined after the start of this study. First, to increase the credibility of the study, before the interviews started, respondents were asked if they wanted to go through the transcripts to see if the respondent's interpretation was correct. All respondents indicated a preference for not spending time on this task and expressed trust in the researcher's ability to adequately address any potential issues based on the recording. As there was no verification from the respondents, the researcher proactively posed several questions for verification during the interviews to ensure that the respondents' answers were correctly interpreted and thus secure credibility. Secondly, in section 3.3, the research context and sample were described in order to enhance the study's transferability. These descriptions allow for the assessment of the relevance of the findings of this study to other contexts. Thirdly, dependability was ensured by maintaining a research diary throughout the study. This diary provides a detailed overview of the research activities conducted each week, along with a record of the rationale behind the

researcher's decisions. Fourthly, confirmability was ensured by transcribing the transcripts verbatim and documenting the various stages of the analysis and its iterations in an iterative codebook. This codebook is attached as an external appendix and will only be accessible to the supervisor and second examiner of this study.

5.6 Reflection on the role of the researcher

Reflecting on the role of the researcher is meant to reflect on the actions, biases and choices that played a role in the process and outcomes of the research (Bleijenbergh, 2016). An important point to raise here is the researcher's educational background. The researcher has a bachelor's degree of applied sciences in Industrial Engineering & Management, which has a connection with Lean Management and continuous improvement of processes. In addition, the researcher is currently studying at the specialisation master's in Organisational, Design and Development. This could possibly result in prior knowledge of how change processes emerge and possibly biases attitudes and practices in working with Lean. The researcher's background in Lean Management proved to be a significant factor during the data collection process. Indeed, during the interviews, this enabled respondents to discuss certain Lean methodologies in a frank and open manner, which contributed to a high level of comfort among the respondents. However, this may have had the disadvantage that, because the researcher is familiar with these terms, certain practices were not elaborated upon by the respondents, thus making it more challenging for individuals lacking Lean expertise to interpret the interviews in a consistent manner.

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Appendix I Overview of respondents

Table 1 Overview of respondents

#	Job Title	Organization*	Gender (M/F)	Age	Educational background	Years of experience**
1	Senior consultant	A	M	35	Business Administration	10 years
2	Senior consultant	A	M	48	Mechanical Engineering	20 years
3	Senior consultant	A	M	51	Industrial Engineering & Management	6 years
4	Junior consultant	A	M	44	Industrial Engineering & Management	2,5 years
5	Senior consultant	A	M	49	Industrial Engineering & Management	19 years
6	Consultant	-	M	44	Business Economics	7 years
7	Junior consultant	A	M	35	Business Economics	1 year
8	Consultant	-	M	49	Business Administration	7 years
9	Junior consultant	B	M	28	Chemical Engineering	3 years
10	Junior consultant	B	F	39	Leisure & Events Management	2 years
11	Senior consultant	B	M	46	Industrial Engineering & Management	20 years
12	Senior consultant	B	M	64	Chemical Engineering	3,5 years

*Just a letter so it is clear which respondents work for the same organisations. If the respondent does not work for an organisation, this will be shown with an -

** Years of experience in consulting with Lean Management

Appendix II Research diary

After the approval of my proposal, I decided to keep a record of what I carried out each week and what my main thoughts were in doing so in a research diary. This also contributes to the dependability of the research.

Week 22 (27/5 – 2/6)

- Tuesday 28th of May: I handed in my research proposal
- Rest of the week: I started on the interview guide and searched for possible respondents through LinkedIn and the websites of Lean consultancy firms.

Week 23 (3/6 – 9/6)

- Friday 7th of June: pass on research proposal from both examinators
- Friday 7th of June: I contacted several Lean consultancy organisations to schedule interviews.
    - In selecting respondents, I first searched for lean consultancy firms in the area and emailed them. I emailed four organisations, of which two eventually responded and provided a number of people. I also searched for the position of lean consultant on LinkedIn and looked at the number of years of experience these people had. Based on the people provided by the organisations, I used LinkedIn to contact two self-employed people who were a good match for the sample in terms of age. The sample consisted of six new consultants (experience 0-5 years) and six experienced consultants (experience 10+ years). I told the organisations that I would prefer a mix of men and women if possible. However, it soon became clear that there were no women working in the first organisation and that there was one woman in the other who was suitable for interview. Unfortunately, this did not result in a 50/50 split, but - given the number of female lean consultants in the LinkedIn search - it does suggest that it is a man's world.

Week 24 (10/6 – 16/6)

- Monday 10th of June:
    - I made the choice to adjust the number of years of experience of respondents to <5 and >10 instead of <2 and >5. This is because when further searching for respondents, the job titles of junior consultant and senior consultant roughly maintain these years, making the search for respondents easier.
    - I planned the first interviews
- Tuesday 11th of June: I worked on my interview guide and asked for feedback on this from a fellow student.
- Rest of the week: I worked on the feedback from Dr. Heusinkveld and Dr. Lohmeyer, which I received upon my research proposal
    - Based on the feedback I changed my research question to *"How does consultant identity change and what factors influence the identity of management consultants throughout their careers in translating management ideas?".* This in order to have a clear/more specific view on what I want to examine within the interviews.

Week 25 (17/6 – 23/6)

- Monday 17th of June: held the first two interviews and reviewed the interview guide afterwards. During the first interview I noticed that my attitude was good; I was open and asked additional questions to understand the respondent better. However, I found it difficult to keep quiet and not interrupt the respondent too early, because an awkward silence can sometimes help the respondent think. I want to try to apply this more often. During the second interview I maintained the same attitude, but I managed to keep quieter, which I experience as positive and want to continue in the following interviews. In terms of content, I noticed during the conversations that I adjusted the order of the questions regarding the personal background: I asked questions 4 and 5 before question 3, which made me decide to adjust the numbering in the interview guide. In addition, I did not find question 13 relevant or well-suited to the content of the conversations during the first two interviews, and it did not provide any in-depth information. That is why I left this question out of the rest of the interviews. Question 18 was too directive for me, because I didn't want to put words in the respondent's mouth, and I didn't use it after the first interview, which is why I also removed it from the questionnaire. After the first interview, I realised that I could ask a lot more

questions about the last question, which is essential for my research. That's why I expanded this question from the second interview onwards with an extra "why" question to gather more information about possible factors that influence the learning process, and I want to continue doing this in the further interviews. After the first two interviews, I revised the interview guide and removed two questions that I didn't find relevant. In addition, I added one question at the end to go deeper into possible factors that influence the translation process. Both interviews lasted about 60 minutes, including the introduction and conclusion, which were not recorded. This gave me the impression that the amount of questions, in combination with the possibility to ask in-depth questions, is good. I have the idea that I can gather valuable information with this interview guide to answer my main question.

- Tuesday 18th of June: held interview 3, 4, 5 and 6. I notice that I feel more and more confident during the interviews and that I therefore continue to ask more questions during the conversation. My relaxed attitude was appreciated by the respondent, who complimented my way of interviewing: "it doesn't feel like a questionnaire that you are going through but like a pleasant conversation in which you continue to ask questions." I have also maintained this attitude during the other interviews.
- Rest of the week: made transcriptions of the interviews held so far

Week 26 (24/6 – 30/6)

- Monday 24th of June: had contact with an organisation in order to plan interview 9-12
- Wednesday 26th of June: held interview 8
- Friday 28th of June: held interview 9
- Rest of the week: I worked on the transcriptions

Week 27 (1/7 – 7/7)

- Tuesday 2nd of July: held interview 10-12
- Rest of the week: transcriptions
- I notice that based on the conversations I already have a fairly general idea of the overarching themes that were discussed. I have noted these topics per interview and will discuss them with Stefan next week.
- I realised that I had made a mistake in conducting the interviews. I should have insisted that the interviewees send me the transcripts so that I could check my interpretation. I asked them to do this, but none of them thought it was necessary. This

affects the credibility of my research. However, for the interpretation of certain data I did ask what the respondent meant exactly during the interview, so as far as I am concerned the data is credible.

Week 28 (8/7 – 14/7)

- Mondag 8th of July: meeting with supervisor about data collection and what rough results I am seeing now. I was quite tense before this conversation. This was mainly because I was not sure whether the execution of the interviews was correct. After the conversation I was relieved, and it turned out that I had worried for nothing. Stefan was positive about my progress so far and we decided to meet again in two weeks (Friday 26 July) to discuss the progress with regard to the analysis phase.
- Monday: finished the last transcriptions
- Tuesday and Wednesday: worked on document Master Thesis, in the sense of organising and completing where possible. I have continued to write out the feedback on the research proposal (these were short comments at first on how to adapt it and with what content, now I have really started writing it). I realise that I am still struggling to link the theory to what I have in mind. I have read a lot, but the translation remains difficult. But of course that is part of the process.
- Thursday and Friday: I have started to open code the transcripts. I am finding that the amount of text is quite overwhelming and I am finding it difficult to determine how much coding is needed without coding too much. I notice that I am afraid of missing something. Of course, I can always cross it out later if necessary.

Week 29 (15/7 – 21/7)

- Monday: I have further written out the piece on sampling. Here I am in doubt whether I should indicate precisely here that I am focusing my research on lean management and take this away from the theoretical framework. I want to check this with Stefan at our next meeting.
- Monday till Friday: open coding. While coding, I tried to really look from the ‘identity work’ and ‘dynamic identity’ lens rather than purely open minded. I found that I did find this difficult in the sense of again having to translate between theory and my own interpretation here. I found that my data complements my theoretical framework more than confirms my theoretical framework.

- In addition, I discovered on Wednesday that I was zooming out too far with the open codes and making it very difficult for myself to add the axial and selective codes later. For this reason, I spent Thursday and Friday recoding the interviews that I had already completed and will continue working on the open codes of interviews 7 to 12 early next week.

Week 30 (22/7 – 28/7)

- Monday and Tuesday: open coding
- Wednesday: selective coding
- Thursday: thematic coding/aggregate dimensions and preparation for meeting with supervisor
- Friday 26th of July: meeting with supervisor. In this conversation we talked about my personal situation and the feasibility of the deadline. We also sparred about my data analysis.
- Friday: I have finished the data analysis section

Week 31 (29/7 – 4/8)

- Whole week: I worked on the result section
- I find it difficult to come up with a good model that shows the results at a glance. I find myself trying to show too much in text.

Week 32 (5/8 – 11/8)

- Whole week: I worked on the result section. Here I have looked at whether I can present my data in tables based on my supervisors feedback. I notice that I find it very difficult to do this clearly and not to put too much text in the table. I have discussed this dilemma with a fellow student who gave me feedback on my results section.

Week 33 (12/8 – 18/8)

- Monday-Thurday: I worked on the conclusion, discussion, limitations, reflection and recommendations. I have also started writing my conclusion and discussion. In this I still have difficulty really addressing my theoretical contribution. I know which debates I contribute to, but it is difficult to explain this properly.
- Friday 12th of August: I handed in a first draft of my Master Thesis

Week 34-36 (19/8 – 6/9): summer break

Week 37 (9/9 – 13/9):

- Thursday: Meeting with supervisor concerning what I still need to improve within the thesis before I hand it in. This conversation was mainly about which sources I used as purpose or means literature and that I have to separate those within Chapter 1 and 2. In addition I need to change Chapter 4, which I need to better interpret in terms of Identity work.

Week 38 (16/9 – 20/9):

- This week I rewrote the introduction and theoretical framework
- I noticed that I find it difficult to properly separate purpose and means in the text. I first created tables in a draft version to make it clear for myself which source is purpose and which source is means and which functions apply to each source. This went quite easily, but when I have to put it into text form, I find that I easily fall back into my previous writing style. It is therefore definitely more difficult than I had thought beforehand.

Week 39 (23/9 – 27/9):

- This week I rewrote the result section and the discussion.
- I have now tried to interpret the quotes and such from the theory (and therefore in terms of identity work). I have left the quotes and codes as they are. I notice that I find this difficult and that I quickly switch to linking the existing theory to what I already have instead of the entire interpretation being different. I hope that this is now better balanced.

Week 40 (30/9 – 4/10):

- Monday: I changed the lasts things based on spelling phrasing, after which I handed in the official document of my Master Thesis

Appendix III Interview guide

This appendix contains the interview guides in Dutch and English.

English interview guide

Interviewer: Carlijn Scholten

Interview number: xx

Date: xx-xx-2024

Opening

Welcome to this interview. First of all, thank you very much for the opportunity to interview you. The data resulting from this interview will be of value to my research. This research focuses on the contribution of experience in implementing management ideas and contributes to expanding knowledge concerns professional identities. For my research, I have delineated this to the management idea Lean Management, hence you and your background fit well with this research.

I would also like to take the opportunity to briefly introduce myself. My name is Carlijn Scholten, I am 22 years old and currently studying for a master's degree in Business Administration with the specialization ‘Organisational Design & Development’ at Radboud University in Nijmegen. As I just mentioned, this interview is of value for my thesis on the contribution of experience in implementing management ideas, and your input will help answer my research question.

Before we get started, I would again like to ask your permission to record this interview. The recording will only be listened to by me to accurately transcribe the interview. Upon completion of the transcript, the recording will be deleted and the transcript can be shared with you, if you wish. You can then check if the interpretation of your answers is correct. Your real name will not be used in the study, but a pseudonym to ensure your anonymity. Furthermore, I would like to ask you if you agree to publish the data in the 'Radboud Repository'. This means that the anonymised data will be stored on a database of Radboud University, making the data easier to find, more accessible and reusable, and in the process also making it possible to check how I carried out my research. Is this okay with you?

The interview is expected to last about 60 minutes. We will start with some general questions about your job and then move on to questions regarding your professional identity, this identity over time, your method of translating management ideas into practice and the influence of your identity in this translation. If anything is unclear or you have other questions, please let me know especially. And again, you are not obliged to answer a question if you don't want to, and you can decide to stop the interview at any time.

Before we start, do you have any questions? If not, we can start the interview and I will start the recording.

Questions

Part II: Personal background

Question		**Protocol**
1	What is your age?	
2	Can you briefly describe the organisation you work for? a) What are the main goals/values of the organisation? b) How would you describe the culture of the organisation?	*Culture: does everyone work the same, or is it open?*
3	What function do you have within this organisation? a) Can you give a description of your current work activities? b) How long have you been working for this organisation? c) How long have you been working in this position?	*What tasks do you perform within your position?*
4	Can you tell me a little about your background? a) What educational background do you have? Also specifically Lean training? b) What professional experience do you have?	*Professional experience related to Lean consultancy*
5	How did you get started as a consultant?	

Part III: Identity over time

Question		**Protocol**
6	How would you describe your professional identity as a consultant? a) What values do you consider important in your work?	*How would you describe/present yourself towards a client?* *Suppose I am the client, how do you introduce yourself?*

7	Has your identity changed during your time working as a consultant? a) If yes, how?	*This is in terms of how you present yourself: attitude, role, values, etc.*
8	Which aspects of your identity do you find most relevant when working on implementing Lean at a client? a) Has this changed during your career as a consultant?	
9	Can you give examples of situations where you notice that is professional identity has changed?	*Situations where you now act differently than before.*
10	Why do you think you act differently now?	*What contributes to this change in terms of internal and/or external factors*

Part IV: Translation of management ideas

Question		**Protocol**
11	How do you approach the process of translating Lean Management into practical applications for your customers?	*How do you proceed?*
12	What do you think are the main challenges in this translation process?	
13	Do you adapt your method/approach based on the specific needs of your clients? a) If yes, how?	
14	Are there specific approaches you use more often than others? a) And why? a) Can you give specific examples of these approaches?	*Approach as in method*
15	Can you give an example of an assignment you have carried out successfully? a) What role did you play in this? b) What contribution did you make in this?	*Role: attitude* *Contribution: results*

Part V: Influence of identity on the translation of management ideas

Question		**Protocol**
16	We have just discussed changes in your identity as a consultant. Do you think this change affects how you translate Lean Management into practice? a) a) If so, can you give an example?	*E.g. different attitude, role, way of working, etc.*

17	How do you think your role influences the outcomes of an implementation assignment? a) If yes, how? b) Can you give an example of this?	
18	Has time maintained influence on the approach you apply Lean Management in your work? a) If yes, how? b) Can you give an example in which your experience has influenced your approach to management ideas?	*Approach as in way of working* *Do you act differently now than you did early in your career?*
19	Are there any specific lessons you have learnt over time that have changed your approach to Lean Management? a) And these lessons, did you experience them freely at the beginning of your career as a consultant? Or was that later?	*Approach in the sense of approach to which you apply management theories*

Closing

We have now come to the end of this interview. Is there anything else you would like to return to or add?

First of all, thank you very much for your contribution to this interview and the valuable information you provided. As mentioned at the beginning, I am happy to send you the transcript of this interview so that you can check if my interpretation of your answers is correct. If there are any misinterpretations or if you have any additions, they can be adjusted. You can expect the transcript within a week. After completion of my research, I will be happy to send you a copy of the completed survey by e-mail, if you wish.

Should you have any further questions or additions, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail.

Again, thank you very much for your time and contribution to this research.

Dutch interview guide

Naam interviewer: Carlijn Scholten

Interview nummer: xx

Datum: xx-xx-2024

Onderdeel I: algemene introductie

Welkom bij dit interview. Allereerst wil ik u hartelijk bedanken voor de kans om u te mogen interviewen. De data die voortkomt uit dit interview is van waarde voor mijn onderzoek. Dit onderzoek is gericht op de invloed van een dynamische identiteiten op de implementatie van managementideeën en draagt bij aan het uitbreiden van kennis betreft professionele identiteiten. Voor mijn onderzoek heb ik dit afgebakend naar het management idee Lean Management, vandaar dat u en uw achtergrond goed aansluiten bij dit onderzoek.

Ik wil ook graag van de gelegenheid gebruik maken om mezelf kort voor te stellen. Mijn naam is Carlijn Scholten, ik ben 22 jaar oud en momenteel bezig met de master 'Organisational Design & Development' aan de Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen. Zoals ik net noemde is dit interview van waarde voor mijn scriptie over de bijdrage die ervaring levert bij de implementatie van managementideeën, en uw input helpt bij het beantwoorden van mijn onderzoeksvraag.

Voordat we van start gaan, wil ik nogmaals uw toestemming vragen om dit interview op te nemen. De opname zal enkel door mij worden beluisterd om het interview nauwkeurig te transcriberen. Na voltooiing van het transcript wordt de opname verwijderd en kan het transcript met u worden gedeeld, indien gewenst. U kunt dan controleren of de interpretatie van uw antwoorden correct is. Uw echte naam zal niet worden gebruikt in het onderzoek, maar een pseudoniem om uw anonimiteit te waarborgen. Verder wil ik u vragen of u akkoord gaat met het publiceren van de data in de ‘Radboud Repository’. Dit houdt in dat de geanonimiseerde data opgeslagen wordt op een database van Radboud University, waardoor de data gemakkelijker vindbaar, toegankelijker en herbruikbaar te maken en daarbij ook te controleren is hoe ik mijn onderzoek heb uitgevoerd. Is dit voor u akkoord?

Het interview zal naar verwachting ongeveer 60 minuten duren. We zullen beginnen met enkele algemene vragen over uw baan en dan verdergaan met vragen betreft uw professionele identiteit, deze identiteit over de tijd heen, uw werkwijze bij het vertalen van

managementideeën naar de praktijk en de invloed van uw identiteit bij deze vertaling. Als er iets onduidelijk is of als u andere vragen heeft, laat het me dan vooral weten. En nogmaals, u bent niet verplicht om een vraag te beantwoorden als u dat niet wilt en u kunt op elk moment besluiten het interview te stoppen.

Voordat we beginnen, heeft u nog vragen? Zo niet, dan kunnen we beginnen met het interview en zal ik de opname starten.

Vragen

Onderdeel II: Persoonlijke achtergrond

Vraag		**Protocol**
1	Wat is uw leeftijd?	
2	Kunt u kort de organisatie beschrijven waarvoor u werkt? a) Wat zijn de voornaamste doelen/waardes van de organisatie? b) Hoe zou u de cultuur van de organisatie beschrijven?	*Cultuur: werkt iedereen hetzelfde, of is dit open?*
3	Welke functie heeft u binnen deze organisatie? a) Welke taken voert u uit binnen uw functie? b) Hoe lang werkt u al voor deze organisatie? c) Hoe lang werkt u al in deze functie?	
4	Kunt u wat vertellen over uw achtergrond? a) Welke opleidingsachtergrond heeft u? Ook specifiek een Lean opleiding? b) Welke professionele ervaring heeft u?	*Professionele ervaring met betrekking tot Lean consultancy*
5	Hoe bent u begonnen als consultant?	

Onderdeel III: Identiteit over tijd

Vraag		**Protocol**
6	Hoe zou u uw professionele identiteit als consultant omschrijven? a) Welke waarden vindt u belangrijk in uw werk?	*Hoe zou u uzelf omschrijven/ presenteren richting een klant?* *Stel ik ben de klant, hoe introduceert u zich dan?*

7	Is uw identiteit verandert gedurende de tijd dat u werkzaam bent als consultant? a) Zo ja, hoe?	*Dit in termen van hoe u uzelf presenteert: houding, rol, waarden, etc.*
8	Welke aspecten van uw identiteit vindt u het meest relevant als u werkt aan de implementatie van Lean bij een klant? a) Is dit verandert gedurende uw carrière als consultant?	
9	Kunt u voorbeelden geven van situaties waarin u merkt dat is professionele identiteit is veranderd?	*Situaties waar u nu anders handelt dan voorheen.*
10	Waarom denkt u dat u dit nu anders aanpakt?	*Wat draagt bij aan deze verandering in termen van interne en/of externe factoren*

Onderdeel IV: Translatie van management ideeën

Vraag		**Protocol**
11	Hoe benadert u het proces van het vertalen van Lean Management naar praktische toepassingen voor uw klanten?	*Hoe gaat u ter werk?*
12	Wat zijn volgens u de belangrijkste uitdagingen bij dit vertaalproces?	
13	Past u uw werkwijze/benadering aan op basis van de specifieke behoeften van uw klanten? a) Zo ja, hoe?	
14	Zijn er specifieke benaderingen die u vaker toepast dan andere? a) En waarom? b) Kunt u hier specifieke voorbeelden van deze benaderingen van geven?	*Benadering als in werkwijze*
15	Kunt u een voorbeeld geven van een opdracht die u succesvol heeft uitgevoerd? a) Welke rol heeft u hierin gespeeld? b) Welke bijdrage heeft u hierin geleverd?	*Rol: houding* *Bijdrage: resultaten*

Onderdeel V: Invloed van (veranderende) identiteit op de translatie van management ideeën

Vraag		**Protocol**
16	We hebben net gesproken over veranderingen in uw identiteit als consultant. Denkt u dat deze verandering invloed heeft op hoe u Lean Management vertaalt naar de praktijk?	*Welke factoren spelen hierbij een rol en hoe?*

	a) Zo ja, kunt u een voorbeeld geven?	*Bijv. andere houding, rol, werkwijze, etc.*
17	Hoe denk je dat jouw rol invloed heeft op de uitkomsten van een implementatieopdracht? a) Zo ja, hoe? b) Kunt u hier een voorbeeld van geven?	
18	Heeft tijd invloed gehand op de benadering waarop u Lean Management toepast in uw werk? a) Zo ja, hoe? b) Kunt u een voorbeeld geven waarin uw ervaring uw benadering van management ideeën heeft beïnvloed?	*Benadering als in werkwijze* *Handelt u nu anders dan dat u deed in het begin van uw carrière?*
19	Zijn er specifieke lessen die u hebt geleerd over tijd die uw aanpak van Lean Management hebben veranderd? a) En deze lessen, heb je die vrij aan het begin van jouw carrière als consultant dan ervaren? Of is dat later pas geweest?	*Aanpak in de zin van benadering waarop u managementtheorieën toepast*

Onderdeel VI: Algemene afsluiting

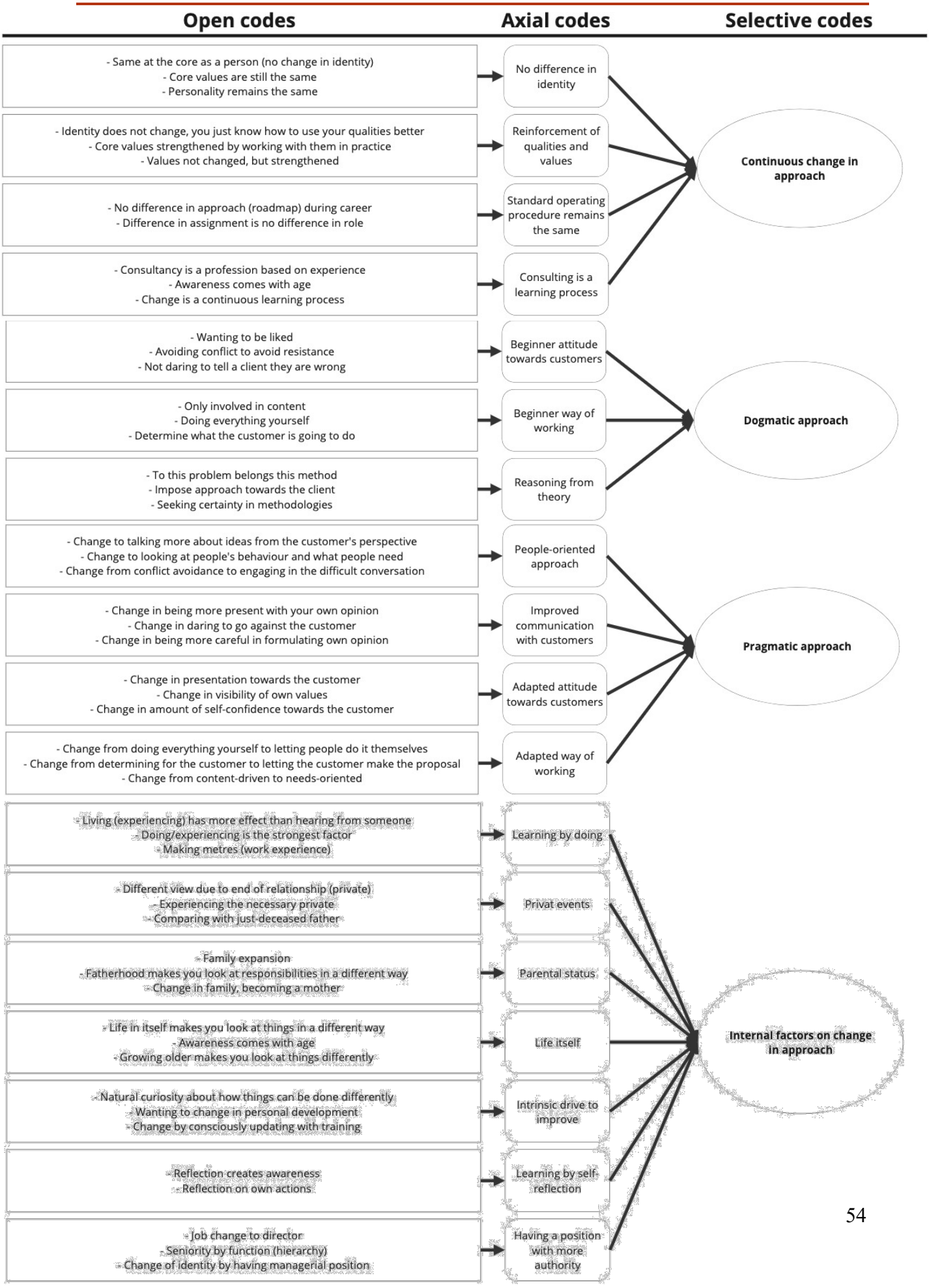
We zijn nu aan het einde gekomen van dit interview. Is er nog iets waarop u zou willen terugkomen of toevoegen?

Allereerst wil ik u hartelijk bedanken voor uw bijdrage aan dit interview en de waardevolle informatie die u heeft verstrekt. Zoals aan het begin vermeld, stuur ik u graag het transcript van dit interview toe, zodat u kunt controleren of mijn interpretatie van uw antwoorden correct is. Als er sprake is van misinterpretatie of als u nog aanvullingen heeft, kunnen deze worden aangepast. U kunt het transcript in de eerste week van juli verwachten. Na afronding van mijn onderzoek stuur ik u graag een kopie van het voltooide onderzoek per e-mail, indien gewenst.

Mocht u nog verdere vragen hebben of aanvullingen willen doen, aarzel dan niet om contact met mij op te nemen via e-mail.

Nogmaals, hartelijk dank voor uw tijd en bijdrage aan dit onderzoek.

Appendix IV Data analysis tree



Appendix V Extended version of Table 1 and 2

Table 1 Change in attitude of consultants (extended version)

	Beginners attitude (insecure, eager and ambitious)	**Why the change?**	**Veterans attitude (confident)**
From being insecure to being confident	• "I was probably much more concerned then with how I would be perceived and what they would think or think of me as an outsider coming in" (I2R50). • "When I started in my career I still had a lot of, let's say, let me put it tactfully or is this not too direct when I put it like this." (I9R49)	• "But that confidence is more a matter of experience than I would dedicate it to a personal change." (I9R51) • "This is a matter of making metres also often, gaining experience." (I10R110)	• "I think now, much more than I used to, I dare to let my own values be visible than I dared before." (I2R50) • "What has changed is that I have become a lot more direct about it. Not so much in an offensive way." (I9R49) • "I did become more present with my opinions." (I9R63). "More confident" (I9R65) • You are more confident in your opinions." (I10R110)
From pretending to be different to being yourself	• "That I presented myself differently then than I do now." (I2R63) • "What I used to do with clients. When you start out, you have this idea of everyone has to like me and everyone has to like me and if I mainly just keep everyone pleasured, then all will be fine." (I9R56)	• "I find as I have grown older that it is easier to be myself." (I2R50) • "Mainly actually because at some point I experienced that even though you may know a lot and have a lot of experience, there are always in detail people who know a lot more about a subject. And that it's totally okay." (I2R66) • This [learning confidence] grows. And you know, every consultant who knows this, they might not start encompassing it in the same words. But this is really something that you... Yes, this has to grow. Someone can tell you, but it's something else to live it." (I9R100)	• "Now I am not actually presenting myself." (I2R63) • "Nowadays, when I put myself down with a client, I start acting more like a thorn in the flesh." (I9R56) • "I dare to be a little firmer in let's say, calling out in a neat way 'you're just not right'." (I9R93)

From wanting to prove yourself to being satisfied with your current position	• "Maybe I also used to have a lot more of that proof drive to know everything or show that you know." (I2R66) • "In the beginning, in the early years, it is mainly the drive, the sharpness that is appreciated." (I2R124) • "I used to be really eager. I want to achieve all kinds of things. Going here, going there." (I10R121) • "I often used to be a bit impatient because of my drive." (I12R82)	• "The change in my family. I have become a mother in recent years." (I10R121) • "I think that relates to the concept of life in general. You go through events which may cause you to look at things differently, which may influence the decisions you eventually make." (I10R123) • "I am getting a bit older myself, so I look at things a bit differently. I have found through experience that sometimes you also have to give things a chance to unfold themselves a bit." (I12R83)	• "That [the urge to prove yourself] has also secretly gone away a bit." (I2R66) • "I don't worry so much about everything anymore. Sounds really stupid, but there are other things that are more important. You have a lot more peace of mind. Now I'm like, boy am I happy in what I do. I like my work. I enjoy it a lot. I'm doing fine. I don't really need to be where my current manager is. Then I think, hey, you sit at home with all that stress, I make sure I'm with the children for dinner in the evening. I find that much more important." (I10R121)
Growth in sense of responsibility	• **"***See, where you used to be a young dog, happy-go-lucky...* You now become a bit more controlled and controlled." (I7R141)	• "Time just in terms of age." (R139) • "I think because I have children, that I'm suddenly more afraid of certain things where I normally saw adventure. That now I think, ooh, too much risk or whatever. So being a parent makes you responsible for others in a different way. Surely that makes a whole different sense of time, but also of responsibility." (I7R169)	• "See, where you used to be a young dog, happy-go-lucky... *You now become a bit more controlled and controlled."* (I7R141)

Table 2 Change in approach of consultants (extended version)

	Beginners approach (dogmatic)	Why the change?	Veterans approach (pragmatic)
From content-oriented to process-oriented	• "Whereas in the first few years, that was maybe more of a trick. Changing a process. With a little bit of lean knowledge, anyone can." (I1R119) • "In which maybe in the past I would have been more directing that content too, than I am today." (I2R96) • "I started once, after I graduated as a consultant, but so at that time I had zero experience myself. Whatever I just said, that felt like a very theoretical interpretation." (I3R40) • "At the beginning of my career, I was mainly only involved in content." (I6R108) • "I think in the beginning I was very stubborn and wanted to do things that way from the books. Of course learned a lot from Toyota and so on and of if we start doing that now, it will work." (I11R44) • "Where I was much more on method in the beginning. And oh yes, with this problem that method. At that problem that method." (I11R44) • "Where in the beginning you still lean on method because you have little experience yourself. From this the theory should work. That you get certainty from theory." (I11R48)	• "That bit of awareness really came with age." (I1R119) • "That did really change over time." (I2R96) • "I think primarily an experience piece. Just bumping your head a few times." (I2R107) • "The fact that with me that human component has started to weigh more heavily over the years. That might really have to do with age. Maybe not just with experience, but also just with age at all." (I2R124) • "Spending time on that subject makes you think about it, makes you become more aware. That has definitely had an impact." (I2R127) • "Because the experience has taught you. You try different things. You notice what works and what doesn't work." (I11R47-48) • "Whether something itself doesn't work, you learn that from experience. That something doesn't work, you notice. Then what does work, you learn that from trainings and some books. But especially in trainings, that you get new handles" (I11R89) • "Because of a piece of life wisdom. That you take yourself with that in your approach and you can switch in the situation. Seeing what is needed at that moment. A piece of growing your own confidence in that."(I11R48) • "You also develop more and more as a person. How you look at things. And what you find	• "I: So now more on the process, previously more on the content? R: Yes." (I2R96-97-98) • "I have been able to let go of [literally carrying out from the book] and not looking for certainty in methods and things like that, but precisely in the experience you have and that if you listen, it will work out fine by itself. That you can make a good plan with that." (I11R44) • "That I now see that it is ultimately about acceptance in people's behavior. Not only the employees, but certainly also the managers. And that I am increasingly concerned with what behavior is needed. Can I bring about a sustainable change. Why do people do what they do? What is behind it? I am much more concerned with that. I certainly see that growth in myself." (I11R44) • "Your approach on the main line remains the same, but within that it is much more situation-dependent and you look at what is really needed at that moment. So more on those needs, that you listen better. That you map out better needs. And therefore have better effects. The biggest difference is that with this approach, with the new approach, you have much better support because you connect much more with the needs and with the people and that you listen to them better." (I11R72-74)

		important in your life, how you see other people, what you see as development opportunities in yourself. And things like that. That definitely plays into it as well. It's also when you listen to all kinds of podcasts, for example, which is not specifically about work at all. But where you think those are also things that I develop myself with. And thus also apply it in my work again." (I11R93) • "Not so much that getting older itself influences that, but that you've seen and heard more." (I11R96)	
From execution in-house to letting customers do things themselves	• "When I was 24, then I really had the idea, I do everything myself. And then I'm sure it will work out. And then we are going to have beautiful success." (I4R58) • "So in the past always doing everything myself and also being the holy conviction of that which is the very best thing to do" (I4R58) • "I had said ten years ago of, I decide, you do it as I say" (I4R94). • "In the beginning, I mainly did the changes myself."(I6R108)	• "The CEO of organisation C, who sat at my career meeting and said to me several times if you keep doing everything yourself, in a few years you will be completely burnt out. And that did stick with me." (I4R58) • "I have had conversations with a colleague, to have another take the initiative, to have another take space, you have to make space." (I4R98) • "I can also just let it happen for a while. So let's see what will happen then in the next steering committee meeting if I don't do anything now." (I4R98) • "By what you experience yourself and by starting to work on yourself the moment you run into something." (I6R110)	• "Getting people to do things themselves. Which is ultimately what works best." (I4R58) • "But by now I know it's much wiser to then ask the follow-up question, okay. But if this is the way you think it's not going to work, how do you think it could work." (I4R94) • "Now you do that a bit more in togetherness in that. If I compare to where I started then and where I am now, a lot has changed, especially in terms of communication." (I6R108)