

Theses of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation

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Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Changes in management consulting methods in a dynamically transforming
environment

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1 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH, OBJECTIVES

1.1 Background of the research

National economies have made the achievement of sustainable prosperity and the identification of growth prospects their primary target, which will guarantee the long-term sustainability of society's living standards and well-being. The extent of the impact of global industrialization and the effective integration of the results of industrial development into the industrial and economic processes of the given country determine a country's income-generating capability, the well-being of its society, and economic growth. Globalization, digitalization, and the advancement of information technologies, as well as developments in the rapid economic, financial, and market environment, all have a strong impact on management consultancy, a young multidisciplinary branch of science, which also contributes to the processes outlined above (ENNSFELNER et al. 2014). The importance of leadership and management consultancy has been recognised by developed and industrialized countries all over the world. The economic and social condition of a nation is the most significant catalyst of transition in the consultancy industry. Whether reacting to cyclical or decyclical transitions, the rapidly changing national economy or the global economy often generates and formulates new problems in order to determine the directions of further development. Adapting to an ever-changing global, financial, technological, and business environment, as well as market competitiveness, is changing the tasks and roles of knowledge-based workplaces and organisations in the economy, encouraging the growth of a leadership and management consultancy market. As a result, the issue of **what impact the changes would have on the development of management consultancy** emerges. According to JAMIENSON et al. (2016), the reforms will have an effect on the management consultancy sector, paving the way for the growth of this profession, the incorporation of emerging sciences and expertise, and the arrival of new entrants into a market where boundaries are blurred, and businesses become global.

What kind of service is management consulting and how is it applied? Consultancy is used differently in various fields of socioeconomic life in different regions and countries as a knowledge-based business tool. Via these knowledge-intensive complex services, this ever-changing service sector contributes to economic development and value creation. In MILLS and SNYDER's opinion (2010) knowledge-based professional consulting services are the "epicentre of workplace evolution," which is why management and management consulting organizations provide professional and technological support to other companies through their activities to help increase efficiency and competitiveness. In the global economic environment, the management and leadership consulting industry acts as a multiplier and a factor in accelerating the rapid spread of innovations, facilitating knowledge transfer between different industries and organizations at the micro, meso and macro levels.

The leadership and management consultancy business is part of the tertiary market, and deeper knowledge of the discipline is needed to comprehend its nuances. Management consultancy, as a type of business consulting, serves a value system with professional independence as the most critical criteria. The measure of the success of independent consultants depends to a large extent on subjective definitions of success, even though their success is one of their day-to-day challenges. It is true that there is no universally agreed concept of success in the empirical sense, because each and every one of us, of course, have their own personal definitions of success, which many people associate with assets and wealth. In one person, the independent consultant should represent professionalism, entrepreneurship, practice, and business. The condition for the success

of the consultants is to have the appropriate image and make themselves visible, primarily through the events of professional organizations and associations (HOLZ 1988).

The topic of my dissertation is the transformation of the leadership and management consultancy industries, as well as the changes of the value system of their customers, for personal reasons. As I have been employed as a consultant for a few years, I would like to present how consultancy has been changing. In addition, I am also a client in the consultancy business, and this duality is apparent in my dissertation. On the one hand, I present the operation and growth of leadership and management consulting firms, as well as the implications and influencing factors of the dynamically evolving economic climate, which will be discussed in the dissertation. On the other hand, I investigate the clientele of consulting firms, as well as the transition, direction, and dynamics of the demand for consulting services.

The research is a benchmark study with the aim of producing a complex, exploratory examination that jointly manages and presents the contemporary state of the Hungarian leadership and management consultancy industry. The fact that consultants are directly involved in the production of innovations and the enhancement of competitiveness demonstrates the importance of field research in management consulting. Management consultancy supports the growth of the economy, the advancement of innovations, and the establishment of competitive national businesses. Consulting firms in developing countries apply their skills and expertise to the implementation of social and economic strategies in big cities, as shown by international examples (VOGELPOHL-KLEMP 2018). Presumably, consulting firms will be included in the HUF 955 billion technology, operational, and educational development initiative for higher education institutions in Hungary supported by the EU (BRÜCKNER 2021).

The rapidly changing information and communication technology has a significant impact and reshapes the way businesses operate in all sectors of the economy. To achieve and retain a competitive edge, companies must adapt rapidly, adopt a new strategy, and improve change management competencies. Management consultancy is a knowledge-intensive service that is influenced by the advancement in digitalization and information technologies, as well as changes in consumer demands and shifts generated by globalisation. Through monitoring and constantly reviewing the client market, changes in consultancy demand can be monitored. The management consulting market and consultants also need to respond to the challenges posed by the changes, which requires a new work culture, new competencies, and a paradigm shift.

Customer expectations in the twenty first century have shifted dramatically, but when analysing management consulting development patterns, careful attention should be paid to shifts in the customer-consultant relationship as well as an analysis of the most significant external and internal impacts. The practical approach of consultancy is continuously changing as a result of shifts in consumer demands following the development of the industry and customer needs.

If consulting bodies, client organizations, and education are to work efficiently, they must adapt to the needs of development and transition. In my empirical research, I look at how needs change in two ways: on the one hand, by recognizing and analysing new needs and areas on the customer side, and on the other hand, by considering the expectations of consulting organizations as a result of changes in client needs, altered circumstances and technologies. As a result, it is important to evaluate how Hungarian client organizations and consultancy firms see process change and effects, as well as how they prepare for an ever-changing economic, corporate, and technological changes.

The objective of the dissertation is to evaluate the role and position of management consulting firms as well as their value creating activity in Hungary's economy, their contribution to profit generation, and the cultural, legal, and other factors that influence how the consultancy sector operates. It is important to investigate whether the **leadership and management consultancy industry will serve as a multiplier and driver of innovation processes** in the economic growth, as well as whether the industry can ensure the implementation of factors that speed up development and innovation processes in light of personal competencies. The relationship between competitiveness, knowledge sharing, R&D and changes in customer relationships in the consulting industry is presented and analysed in this dissertation. Furthermore, I investigate whether Hungarian leadership and management consultancy firms are competitive in foreign comparisons, as well as which areas show similarities and disparities. As a result, it is critical to correctly define consumer requirements and processes. The details that have been discovered and the outcomes that have been reported will help to improve Hungarian leadership and management consulting organizations, support professional knowledge transfer, build a knowledge-based economy and spread innovations more efficiently.

1.2 Objectives

The aim of the research is to compile a summarizing, exploratory report that manages and addresses the current state of the Hungarian management and leadership consultancy industry. The foundation of my objectives is in management consultancy literature, which addresses various theories, challenges, and causal relationships in logical steps.

The research is primarily grouped around three topics:

- Trends impacting the management consultancy industry on a global and regional scale, with global and regional implications while identifying the contributing factors.
- The situation of management consulting firms in deciding the types of consulting practices and techniques employed. Presentation of the processes of knowledge generation in consultancy firms. The role of marketing in consultancy firms and its changes in order to reach clients.
- Examining client organisations from the point of consultancy services, information technology use, knowledge sharing, knowledge generation, and the marketing-based approach of the consulting profession. Presentation of the opinions, expectations, and perspectives on management consultancy. The reasons for turning to management consultancy and its success with client organisations.

The theoretical basis of the management consultancy industry, the various types of market players, their development opportunities, the opinion and experience of the clientele using consulting services, and the developments in consulting methods due to emerging digital technology will all be presented in the first part of the dissertation. In researching the topic, I focused on global impacts that have a significant effect on developments in the client organization's needs as well as the advancement of the management consulting organization's competency and skill needs, knowledge transfer, and portfolio development. All players in the market, from consultancy firms to clients and professional organisations, would be affected by the transition.

The second part of the dissertation uses secondary data to present the operation, position, and role of management consulting companies in the economy in an international context. In addition to professional books, I present papers and scientific findings on the subject that have been published in domestic and international, Hungarian and foreign journals, with exact references.

The research is focused on expert interviews and two questionnaire studies on the subject - "Management Consulting Questionnaire" and "Management Consulting - Client." The examination was carried out in two stages, with the first lasting from November 2017 to the end of March 2020.

The theoretical validity of the objectives set, and hypotheses drafted is verified through the conclusions in the literature, which support the need and elements of the primary research.

The objectives of the research are as follows:

O1. Explore and determine international and domestic factors that influence the demand for leadership and management consulting.

- H1: The economic development of countries has a significant impact on the demand for leadership and management consulting.
- H2: There are significant differences in the use of consultants between European countries. Differences from country to country have a significant impact on the management consulting market.
- H3: Between the societies of economically developed and moderately developed countries, cultural variations may be identified. In Hungary, both public and private sector organisations are receptive to the results of management consulting services focused on cultural aspects. The openness of society to new things and services, the effectiveness of which is unknown and depends on trust, influences demand.
- H4: Domestic consultancy firms play an important role in the development of domestic innovations as well as knowledge transfer between industries and sectors.
- H5: In both prosperity and recession, fluctuations in the economic indicators have no effect on demand for European and domestic consulting services.

O2. Investigate and assess the effect of developments in the global environment, as well as the advancement of manufacturing and information technology, on the development of management consulting methods. The research is focused on the review of domestic and international literature as well as details from interviews conducted on the subject. A modern consulting method terminology and its implementation conditions and opportunities were developed as a result of this.

- H6: Economic and social changes have resulted in the adoption of a new consulting model, which has been well received by both customers and consultants.

O3. Conduct empirical research to determine the present and future state of the Hungarian management consultancy industry. How widespread the involvement of consultants and the implementation of external knowledge in Hungarian private and public sector organizations is, during which I examine the scope, status, and acceptance of the sector.

- H7: Domestic consultants have a service portfolio that is in accordance with market demands. Regardless of industry, organizations with various ownership structure use the expertise of external consultants. They are

aware of the benefits and drawbacks of such services and use them wherever possible.

O4. Within the framework of empirical study, I examine how client demand for knowledge-intensive services has changed in the Hungarian consultancy industry. My objective is to identify and evaluate the course of progress in consumer demands, changes in demand for knowledge transfer, collaboration opportunities, and their potential ways.

- H8: In terms of consultancy selection, there is a distinction between private and public sector organisations in Hungary. Traditional standards are used by public sector organisations in selecting consultants (previous relationships at work, acquaintances, company reputation). In the case of private sector companies, the choice of a consultant is influenced by the complexity of their services, the size of their companies, and the volume of their prices. The selection process is less influenced by the origin of the consulting firms, the coverage of their advertisements and their regional location.
- H9: In comparison to businesses with an international ownership structure, organizations with a domestic ownership structure would see a rise in operating and other costs as a result of digitalization. As a result, demand for IT consultancy, IT management, and outsourcing services among foreign-owned businesses is smaller.

2 MATERIAL AND METHOD

My research objectives are met by collecting empirical data, which will be aided by two questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews with consultants and customers. The Hungarian leadership and management consultancy sector, as well as its clientele, will be presented, which will support me in achieving my research objectives. The literature review, as well as information obtained from previous domestic and international research findings and experiences, form the foundation for the research goals I have set. The dissertation is unique in that it evaluates both consultancy industry services and client expectations at the same time, and I would also like to point out the impact of digital technology changes in this area.

For all client organisations and consulting companies, I believe it is essential to provide a thorough understanding of the goals, requirements, and strategies for the future management and transfer of knowledge. In this research, I look at the consultancy industry in the Hungarian market to see if it succeeds in establishing trust in management consulting services in the Hungarian B2B market.

The basic model of the research is presented by Figure 1.

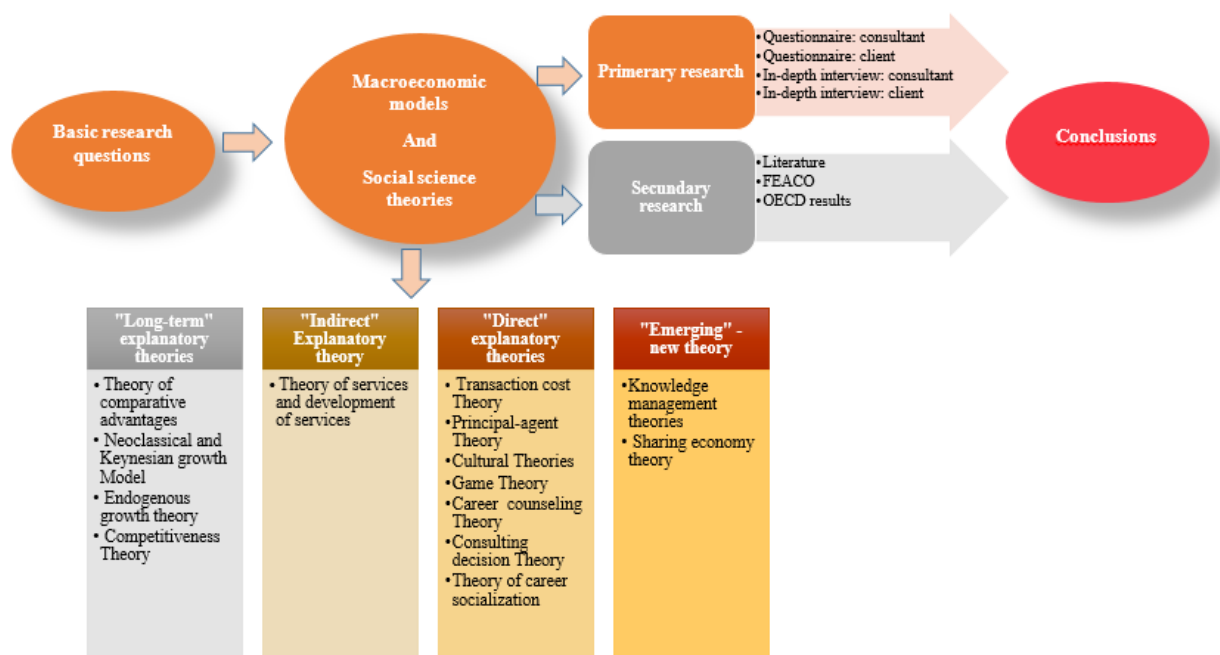


Figure 1 Basic research model

Source: author's own compilation

Basic research questions, defining the focus:

- Examining the operation of Hungarian management consulting firms
- Drafting research questions

Literature review:

- Macroeconomic models
- Social science theories

Primary and secondary research:

- Use of reliable secondary data sources: biennial research data from the Central Statistical Office, Eurostat, OECD, World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD and FEACO. FEACO data are from a widely used reliable source that is used by many researchers to process the topic, despite the shortcomings of FEACO research. One of them is that data come from a small number of countries in Europe and the structure and data content of research have changed several times, making it difficult to make longitudinal comparisons of data.
- Quantitative management consulting research, which covered four areas.
- Client research covers organizations that are currently using counseling, planning to use counselling, and do not use counselling at all.

Evaluation of research results, conclusions:

- testing research hypothesis,
- drawing conclusions,
- making recommendations.

2.1 Method of data collection

The responses of independent consulting and client companies working in Hungary were used as the pool for data collection. Based on reviews, the questionnaires were often filled in by senior advisors and business executives.

The current research employed a specialist or access-based sampling technique rather than the random sampling method (SZOKOLSZY 2004).

The study included the Budapest Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), as well as professional associations and consultancy firms. On the one hand, two questionnaires were submitted one to the consulting bodies, while the other one was sent to Hungarian enterprises. Both questionnaires were created using the online questionnaire programmes LimeSurvey and Google Survey, and the link was emailed to participants together with the letter of invitation.

The empirical investigation of the topic was performed in two stages, from November 2017 to March 30, 2020.

My primary research focused on four areas:

- questionnaire survey for consultancy firms: 630 evaluable questionnaires,
- consumer questionnaire research for the SME sector as clients: 588 evaluable questionnaires,
- conducting professional interviews with consultants working in the consulting industry: 55 interviews,
- conducting professional interviews with clients using consulting services: 56 interviews.

Professional associations were asked to distribute the questionnaire to consultants. According to 2018 statistics, there were 5,510 consultants on the market in Hungary, with professional associations filling in 630 evaluable questionnaires, with a response rate of 11.4 percent. BCCI distributed the questionnaire for client organizations to the businesses working in Hungary and the questionnaire was also shared in the SME business group. According to Central Statistical Office data, there are 1,797,000 registered businesses in Hungary, but the number of responses that can be used by client organizations is only 588, so the sample size does not meet the necessary criteria for representativeness. The client organization questionnaire can be divided into three sections, with 54.8 percent of the organizations in the survey using consulting services that were included in the first part of the questionnaire. The second section includes feedback from organisations that are planning to use consulting services, accounting for 8.6% of the total sample. 36.6 percent of the respondents said they had never used or planned to use the program.

The findings of the structured professional interviews with the experts and the executives of the client organisations, in addition to the quantitative survey, help to test the hypotheses drafted. I conducted a total of 111 in-depth interviews, 55 of which were with consultancy company presidents and senior consultants and 56 with client company executives. The responses of my interviewees offer a better understanding of the consultancy industry's activity, the motives for using consulting, and the frequency of the applied consulting methods, which makes it possible to evaluate the usefulness, availability and importance of consulting services for organizations.

Areas touched upon in the research:

- The survey used in quantitative management consulting research covers four areas:
 1. characteristics of advisory bodies,
 2. the method and means of contacting advisory organizations,
 3. developments and innovations in the field of consulting, the impact of Industry 4.0 on consulting,
 4. knowledge on customers.
- Customer research covers organizations that are using counselling, planning to use counselling, and do not use counselling at all. The research covers the following topics:
 1. characteristics of client organizations,
 2. expectations and conditions for the use of consulting services,
 3. the impact of Industry 4.0 and digitalisation on organizations,
 4. types of knowledge management, their appearance in the life of organizations

2.2 Processing research data

Exploratory and inferential statistical techniques were used to test the hypothesis. Exploratory analysis is mainly used to get a better understanding of the research issue, and it is focused on qualitative primary research that is flexible. This ensures that the problem is defined and that hypotheses are developed. A concluding study is carried out after the exploratory research through which the aim was to get to know the topic in Hungary. A pilot survey was used to perform exploratory analysis, which was followed by qualitative and quantitative research. Exploratory research is less structured than inferential research. Qualitative methods can be used to analyse the data collected during the research (MALHOTRA 2009). Inferential study findings can be regarded inference, but nothing can be obviously proven from a scientific standpoint. That is why when conducting research, the researcher must select between descriptive and causal research methods based on which research approach better matches the research objectives. The current research is a descriptive study, the reason of which is that the aim of the research was to get to know and explore the current market situation in Hungary. All this presupposes that the researcher has prior experience of the studied topic about which the hypotheses are drafted. A variety of research methods may be used in descriptive research to explore, analyse, and draw conclusions from the issue.

Data collection methods include

- Interview: its benefits include exploring detailed information, observing nonverbal communication, exploring causes and results. Disadvantages are that conducting the interview is very time consuming, costly and the result is not quantifiable.
- Questionnaire survey makes it possible for a large number of individuals / organizations to be questioned at the same time, with the answers being conveniently measured. The costs are low due to the large number. Disadvantage is that the willingness to respond is variable, it is difficult to reach the right respondents, the possibility to ask questions is limited.
- The costs of secondary data analysis are low, and the collected data can provide relevant information. Data access is quick and easy where data authenticity is essential. The

disadvantage is that filtering out knowledge that is valuable to the researcher of a large amount of data from is tedious and time consuming.

The primary objective and task of the research is to provide a holistic image of management consultancy (hereinafter: MC) in Hungary, as well as the demands, experiences, and opinions of consulting clients about consultants and the complexity of the services they provide. Since no country-wide scientific survey on the subject has been undertaken to date, the research is novel of nature. In VINCZE's 2014 dissertation, SZADAI-TOKÁR's 2010 dissertation, and CSAPÓ's 2015 dissertation on consulting methods, the details of previous studies have touched on the demand for the market of the management consulting profession. The aim of the study is to provide a comparative framework for potential benchmark queries. In the future, I wish to extend the research - manager consultant, client - to many Central and Eastern European countries, with a country-wide sectoral survey in each. The findings will be published in peer-reviewed journals.

The quantifiable data collected during the quantitative research was analysed using a variety of statistical methods. In the first step, basic descriptive statistical analyses were performed using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. After coding, I used the SPSS 20.0 software package to evaluate the quantifiable data in a second phase.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Dynamic Knowledge Transfer Counselling model

This chapter presents the terminological meaning of the *Dynamic Knowledge Transfer Counselling Model*, which is based on literature review and opinions from personal interviews. The previously used consultancy operating models will be transformed as an impact of the turbulent business environment, and a modern operating model will be used. The emphasis in the business processes is on knowledge, data and information. Information processing capability, knowledge organization, knowledge sharing, knowledge development techniques, innovation and human creativity are becoming important. Complete knowledge of information, strategy and data is one of the foundations of development and innovation. The application of the new counselling model is part of the work of consulting organizations, the definition and presentation of which is the topic of this chapter. The model can be applied to all areas of consulting, especially in the development and integration of strategy development tasks, IT projects and systems, HR consulting topics, and the compilation of business development concepts.

Various collaboration forms between the consultant and the client are established through the counselling phase, which are declared by contracts. The type of client, the size of the organisation, the area of activity, and the type and source of the problem all influence collaboration. One of the most important objectives is to build a productive partnership. Collaboration, generating and sharing common knowledge is a prerequisite of the consulting process. In the counselling phase, the collaboration is a “win-win” form on which both sides influence and cooperate. This is because “us” as a group will be more effective than “I” or “you” individually. Throughout the relationship, both the consultant and the customer contribute their previous expertise and experience. It is true that the result of the process is determined, but no one knows the problems and challenges that arise during the process. In this relationship, the consultant's skill, professional experience, and competences are the most important factors, which could be applied to a variety of client organizations.

In a complex information transfer therapy model, the counselling process is defined.

The counselling process in the dynamic knowledge transfer counselling model

In the paradigm of a partner-type relationship, where the client and the consultant collaborate together in the counselling process as a partner resulting in the creation of individual solutions, collaboration is the most significant buzzword. Its objective is to deliver quick, reliable, advanced, customised solutions in which the consultant and the customer collaborate to expand the knowledge they share. A better knowledge of the client environment, well-posed questions and responses, emotional capabilities, the availability of a creative workspace, and the utilization of data during the collaboration are all essential conditions for dynamic and creative cooperation. Partnership and collaboration are more than a productive and controlling process. This is because the participants are given the objective to achieve as well as the objectives to accomplish it. The possibilities provided by digitization and ICT technology, as well as the application of artificial intelligence, are an essential part of the process. The project partners, their knowledge, and the technological resources they would apply to accomplish the goal are all established during the development process.

The dynamic knowledge sharing model is not a closed-loop mechanism, but it does resemble the three consulting models and the PDCA model in several ways (Figure 2). As a result of the process, new knowledge is developed, created, and new practices are introduced and shared.

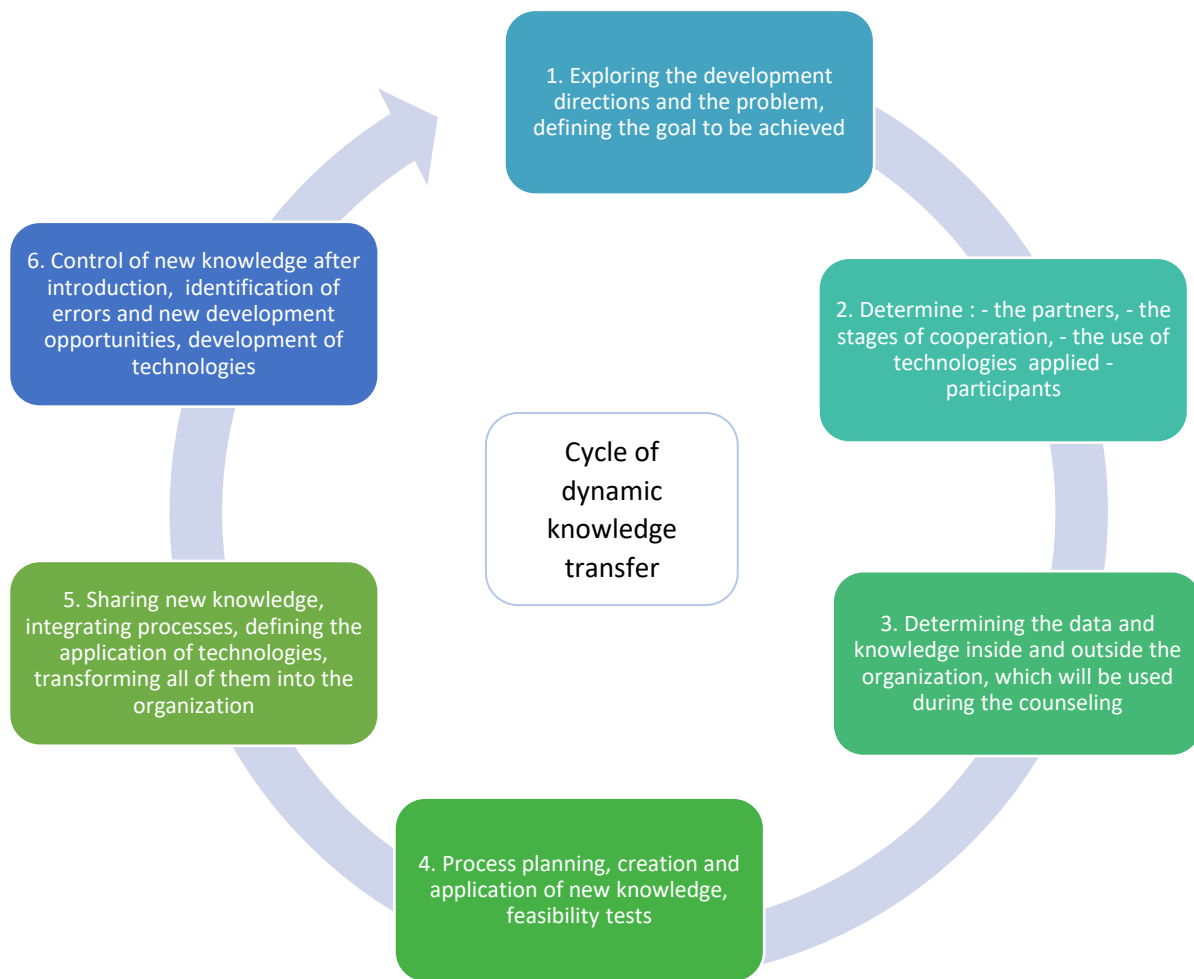


Figure 2 Dynamic knowledge transfer process

Source: author's own research (2021)

1. The Dynamic Knowledge Transfer Model focuses on potential development trends, the generation and application of new knowledge, and the solution of evolving problems. The first step in the process is to determine the client organization's objectives and the scenarios that would be used to accomplish them. As a result, at the territorial level, in the system of relations, and in the practice of effect, it is essential for the client organization to specifically identify the trend of development, the objective to be accomplished, and the problem. The most critical step of the model is to investigate the processes that reveal the problems that arise in the enterprise as well as in the processes that are not working properly. In this stage of the model, a preliminary contract is concluded between the client and the consultant, which aims to explore and define the processes and the problem.
2. The structure and rules will be described as the next stage in the consultation process. The identification of internal and external collaborators participating in the process, the technological techniques and technology used, and the phases of collaboration are all included. Discussions with the client company, the management, and middle management and operational staff decide the exploration of challenges and procedures.

The cooperation stages and actors for each phase are specified during the process with the external and internal experts involved in the exploration, as well as the technological criteria and forms of advanced technology together with the fields in which they are used.

3. Once the structures and guidelines have been established, data collection will begin, covering both internal and external data. This ensures that the organization can make responsible and well-established decisions on strategic issues. At this stage of counselling, the task of the consulting organization is to get to know the organizational, community, network and group processes, contexts and relationship system of the client organisation, determine the knowledge in the organization and collect benchmark data related to the topic. Furthermore, the method of data collection, its participants, the technological and methodological background of data processing will be defined.
4. The next step is to process and compare the internal and external data uncovered in the previous step and evaluate the factors that hinder the problem and organizational processes based on the findings. The next step is to plan out all of the future possibilities. The task of the client organization is to accept the solutions that best serve the legal and optimal operation of the organization and ensure the conditions for the introduction and application of the created new knowledge. The fulfilment of these conditions ensures the organization-specific creation and application of new knowledge and good practices for the organization.
5. The next step of the model is to integrate the new knowledge generated by external and internal consultants into the client organization's operations, which is key to the success of the consultancy project. As a result, managing the knowledge is essential whose part are as follows.
 - Provide appropriate technologies, programmes, applications, ICT tools,
 - Choose methods of knowledge distribution,
 - Select participants to ensure productivity of knowledge use.

This is one of the most constructive processes of organisational development. The client organisation goes through a step-by-step learning process in the dynamic knowledge transfer model. The method is characterised by integration, virtualization, and the use of AI robotics and cloud-based technologies, with information technology providing the technical background.

The transformation and management of knowledge into the enterprise is ensured by technology support, which is defined by five factors. The performance of the variables is affected by innovation and applied technologies, which have a measurable market impact on client organizations (Table 1).

6. After implementing the knowledge introduced into the client organization, the application and verification of the knowledge is the next step. The purpose of the audit is to determine the effectiveness of the new knowledge at the normative, strategic and operational levels. During the audit and evaluation of the data, we get an answer as to whether the objectives formulated in the first step of the consulting work have been achieved. The ever-changing business environment determines new goals to be set based on the results in order to maintain development and market position. Together, this ensures the continuous development of the organization, the effective application of new technologies and innovations.

Table 1 Correlation of factors that influence knowledge generation

Factor influencing knowledge generation, innovation	Technology application	Market effect
Customized solutions for client organizations	Technology that provides detection, operation, connection	Meeting different consumer needs
Closed loop operation ensures continuous improvement of the feedback result	Application of technology optimized for customer organization (AI, Big Data, robotics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing demand for products and services - Increase in production costs - Higher level of regulation
Knowledge sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application of optimised technology - Mobile and cloud-based technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher level of regulation - Growing demand for products and services
Cooperation with the ecosystem and market players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application of optimised technology tailored to the organisation - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing demand for products and services - Decreasing market costs - Decreasing market risk
Agile, adaptive organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application of optimised technology - Mobile and cloud-based technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decreasing market costs - Growing demand for products and services - Meeting versatile consumer needs

Source: author's own research (2021)

Characteristics of the dynamic knowledge transfer counselling model

The consultant's function in the dynamic knowledge transfer counselling model is to teach the organization, generate and integrate new knowledge, accomplish the objectives defined, and support and grow the knowledge introduced on a continuing basis. Learning organizations are formed as a result of the development of new knowledge. In this process, the consultant generates knowledge by collecting and analysing data and information, and then processing the data based on the acquired findings, ensuring that the organizational objectives, competitiveness, and innovation are met. An organization need the right combination of human characteristics and expertise from consultants and clients to produce successful knowledge the results of which are determined by the results identified by performance indicators (Table 2).

Table 2 Performance indicators in the counselling model

Customer-based performance indicators	Consultant-based performance indicators
Agreement on the generation of knowledge	Customer satisfaction following the introduction of the knowledge created
Customer satisfaction following the introduction of knowledge	Increase of income
Adequate quantitative and qualitative time for implementation	Increase in the number of clients of consulting companies, increase in the number of permanent clients
Cost reduction, revenue growth	Consulting practice, company-specific professional practice
Use of informal and formal channels developed through cooperation	Number and composition of clients
Creating an innovative, adaptive and energetic business environment	Professional past, personal and professional success
Providing professional support and a high user experience, complexity in implementation	Knowledge sharing, creation of special expertise
Increase in innovation and competitiveness indicators in target markets	References
ROI indicator, reducing the cost of learning	Decrease in costs, increase in profitability indicators

Source: author's own research (2021)

The consultant-client relationship is shaped by a variety of factors, and practical experience has shown that the consultant-client relationship is shaped by a variety of factors. According to practical experience, the most important tool for a consultant is cooperation as a partner in the implementation of a successful consultancy project, joint response to emerging challenges, mutual trust and innovative use of common knowledge. Therefore, the counselling process is influenced by the following effects (Figure 3).

The foundation of collaboration in the dynamic knowledge transfer model, similarly to the previous models, is ensured by building and strengthening trust between the customer and the consultant. This establishes a connection that allows for the collection of information, the definition of explicit and tacit knowledge, and the precise definition of consumer needs and expectations. The consultant conducts interviews and conversations with senior management and employees responsible for strategic and operational goals in order to gain an understanding of organizational knowledge and customer demands. The responses to the questions asked during the interviews, as well as data on the organizational management, assure precise understanding.

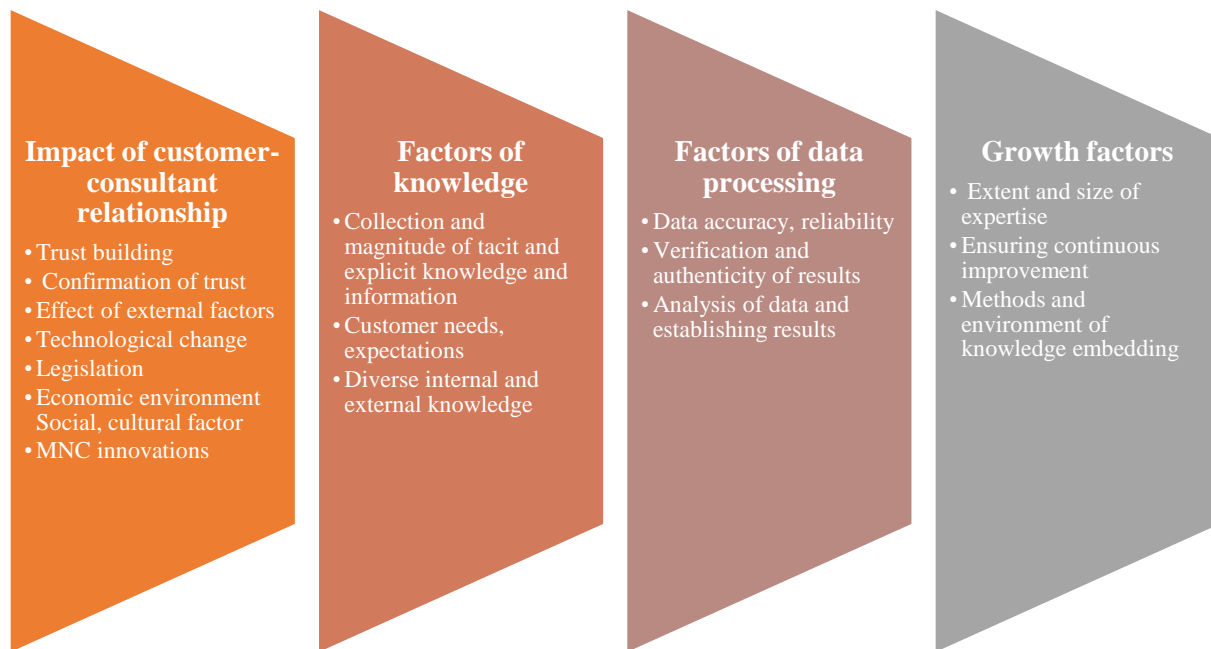


Figure 3 Factors influencing the dynamic knowledge transfer counselling model

Source: author's own research (2021)

The accuracy, reliability, and usefulness of the data are reviewed after correctly understanding the customer's demands and collecting the data. The validity of the data assures the success and effectiveness of the consulting project. The consultant is aided in working out the proper counselling implementation by the analysis of verified data, comparison of the acquired findings to the benchmark, and drawing the conclusions.

The project assures a high level of professional expertise, continual development, and the integration and consolidation of new knowledge in the client organization in the consulting process for the client organization, which is managed by external and internal consultants.

The consultant should possess the attributes listed below during the consulting process:

- understanding,
- attention, active attention,
- patience, calmness,
- open thinking and sharing thoughts,
- coordination, organization,
- expertise,
- systems approach,
- ability to ask questions,
- professional knowledge, high-level knowledge of the given field,
- partnership, cooperation,
- sincere dialogue,
- willingness to take risks.

Of the most important qualities, I would like to highlight the art of understanding and questioning, which ensures extensive and deep data collection and accurate knowledge of customer needs. For this reason, one of the most valuable qualities of a counsellor is to make a balance between questioning and active listening. The responses to the professionally formulated formal and informal questions guarantee that the client organization is thoroughly

and accurately understood. Aside from psychological aspects, a precise understanding and definition of technological / technical expectations is also a critical task for the success of your consulting procedure.

3.2 Statistical analysis of hypotheses

The literature review presented during the research provides the definition of concepts related to management consulting and the hypotheses that can be formulated based on practical experience. In the following part, the hypotheses formulated on the basis of the theoretical and practical experience of the research are verified through the processing of secondary and primary data.

H1: The economic development of countries has a significant impact on the demand for leadership and management consulting.

Statistical data from the FEACO surveys, the German study from 2000, and current data from worldwide research networks like SOURCE GLOBAL RESEARCH and the IBIS report serve to confirm the hypothesis. The hypothesis formulation is supported by the observation of the American Association of Consulting Engineers (1986) that variations in demand for consulting are independent from the changes in economic life.

On the basis of the data from the FEACO annual reports, the hypothesis according to which the demand for consulting is affected by the nations' economic progress may be tested. The reports detail the country-by-country distribution of European consultant market turnover, allowing for comparable comparisons between developed and developing nations. Figure 4 depicts the growth of GDP and consulting company turnover by nation in 2019. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that economic progress has no impact on the usage and frequency of consulting.

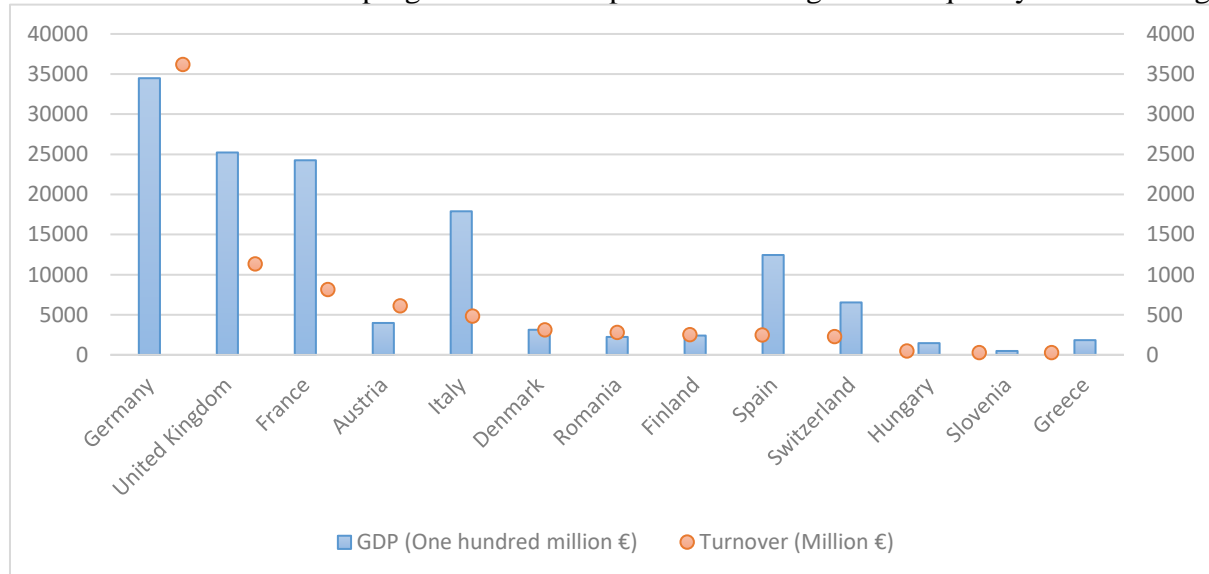


Figure 4 Management consulting market turnover by country and GDP changes, 2019

Source: FEACO, 2020 and EUROSTAT, 2020

Performing a Pearson correlation analysis (GDP-Tan. Rot $r = 0.82$ $p < 0.001$), a strong, positive relationship can be detected between the two variables, which means that the demand for advice increases with GDP growth, regardless of economic development (Table 3).

Table 3 Regression statistics

<i>Regression statistics</i>	
r value	0,816905
r-squared	0,667333
adjusted r-squared	0,637091
Standard deviation	683,2828
Observations	13

Source: author's own research (2021)

The need for management consulting has been gradually increasing since the global economic crisis of 2008-2009. Table 4 presents the change in the revenue and GDP in European nations since 2017 as well as the size of the shift. According to the table, the average change in management consulting revenue for the European panel was 7.6 percent every year, which includes 12 European countries, while GDP growth was only 2.3% / year, which shows that the growth rate of the industry is higher than the growth rate of the economy. In terms of industry, France, Austria, Hungary, the UK, Greece, and Italy have seen exceptionally high sales growth over the past three years.

Table 4 Changes in revenue and GDP between 2017 and 2019

	2017		2018		2019		Average revenue 2017-19.	GDP average 2017-19	Difference Average revenue and GDP average
	GDP change %	Revenue change %	GDP change %	Revenue change %	GDP change %	Revenue change %			
Austria	3.1%	12.3%	4.2%	12.9%	2.6%	7.9%	11.0%	3.3%	7.7%
Denmark	2.0%	7.9%	2.0%	5.7%	2.3%	7.0%	6.9%	2.1%	4.8%
Finland	3.3%	4.3%	1.5%	0.0%	1.1%	4.0%	2.8%	2.0%	0.8%
France	2.3%	10.2%	1.8%	12.3%	1.5%	11.5%	11.3%	1.9%	9.5%
Germany	2.6%	8.6%	1.3%	7.3%	0.6%	7.1%	7.7%	1.5%	6.2%
Greece	1.5%	7.1%	1.9%	9.3%	1.9%	10.0%	8.8%	1.8%	7.0%
Hungary	4.3%	6.3%	5.1%	8.8%	4.9%	12.0%	9.0%	4.8%	4.3%
Italy	1.7%	7.8%	0.8%	8.6%	0.3%	7.9%	8.1%	0.9%	7.2%
Slovenia	4.8%	1.2%	4.1%	7.5%	2.4%	3.0%	3.9%	3.8%	0.1%
Spain	2.9%	8.0%	2.4%	6.5%	2.0%	5.0%	6.5%	2.4%	4.1%
Switzerland	1.8%	5.7%	2.8%	4.9%	0.9%	6.1%	5.6%	1.8%	3.7%
United Kingdom	1.9%	1.4%	1.3%	18.3%	1.5%	7.5%	9.1%	1.6%	7.5%
European panel	2.7%	6.7%	2.4%	8.5%	1.8%	7.4%	7.6%	2.3%	5.2%

Source: FEACO (2018) and EUROSTAT (2020)

The data in the table reveal that the economic progress of the country has no effect on consulting demand, as the industry's average annual revenue growth is larger than the average GDP growth. Based on the findings, it appears that certain industrialized nations have had a similar growth in industrial turnover as less economically developed countries. An example is Hungary or Greece, while in the case of economically developed Switzerland or Finland the growth rate is lower. Based on the above factors, the hypothesis is rejected as the growth of the industry is not affected by the economic situation of the given country.

H2. There are significant differences in the use of consultants between European countries. Differences from country to country have a significant impact on the management consulting market.

A 1999 research in Germany as a benchmark serves as the basis of the hypothesis that considerable disparities in the employment of consultants might be noticed at the regional level. I used the results of the available international research, which was carried out in 1999, when compiling the research questionnaire (HÖSELBART 2000; TOKÁR – SZADAI 2010). The German consultant survey looked at 21 factors on a 7-point Likert scale to determine the characteristics of a consultant. The German research features were included in my questionnaire, and for the purposes of comparability, the German data were transformed into a 5-point scale, since this was utilized throughout the study, allowing the findings of both research to be compared. The two research were compared at the regional level, in which I used a one-sample t test, where the value of the test was assigned on the basis of the experience in Germany. According to the examined 21 aspects, the results show agreement between the German values and the Hungarian research results in the case of communication skills, according to which the null hypothesis is acceptable at the 95% confidence level, i.e., there are no significant differences at regional level in employing consultants. On the five-point Likert scale, the difference between the two test results is estimated by client organizations to be less than 0.5 for the following 12 consulting attributes: project approach / project management skills, vision, ability to vision making, openness to information technology, change skills, social competence, independence, conflict management skills, team spirit, courage and taking a stand. Change and adaptability, participative management, cost-benefit approach, loyalty, and asceticism all have a variance of 0.5-1. The value is above 1 for three consulting qualities: experience, ethics, and balance. The difference in a consulting quality demonstrates a lot of variance; it is authority-based management, yet it is the least distinguishing attribute in both areas, but it is by now dominant in selecting a consultant. Based on the evaluation of the results of the one-sample t test, the first part of Hypothesis H2 should be rejected, as no significant regional difference in the characteristics of the consultants can be detected according to the value judgment of the entrepreneurs (Table 5).

Table 5 Benchmark – comparing the results of two research by means of one-sample t-test

One-sample t-test								
	Average of research	Benchmark average	t	df	p-value	Average difference (own research – benchmark)	95% Interval difference at reliability level	
							Max.	Min.
Communication	4.32	4.43	-2.87	347	.004	-.11	-.18	-.03
Strategic approach	4.10	4.00	2.15	344	.033	.10	.01	.18
Change, adaptability	4.03	3.21	20.15	346	.001	.82	.74	.90

Authority-based management	3.21	1.43	33.68	344	.001	1.78	1.67	1.88
Participative management	3.93	3.21	15.83	341	.001	.72	.63	.81
Project approach	3.98	4.36	-8.29	342	.001	-.38	-.47	-.29
Vision	4.01	3.79	5.18	346	.001	.22	.14	.31
Cost-benefit approach	4.03	3.50	12.01	345	.001	.53	.44	.62
Loyalty	3.97	3.36	12.48	340	.001	.61	.51	.71
Openness to information technology	4.08	4.21	-3.01	345	.003	-.13	-.22	-.05
Change skills	4.06	3.86	4.48	345	.001	.20	.11	.29
Experience	4.14	2.93	24.63	344	.001	1.21	1.11	1.30
Ethics	4.15	3.14	23.46	343	.001	1.01	.92	1.09
Social competence	3.87	3.64	5.57	344	.001	.23	.15	.31
Independence	3.82	4.00	-3.75	345	.001	-.18	-.28	-.09
Conflict management	4.05	3.57	10.74	344	.001	.48	.39	.56
Team spirit	3.85	3.57	5.94	345	.001	.28	.19	.37
Entrepreneurship	3.97	3.71	5.70	346	.001	.26	.17	.35
Balance	3.66	2.57	20.58	344	.001	1.09	.99	1.20
Courage, taking a stand	3.87	3.50	8.31	343	.001	.372	.28	.46
Asceticism	3.66	3.14	10.19	339	.001	.52	.42	.62

Source: author's own research (2021)

Differences in regionalism have a substantial influence on the management consulting business, as summarized in the annual reports of FEACO. As consultants focus on the main key industries of the national economy and modify their service to the needs of these industries, the European consulting market cannot be regarded homogeneous; there are significant disparities in the composition of services. In this regard, it is worth noting that consulting services relating to the automotive and manufacturing industries, as well as operational and supply chain management services, are over-represented in Germany. In Austria, demand for strategic services has increased as a result of modernization and the implementation of digital changes in the operation of small and medium-sized enterprises, which appears as a strategic decision at this level. Among the services offered by consulting, the demand for technological services is outstanding: 45% in Hungary and 36% in the United Kingdom, respectively. The development of the infrastructure of many companies, as well as the interest in and introduction of innovation and innovative technologies ensure a large market share of technology consulting. This is due to the implementation of long-term IT development projects, which will continue to be a determining factor in the market for both SMEs and public administration. Figure 5 illustrates that there is a significant difference at the regional level in the areas of demand for consulting services, which assumes that the portfolio supply of consulting firms / organizations differs from country to country.

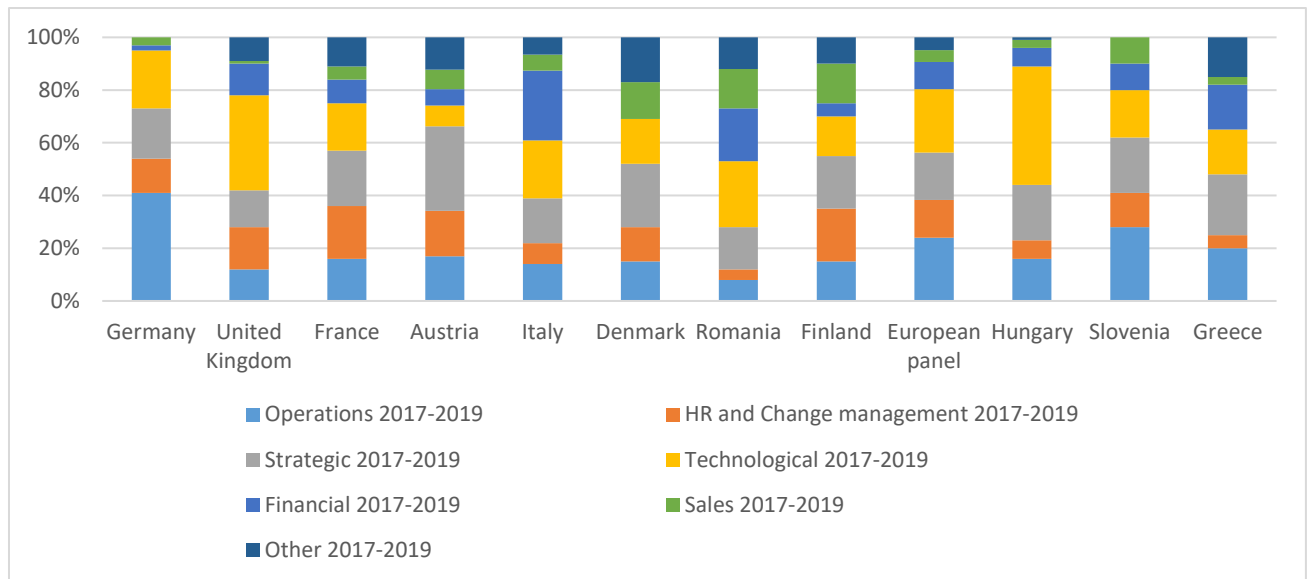


Figure 5 Consulting services in 12 countries of Europe 2017-2019

Source: FEACO, 2015-2019

On the basis of the hypothesis test, it can be stated that Hypothesis H2 is partially accepted, as no substantial variations in the employment of consultants can be found. The findings reveal that the consulting services are targeted to the demands of the local market. The second part of Hypothesis H2 is accepted in this regard, as supply fluctuating from nation to nation depends on local market and national economic conditions.

- H3. Between the societies of economically developed and moderately developed countries, cultural variations may be identified. In Hungary, both public and private sector organisations are receptive to the results of management consulting services focused on cultural aspects. The openness of society to new things and services, the effectiveness of which is unknown and depends on trust, influences demand.

Based on HOFSTEDE (2011)'s cultural dimensions, it is vital to investigate the feasibility of influencing particular nations along cultural dimensions, as well as society's receptivity to the usage of innovative services. In this regard, Hungary was studied and compared with the nations previously analysed, as well as the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. As cultural elements substantially influence the growth and demand of an industry, and the rationale for including the Central and Eastern European region can be traced back to historical origins, I believe it is essential to do a comparison based on cultural influences for the nations examined in the first hypothesis. Furthermore, it is important to examine Austria due to its proximity to Hungary and Germany because of their intertwining economic relations, as this fact has a very strong impact on the Hungarian economy, labour market, human resource development, education system and, consequently, the service sector.

Numerous authors and studies examine the impact of culture on management consulting practice and the industry. In North America, BARTHÉLEMY (2020), in Western Europe, PEMER-SIEWEKE-WER (2014) conducted research on the relationship between management consulting and culture. The research results consistently suggest that the uncertainty avoidance index reflects the openness of a given society towards services whose results are unpredictable. Unlike the mentioned authors, in my opinion, the development of the uncertainty index and the joint examination of the future orientation-long-term orientation most clearly reflect the cultural

effects. The uncertainty avoidance index shows how open a society is to new things, how it sees dubious and unknown situations as a threat, and how much it requires a structured system. Based on high values, members of society try to avoid unexpected situations, do not open up to new things and follow the rules. In the case of lower scale values, the use of different practices is accepted by society, they are open to new things. In the case of long-term orientation, low value indicates that society is focused on the present and near future, whereas high-value cultures consider the long term and the future. The findings suggest that the uncertainty avoidance index of economically developed countries is low, while the future orientation index is higher. Economically developed countries, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Denmark, have a low uncertainty avoidance index and are characterized by long-term thinking and economic decisions. Based on the results of the table, it can be stated that examining the Central and Eastern European region, after Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Hungary is less open to accepting and applying new practices, thinking more long-term and focusing on the future (Figure 6). Based on these results, it is more difficult for Hungarian society to accept changes in social and economic decisions, despite the need for a positive attitude and openness to deal with changes caused by a rapidly changing economic environment. It is true that focusing on the future ensures the development of organizations and society, which can be observed in the case of Hungarian data. This assumes that Hungarian society is less accepting of the services provided by the consulting industry, which provides uncertain results. Future orientation will positively impact the demand for the management consulting industry and increase the development and acceptance of related services, resulting in further growth of the industry. Based on this finding, the hypothesis is partially accepted.

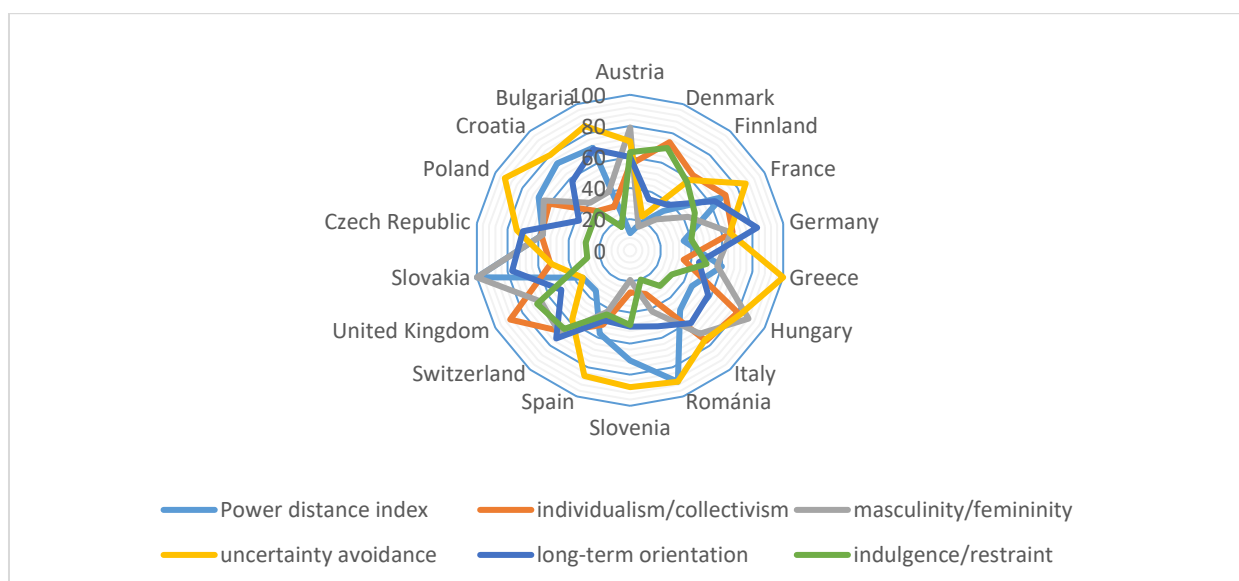


Figure 6 The values of HOFSTEDE's cultural dimensions in the case of 18 European countries

Source: author's own research (2021)

H4: Domestic consultancy firms play an important role in the development of domestic innovations as well as knowledge transfer between industries and sectors.

Secondary statistical data will be used to verify the hypothesis during which the creation of innovations and their macroeconomic relationship help to justify the hypothesis. Innovation may be developed in a variety of ways. In the research laboratory of a major corporation,

innovations are frequently developed through processes that increase an organization's productivity. The objective of the process is to increase production at both the corporate and national levels while keeping input constant. Nowadays, a new way of innovations has evolved with the formation of start-up firms, which are focused on the creation of some type of technical breakthrough, as a consequence of which the company may develop rapidly and achieve considerable market share in a certain industry markets, such as Spotify, Netflix, Trivago. The requirement for the concept / innovation, the process: supportive and demanding professionals who give the funds and expertise to transform the innovation into a commercial product or service is a crucial element of start-up innovations. By employment, the consultant is involved in the process of developing a viable product or service, as well as connecting capital to start-up enterprises. Many players in the consulting sector are involved in the market access of the project in order for the created innovation to enter the market. There is a connection between the creation of innovations and the development of R&D expenditures at the level of the national economy, according to which a correlation can be observed in the long run, which results in an improvement in productivity. One of the main problems of the Hungarian economy is the low productivity indicator, the improvement of which results in the growth of the national economy. The result of R&D expenditures is reflected in the number of patents filed, which is worth analysing in the long run. In support of the hypothesis, the number of patents with the sales revenue of the management consulting market and the growth of GDP are compared in Hungary and also the relationship between the two variables is examined with the help of regression statistics (Table 6).

Table 6 Regression statistics Consultant revenue/number of patents

<i>Regression statistics</i>					
r value	0,7565				
r-squared	0,5724				
Adjusted r-squared	0,5009				
Standard deviation	20721,18				
Observations	15				
	Regression coefficients	Standard dev	t value	p-value	F significance
Axis section	72.68	16.79	4.33	0.0006	0.0008
Revenue of consulting	0.0078	0.0018	4.33	0.0006	

Source: author's own research (2021)

A regression analysis was carried out to test the hypothesis. The value of the regression coefficient (Revenue-Number of patents: $r = 0.76$ $p = 0.001$), which indicates that the two variables have a significant, positive association. As a result, it is concluded that domestic consultants play an important role in the development of innovations and the promotion of market appearance, therefore, economic players are not reluctant to use consulting services. The WEF Forum's Competitiveness Report 2019 also supports my finding, as Hungary has improved its position in the global competitiveness list, mainly due to the use of ICT (information and communication technologies) tools and adaptations, and a significant improvement in innovation capacity in terms of patent expansion.

The results of the questionnaire and in-depth interviews support the second half of the hypothesis, that cross-sectoral knowledge transfer operates between industries. The sectoral distribution of the clients of consulting firms was inquired about in the research questionnaire.

Based on the results, it can be stated that the services provided by the consultants are used by both the public sector (state administration, local government) and companies operating in the private sector, the consulting organizations also cooperate with several client sectors. The partnership has proved that parts of good practice which have been effectively applied to one client can also be effectively applied to other clients. The findings of the interviews justify the hypothesis; the responses of the interviewed consultants reveal that the solutions and schemes used with individual customers may also be used with customers from other industries. This statement was determined by the in-depth interview subjects primarily in the field of IT development and system development. Based on these findings, the hypothesis is accepted.

H5: In both prosperity and recession, fluctuations in the economic indicators have no effect on demand for European and domestic consulting services.

Hypothesis H5, according to which demand for domestic and foreign – private and public sector – consulting services is unaffected by economic fluctuations, regardless of whether it is a period of economic prosperity or a period of economic decline. A long-term time series analysis is required to evaluate the current hypothesis. The data for this purpose is provided by the annual report on the European advisory market by FEACO since 1998 and by the data series on GDP provided by Eurostat, so that a 21-year time series is available for analysis.

During the period under review, both the prosperity cycle and the recession cycle of the economy may be observed. The global economic crisis of 2008, which had an influence from 2008 to 2013, was the defining economic event of the time under consideration. According to the data, revenues in the European consulting market increased throughout both boom and downturn periods in the economy. The 2008 financial crisis had an influence on both the change in GDP and the change in sales revenue of the management consulting industry - sales revenue decreased by 3.5 percent between 2008 and 2009, although consulting market volume grew from 2010 onwards. When compared to the previous year, 2009, there has been a 3% growth. The change in GDP over this time period reveals a 4.3 percent decrease.

From 2012 onward, the change in consulting sales volume indicates a greater growth rate than the change in GDP. This is because during times of prosperity, more individuals can afford to purchase consulting services, which allows businesses to grow. In times of economic depression, businesses hire consultants to help them offset the effects of the crisis while also obtaining new knowledge, retaining market position and ensuring long-term development for the organisations (Figure 7).

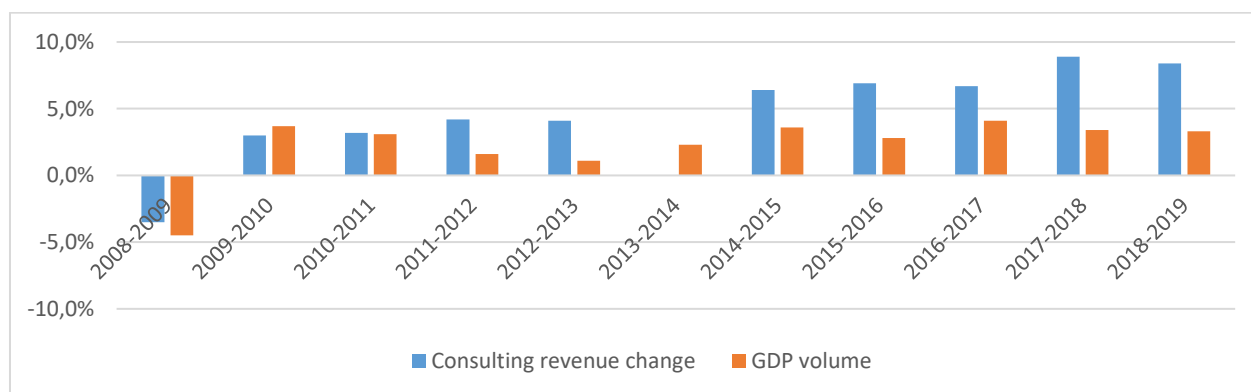


Figure 7 Change in revenue and GDP volume of the European consulting market (change compared to the previous year)

Source: FEACO, 2019 and EUROSTAT, 2020

With a r^2 value of 0.1408 and a regression analysis, it can be concluded that there is a weak link between the change in sales revenue and the change in GDP volume (GDP-Tan. Rot $r = 0.38$ p 0.021).

Based on the Hungarian data, it can be stated that during the economic crisis, from 2008 to 2009, there was a 12.7% decline in the change in GDP and a 13.6% decline in the sales revenue of the Hungarian consulting market. If we look at the change in the volume of the consulting market, the change in European data does not show such a high fluctuation, as a decrease of 3.5% was observed from 2008 to 2009. During the recession cycle, the change in the volume of the Hungarian consulting industry showed a drastic decrease of 31.7% from 2008 to 2010.

In addition to the change in volume, there was also a shift in the content of the services delivered, with a considerable rise in IT consulting (from 19 percent to 36 percent) and systems development and integration consulting (from 4 percent to 8 percent), as well as a fivefold gain in market share in outsourcing. In this regard, it can be stated that in times of recession, some consulting services can be sold well, which are aimed at optimizing operating costs. The above data support that the demand for services is not affected by fluctuations in the economy, regardless of the country's economic development. Based on this, Hypothesis H5 is accepted.

In the further stage of the hypothesis testing, the basis of the verification of the hypotheses is provided by the results of the primary research.

H6: Economic and social changes have resulted in the adoption of a new consulting model, which has been well received by both customers and consultants.

Changes in the economic, technological and social business environment have an impact on the practice of consulting, so it is necessary to examine the factors that have influenced the development and viability of the new consulting model. Because consulting as a profession has a long history, dating back to the Second Industrial Revolution, it is important to look at the social, historical, and economic impacts of various consulting models. The quantity of labour and capital that can be used in production, technological development, historical and political background affect the rate of development of economic growth in each country and region.

As I previously stated, the expert consulting model is in line with the evolution of the sector, according to scientific management representatives. For almost 80 years, TAYLOR, BABAGE, and FAYOL have been regarded the forerunners of corporate consulting, and this tendency has characterized the first stage. The historical, sociological, and technological advances of the era, as well as political changes, all shaped the creation of the expert model. The shift at the end of the nineteenth century was shaped by the rise of human and civil rights, democracy and nationalism, industrialization, and the free market economy. Industrial revolutions follow a three-stage process in which the first phase is fast change, the second step is dynamic development that leads to structural change, and various repercussions of economic development reach several sectors in the third phase (MOKYR 1998). In Europe and the United States, the second industrial revolution accelerated industry, transportation, and information movement making Europe the financial and commercial centre of the world. New technological developments have induced the development of industry and heavy industry, and production methods have changed. As a result of technological advances, the development of railways, electricity, and motion pictures, industrialization has grown more and more. The growth of the population and labour force has resulted in a change in consumer needs, which has also contributed to the development of industry. World War I was the first mechanized war that left a deep mark on all walks of life. World War I and the following economic crisis halted the rapid expansion and development of industrial production, and the performance of the economy plummeted. Post-crisis arms competition, recovery processes have resulted in economic

recovery. World War II, in Europe the Civil War (Spain 1936-1939), the revolutions (Hungary 1956; Czechoslovakia 1968) resulted in a temporary economic downturn. Reconstruction, Cold War armaments, the pursuit of social security bring about the expansion of economic development, the countries have reached the level of previous growth. Management consulting firms operating during this period serve industrial and government clients with advice related to strategic and operational financial tasks.

In the 1970s, the economic recovery was hampered by a global recession, a sharp drop in energy costs, and a reduction in steel and mining production. Technology advancements and the widespread use of computers, on the other hand, have presented significant hurdles for management consulting firms. The optimum utilization and flow of energy resources, as well as capital, are the foundations of economic progress as a result of which there has been an increasing demand for the work of consultants on the part of companies. Continuous development, transformation, and modernization of businesses, as well as organizational development, integration of new technology and processes, and human resource development, have all become important tasks for the development of companies. The regime changes of the socialist nations reshaped Europe's map, resulting in the emergence of new countries. Increased mobility, common legislation and a common market have resulted from open borders.

Consulting was impacted by the 2008 economic crisis, as well as the consequences of technology, digitalization, and globalization. Companies are increasingly looking for IT consultancy, as well as developing corporate growth strategies and diversifying international logistics services. The new technological solutions of digitalisation are paving the way for the expansion of Internet-based jobs, as well as low-capital-intensive corporations and small firms.

Industry 4.0, the application of technological advancements, the growth in globalization and capital concentration, and the rearrangement of employment, the growth of population and sustainability as key factors have restructured the economy of the future and resulted in the development of the consulting industry. The main task of consulting companies is to prepare organisations for the transformation of the economy, increase efficiency, manage human resources, implement IT projects, cloud-based technologies and services in the everyday life of companies. As a result of Industry 4.0, existing production systems are being transformed, and existing products, services, and processes are being developed through digitized technology, resulting in new business models and the integration of horizontal and vertical value chains (WANG et al. 2016). The factors influencing the development of consulting models are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7 Summary of changes of the economic and social impacts

	19th c.	20th c.	21st c. (vision)
Consulting model	Expert model	Process-Inquiry model	Dynamic knowledge transfer model
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • civil wars, • racism, • segregation, • imperialism, • colonialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW I and II, • cold war, • oil crisis, • forming of the European Union, • collapse of the Berlin wall, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdependence between nation states, • decentralization of power, nationalism, • world economic crisis
Technological changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • electricity, • telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • computer, • internet, • social media, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber technology, • AI, • robotics,

Industry development, business climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oil industry, • textile industry, • mass production, • profit maximisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application of computers, • advancement in electronics, • automotive industry, • more popular custom-made manufacturing, • corporate social responsibility (CSR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • digitalisation, • common economy, • social enterprise, • social media, • Internet, • value creation in the centre, • sustainable development
Environment change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • man conquers nature, • key to production: capital, labour, land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environmental protection, • human capital in the centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human-nature symbiosis, • sustainable development, • green growth, green energy, • the most important source of nature: natural capital, human capital, cultural capital, social capital, • depletion of natural resources
Changing standards of living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase in average income, • increase in average living standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • globalization, • access to information, • increase in average income, • urbanization, • an aging society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • longer average age, • increasing migration, • decrease in productivity, • growing social inequalities, • climate change
Labour changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • division of labour, • hierarchical organizations, • bureaucracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizational transparency, • responsibility and accountability of the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizational transparency, accountability, • shared responsibility, • organizational responsibility, • flat organization, • teamwork
Educational changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public education - primary and secondary schools, • preparation for the labour market, • academic education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • divergence of education (private, individual curriculum), • inter-institutional competition for pupils / students, • education for individual fulfilment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emerging school networks, • cooperation and partnership between the institutions at all levels, • personalized learning

Source: author's own compilation (2021)

The confirmation of the research hypothesis is supported by the presented economic, social and technological environmental changes based on those summarized in Table 7. The results of the in-depth interviews also support the areas of application of the new model, the definition of the consultant's tasks, the aim of which is to eliminate problems and mistakes and achieve growth. Based on interviews with the consultant and client organizations, it can be determined that the consultant's duty is to help the client accomplish the intended outcome by utilizing the technological capabilities. The client and the consultant build an intense cooperation and mutual knowledge exchange through the counselling process, with the purpose of achieving the client's goal. This new consulting approach is predominantly employed by enterprises in IT and organizational development (OD) consulting, according to the consulting firms that participated in the research. Table 8 provides an overview of the consulting models. The new consulting approach that arises in the transition of model-changing universities is used by 85% of the companies examined.

The research examined the extent to which the new counselling method was accepted for clients. 72% of the client organizations surveyed have already used this consulting method in the case of IT and info communication system development, which consulting model can be observed for model-changing universities. The new consulting method is accepted and well applicable in all client organizations.

In their view, reliable, personalized consulting is provided by the new consulting method and client organizations find that the new consulting method provides them with continuous improvement. Based on this, the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 8 Summary of consulting models

Focus	Expert consulting model	Process consulting model	Inquiry /Humble consulting model	Dynamic knowledge transfer consulting model
What is the task of the consultant?	Problem solving	Problem solving	Achieve the result desired by the customer	Achieve the optimal goal and the result desired by the client using the appropriate technology
What is the relationship between the consultant and the client?	The consultant transmits or transfers knowledge	The consultant and the client work together on issues related to human resources and organizational operation	The consultant and the client work together as partners in the technical and human issues of change (result)	The consultant has an active role in the implementation and consulting processes, the consultant works together with the client and the machine on issues related to human resources and organizational operation, as an equal partner

What is the role of the advisor?	The consultant acts as an expert who passes on knowledge and good practices	A counsellor is a “helper” or an expert in a process	The client and the consultant combine their different experiences to achieve the desired result	The consultant is also a helper, teacher, doctor, lawyer who helps to combine the experiences of the client, the consultant and the machine
How can growth be achieved at the customer?	Conveys knowledge in the form of a product or service	Helps the client learn to work effectively	The combined knowledge of the consultant from the client is required to achieve the goals	The unification of common knowledge, the aim of which is to introduce, manage and maintain successful change
To what extent is the service provided to customers unique?	In general, knowledge can be used in different contexts	Customised solutions	Customised solutions	Customised solutions

Source: author’s own research (2021)

H7: Domestic consultants have a service portfolio that is in accordance with market demands. Regardless of industry, organizations with various ownership structure use the expertise of external consultants. They are aware of the benefits and drawbacks of such services and use them wherever possible.

Based on the hypothesis, I analysed the extent to which the range of services provided by consulting organizations is consistent with the consulting form required by clients. In the questionnaire, both clients and consultants had to decide what to offer and what they would like to use from several areas of counselling services. Table 9 summarizes the possible areas of counselling offered and the frequency of users.

Table 9 Frequency of consulting areas client- consultant (%).

Type of consulting service		Service providers (%)	Service users (%)
Strategy	Strategy planning	31.4	24.8
	Organisational development	33.5	33.9
	Market research	11.7	15.4
	Marketing	13.8	25.4
	Financial consulting	37.3	32.0
Operative processes	Business planning	40.0	24.5
	Change management	25.2	19.4
	Project management	32.9	27.9

	Supply chain management	4.1	8.2
	Accounting, finance	18.4	30.4
Human resources	Headhunting	41.8	42.0
	Education	33.5	30.1
	Income, remuneration, incentives	25.7	24.8
	Outplacement	4.9	12.5
	Knowledge management	44.6	43.9
Information consulting	General consulting	67.5	34.8
	System development, system integration	62.7	49.5
Outsourcing	IT management services	68.5	32.0
	Applied managerial services	4.8	10.7
	BPO business processes outsourcing	1.7	16.3
Coaching	Coaching	24.4	18.2
	Team coaching	14.8	9.4
Crisis management	Crisis management	7.3	3.8

Source: author's own research (2021)

According to the findings, consultancy firms were mainly interested in IT consulting, strategic consulting, coaching, project management consulting, and human capital management assistance. Organizational development, systems development, general IT support, coaching, and employee recruitment are examples of these services. Client organizations bear a resemblance to consulting firms in that they have shown less willingness to seek a consulting firm for areas they support less, such as supply chain support or BPO process outsourcing.

In the course of my study, I looked at the relationship between portfolios of consulting firms and consulting demand. Based on the Wilcoxon test findings ($Z = -1,095$, $p = 0,274$), no substantial gap between the portfolio of services provided by domestic consultants and market demands can be justified.

The research results confirmed that the supply opportunities are in line with the demand needs. Every second consulting firm offered project management, general IT and systems consulting, IT outsourcing, recruitment, education and knowledge management, and coaching. Every second organization that has already used consulting required IT general and systems consulting, IT outsourcing, coaching, knowledge management, and headhunting.

Based on survey data, the total number of assignments for consulting firms involved in the study increased by approximately 20% in 2018. The findings are consistent with the market share of the consulting industry, which is 45 percent for technology-driven IT consulting. The hypothesis is accepted by the aforementioned findings.

The second part of the hypothesis states that client companies employ consulting services to avoid risks resulting from environmental changes, with the primary goal of ensuring the company's development and business stability. Based on the results of the in-depth interview - 100% - and the questionnaire research - 54.8% used a consulting service - it can be stated that the clients are familiar with the services provided by the consultants and use external

consultants in their work. During in-depth interviews, clients believe that there are two important reasons for using a consultant, helping the company to grow while maintaining its market position, and the consultant's expertise. Based on the above data, Hypothesis H7 is accepted.

H8: In terms of consultancy selection, there is a distinction between private and public sector organisations in Hungary. Traditional standards are used by public sector organisations in selecting consultants (previous relationships at work, acquaintances, company reputation). In the case of private sector companies, the choice of a consultant is influenced by the complexity of their services, the size of their companies, and the volume of their prices. The selection process is less influenced by the origin of the consulting firms, the coverage of their advertisements and their regional location.

While testing the hypothesis, I looked at the relationship factors of the selection process. Due to their previous work relationship or business reputation, I assumed in my research that consumers would choose to use conventional relationship-building approaches. First, I investigated how businesses with various ownership arrangements contacted consultancy firms, and several answers could be accepted at this point.

Based on the responses, it can be concluded that the most common method of interaction is making contact based on word of mouth regardless the company is state-owned or operates in the private sector. The chamber's recommendation and the creation of a working partnership by tenders are less common and well-known among businesses similarly to advertising. According to the findings of the consulting company examination, personal contact with consulting organizations forms the basis of 37.0 percent of the commissions, which is also reinforced by the findings of the in-depth interviews. Both consulting companies and clients believe that the consultant performs work based on relationships of trust, where personal acquaintances form the basis of trust. 22.9% of the consulting organizations surveyed say they reach their clients through advertisements. The most common advertising technique for consultants is professional conferences, workshops and advertisements in special journals and online professional platforms. To a very significant extent, 19.7% of customers gain clients through tenders (Table 10).

Table 10 Techniques of establishing contact in percentage

Technique of establishing contact	Personal acquaintance	Ad, advert	Chamber's recommendation	Application, tender
Private domestic firm	42.6%	14.7%	3.8%	6.0%
Private foreign-owned firm	13.5%	3.8%	0.9%	8.2%
State-owned company	6.3%	3.8%	4.1%	4.7%
Mixed	1.6%	1.3%	0.3%	0.9%

Source: author's own research (2021)

The study looked at what factors consultancy firms and clients consider significant when choosing a consulting company. Respondents were asked to rate how significant a specific feature was to them on a 5-point Likert scale. Point 1 stood for "not at all significant," while the number 5 indicated "extremely important. „The results of the responses of both consulting firms and clients are summarised by Table 11.

Table 11 Aspects for selecting consulting firms (mean, standard deviation)

Aspects	Consulting companies		Clients	
	Mean	St. dev.	Mean	St. dev.
Reputation of the consulting firm	4.02	0.907	3.93	0.816
Previous work relationships	4.19	0.906	3.79	1.002
Advertising of the consulting company	2.98	1.235	3.07	1.003
Marked references of the consulting firm	3.77	1.027	3.68	0.908
Personal contact with the consultant	4.29	0.882	4.00	0.963
Deadline for the consultant 's commitment	3.69	1.088	3.77	0.992
Nationality of consultant	2.80	1.394	2.96	1.268
Regional headquarters of the consultant	3.09	1.284	3.15	1.147
Regional office of the consultant	3.11	1.315	3.19	1.064
Price level of the consultant	3.64	1.003	3.77	0.862
Favourable payment terms	3.45	1.185	3.57	0.993
The size of the consultant	3.18	1.197	3.37	0.964
The connections of the consulting company	3.94	1.03	3.71	0.916
The complexity of the service offered	4.05	0.904	3.94	0.931
Opinion of acquaintances	4.05	0.931	3.72	0.965

Source: author's own research (2021)

According to the clients the most important issue is personal contact with the consultant, the complexity of the service offered, the reputation of the consulting firm, previous work relationships, the deadline for the consultant's commitment to the project as well as the price level of the consultant in a price-sensitive market. Within this, in the decision-making process, the nationality of the consultant and the headquarters, as well as the regional office of the consulting firm is relatively less important. The consulting service providers, however, felt that the following criteria are decisive when selecting a company: personal contact, previous work relationships, the reputation of the company, the complexity of the service offered and the opinion of acquaintances. A neglectable factor in decision making is the nationality of the firm, the regional offices of the company, ads and adverts. The results show that consulting firms and clients had very different views in this regard. The latter circumstance complicates and prolongs the selection process.

For the purpose of the examinations, I compressed the client's aspects into factors, all variables were suitable for factor formation. The factors were rotated using the Varimax method, the explained variance ratio was 60.568%. Based on the factor weights, the following factors were determined (Table 12).

Factor 1 The geographical features of the consulting firm

Factor The size of the consulting firm on the market

Factor 3 The financial conditions of the consulting firm

Factor 4 The reputation offered by the consulting firm

Table 12 Principal component analysis

	Component			
	Geographical features	Size, advert	Financial conditions	Reputation
Nationality of the consulting firm	.827	-.096	-.082	.185
Regional headquarters of the consulting firm	.783	-.112	.303	.116
Regional offices of the consulting firm	.711	.061	.345	-.037
Ads, adverts of the consulting firm	.362	.644	.007	-.080
Size of the consulting firm	.422	.606	-.041	-.002
Connections of the consulting firm	.205	.737	-.040	.117
Reputation of the consulting firm	.095	.680	.364	-.036
Previous work relationships with the consulting firm	-.066	.645	.107	.195
References of the consulting firm	.265	.536	.251	.105
Complexity of services offered by the consulting firm	-.091	.170	.506	.431
Price level of the consulting firm	.014	.058	.847	.109
Payment conditions of the consulting firm	.392	.208	.652	.007
Deadline for the consulting firm	.057	.430	.579	.081

Opinion of acquaintances about the consulting firm	.272	.090	.011	.857
Personal connections with the consulting firm	-.128	.473	.163	.578
Explained variance (%)	29.915	15.209	8.740	6.704

Source: author's own research (2021)

The four factors were used to create homogeneous groups of clients based on the given factors. For the cluster formation the K-mean method was applied, and the following cluster centres were created (Table 13).

Table 13 Final cluster centres

Factors	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Geographical features	0.050	0.311	-2.709
Role of size, market	0.401	-0.358	-0.214
Financial conditions	0.459	-0.431	-0.085
Reputation	-0.540	0.515	-0.037

Source: author's own research (2021)

Customers are divided into three clusters: 45.9% belong to the first cluster, 47.7% to the second cluster, and 6.4 percent to the third cluster. According to cross-tabulation analyses, one out of every three small businesses and half of all large companies was price sensitive. All these results show that the organizations operating in the Hungarian market are price sensitive. By activity, service providing companies pay a lot of attention to reputation and price (42.6%), while, for example, nearly 10% of commercial organizations do not consider in depth the selection of consultants.

Nearly 90% of customer organisations were satisfied with the consultancy services, as they were used to investigate internal organisational issues and recognise organizational challenges. Another reason is to provide an environment for the implementation of new business and technical advances that will support organizational development, in which the consultant will play an active role. In addition to the application of technological developments, the development of the organization is ensured by its human resource education and competence development, which contributes to the increase of the organisation's competitiveness, efficient operation and productivity.

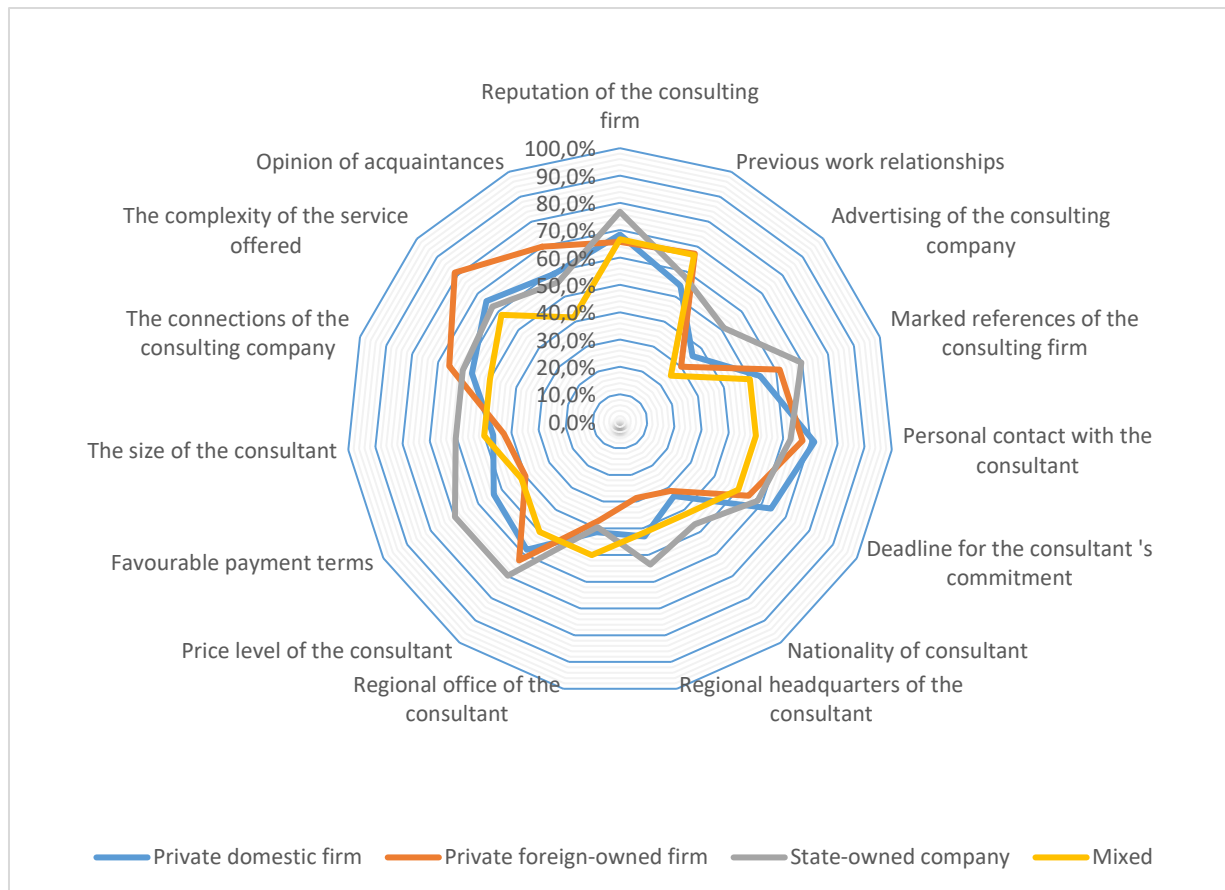


Figure 8 Criteria for selecting a consulting firm for clients with different ownership structures

Source: author's own research (2021)

For public sector players, the price level of organizations is important; they are price sensitive, which is why the state regulation (act on state budget, public finances) establishes the mechanism and requirements for procuring consultants for public sector actors, according to which making use of the lowest priced service on the market caters for achieving optimal public finance management. Therefore, in addition to the price, one of the important aspects of tendering consulting activities is the complexity of the services provided by the given company, the reputation of the consulting organization, the reputation and references of the consulting firm (Figure 8). These aspects of selection are also prevalent in the case of the Hungarian private sector organization, therefore the hypothesis is not accepted, because no difference can be observed in the selection process between the Hungarian private and public sector organizations.

H9: In comparison to businesses with an international ownership structure, organizations with a domestic ownership structure would see a rise in operating and other costs as a result of digitalization. As a result, demand for IT consultancy, IT management, and outsourcing services among foreign-owned businesses is smaller.

Hypothesis verification was approached from a variety of angles. On the one hand, I compared the responses of the in-depth interviews to the findings of the questionnaire, and on the other hand, I compared the views of the consulting and client organizations about the impact of digitization. The demand of the responding organisations for IT, IT management, and

outsourcing is growing, according to Hypothesis H8. The data is also confirmed by the development of the territorial distribution of domestic management consulting. When confirming the current hypothesis, I examined to what extent digitization, mixed ownership structures, and organizational size affect the operation of organisations.

During the research, I looked at which areas the organizations believe digitization has an effect on. The respondents had to determine on a 5-point Likert scale how much the given feature affects the function of the organizations and in which areas the growth and transition as a result of digitization can be seen. Number 1 stood for not impacting it at all, whereas number 5 marked a strong influence. Table 14 summarises the results from the answers of both consulting companies and clients.

Table 14 Impacts of digitalisation on consulting firms (mean, standard deviation)

Aspects	Consulting firms		Clients	
	Mean	St. dev.	Mean	St. dev.
Reaching a specialist / consultant as an employee	4.15	0.743	3.69	0.874
Reaching customers	4.21	0.861	3.90	0.928
Organization of trainings	4.08	0.840	3.73	0.926
Gaining knowledge on clients	4.19	0.778	3.87	0.889
Entering international markets	4.05	0.967	3.85	1.000
Reaching international clients / projects	3.60	1.019	3.53	0.988
Obtaining information	4.39	0.831	4.06	0.870
Classification of information	4.00	0.933	3.72	0.960
Evaluation of information	4.02	0.907	3.75	0.915
Transaction costs	3.93	0.936	3.72	0.953
Knowing global trends	3.99	0.910	4.02	0.889
Decision making costs	3.66	1.040	3.54	0.961
Bargain costs	3.49	1.040	3.40	1.010
Controlling costs	3.60	1.019	3.53	0.988
Implementation costs	3.84	0.914	3.64	0.986
Achieving new research results	4.21	0.861	3.90	0.928

Source: author's own research (2021)

According to consultancy firms, digitization had the greatest effect on obtaining information, reaching clients, and achieving new research results. The smallest impact can be observed in terms of costs, as it has the smallest impact on bargaining, controlling and decision-making costs, as well as reaching international projects. Clients share this view. They also believe that the acquisition of information, global trends and the achievement of new research results will become faster as a result of digitization. My in-depth interview subjects also highlighted these aspects and believe that digitization has the least impact on costs. Knowledge of global trends and new research findings contributes to the development of organizations and the maintenance of their market position.

In terms of the implications of digitization, I examined what groups consultants and clients can be categorized into. I condensed the considerations into factors to serve the objectives of the research. All variables were suitable for factor formation. Based on the obtained results, three factors can be determined, because the explained variance ratio was 61.97%.

Based on the factor weights, the following factors were determined:

Factor 1 Reaching professionals, employees and opening new markets

Factor 2 Opportunities of cost reduction

Factor 3 Managing information

Table 15 Factor structure, aspects of measuring the effects of digitization for clients - Explanatory variance

	Component		
	Reaching professionals, employees	Opportunities of cost reduction	Managing information
Reaching a specialist / consultant as an employee	.624	.350	-.045
Reaching customers	.529	.207	.436
Organization of trainings	.644	.209	.069
Gaining knowledge on clients	.751	.085	.269
Entering international markets	.724	.170	.224
Reaching international clients / projects	.814	.164	.162
Decision making costs	.180	.756	.269
Bargain costs	.162	.829	.203
Implementation costs	.228	.774	.134
Obtaining information	.476	-.155	.580
Classification of information	.206	.282	.785
Evaluation of information	.133	.338	.770
Knowing global trends	.425	.116	.606

Explained variance (%)	26.063	20.783	15.123
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KMO=0.904, Bartlett-test: $\chi^2=4538.398$ df:1120, $p<0.001$

Source: author's own research (2021)

Based on the principal component analysis, three groups of factors were created (Table 15). The first factor includes 55.4% of customers, the second factor is made up by 15.6% and the third factor consists of 29.0% of customers. The second factor, cost reduction, has an impact on 15.6% of organizations in total. Carrying out the cross-tabulation analyses, it can be stated that there is no significant difference between the Hungarian-owned and the foreign-owned companies in terms of the impact of digitalisation on cost reduction. Based on the results obtained, the hypothesis is not accepted.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The examination is a comprehensive, gap-filling benchmark research that looked at both the consultant and client sides of the domestic consulting business. In order to meet my objectives, I analysed the foreign and domestic factors that influence demand for leadership and management consultancy, as well as the implications of changing economic conditions on the consulting market and the development trends and opportunities of leadership and management consulting.

Management consultancy is of vital importance for the national economy as well as the productivity of businesses and organisations to achieve profitable operations and development. In my opinion it is critical that the expert information held by consulting firms be made available and open to all players in the economy.

According to the findings, different professional associations focus on different aspects of consulting. It would be essential to have a single, supervisory professional body based on the Austrian model of consulting association, which would oversee and manage consultant operations. This move would help alleviate mistrust between different client organizations and share innovations, best practices and knowledge at a rapid pace.

As described above, the further continuation and extension of national research to neighbouring countries will ensure the development of the industry and the widespread use of consulting. A research group called InterCons Research Team (ICTR) set up by Professor Dr. József Poór contributes to all this.

The primary research involves a large amount of data from a variety of research fields, which has partly been processed and further research findings presented in research papers and articles on the topic.

- H1: To test the hypothesis, I used descriptive statistics and regression analysis to international statistical data. Based on processing these data, it can be concluded that a country's economic development has little influence on the increasing demand for consultancy, so the hypothesis was rejected. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the demand for counselling is constantly increasing after the global economic crisis of 2008-2009. For the 12 European countries examined, a higher rate of industry growth can be observed than the average GDP growth.
- H2: Benchmark research is used to test the hypothesis, with the benchmark data coming from the results of a study conducted in Germany in 1999. According to the hypothesis test, Hypothesis H2 is partly accepted since no major variations in the use of consultants can be seen in cross-country comparisons. The results show that the range of consulting services varies from country to country, tailored to local market needs, so the second part of the hypothesis is accepted.
- H3: On the basis of comparing the findings of the cultural aspects, this hypothesis is justified. Based on the results, it can be concluded that Hungarian culture is less tolerant of consultancy services that produce unpredictable outcomes. The future orientation of society has a positive impact on this outcome, as it assures organisational development and progress as well as acceptance of services in the industry. Therefore, the hypothesis is partially accepted.
- H4: The domestic consulting industry, which I examined based on domestic GDP data, the number of patents, and the sales revenue of the consulting market, plays a significant role in the spread of inventions. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that

Hungarian consultancy firms play an important role in the diffusion of new ideas and best practices. The employment of consultants provides the basis for cross-industry knowledge transfer and the introduction of good practices, which ensure the development and maintenance of competitiveness of client organizations in the long run. The hypothesis is accepted.

- H5: In the course of the research, I examined the effects of economic volatility on consulting firms. Based on the findings of the examination, it can be concluded that demand for consulting services is unaffected by economic volatility and is independent of the country's economic growth, both in times of prosperity and recession. On the basis of this, the hypothesis is accepted.
- H6: During the research, societal, economic, and technical advancements necessitated the use of a modern consultancy method that ensures continuous organisational development. The findings of the examination suggest that the new consultancy method is being actively implemented by consulting firms, which results in client satisfaction and ensures the opportunities for development. The hypothesis is accepted.
- H7: The findings of the study were based on primary research. The research contrasted the availability of consulting services with the needs and requirements of clients. Based on the findings, it can be inferred that demand and supply are in balance, and supply opportunities are in line with demand needs. The services provided by the consultants are also known and used by the clients, as the consultant has specialized knowledge that is missing from the client organization. This special knowledge contributes to the development of the client organization and the maintenance of its market position. The hypothesis is accepted.
- H8: Client organisations often contact consultants based on a personal recommendation, which is based on the consultant's image and reputation developed through a previous work relationship. After conducting a factor analysis, I discovered that there is no difference between companies with different ownership structures in terms of the factor that affects consultant selection. This hypothesis is rejected.
- H9: To test the hypothesis, I examined the effects of digitization on consulting and client organizations. After performing the cross-tabulation analyses, it can be stated that there is no significant difference between the Hungarian-owned and the foreign-owned companies in terms of the impact of digitalisation on cost reduction. Based on the results obtained, the hypothesis is not accepted.

Based on the research results, consulting services are provided to both private and public sector organisations, and substantial results can be obtained with the participation of external consultants in order to expand and improve organizations. Both the client and the consulting firms agree that monitoring progress and adapting to changes is a fundamental requirement. Organizational employees and managers are often required to manage transition and bring about development with a proactive approach, in which external consulting firms play a significant role as they have the expertise that comes with professional practice, which ensures development for all organisations.

Recommendations for external consulting companies: Consulting firms have extensive professional experience, allowing them to put together diverse training services that are customized to the needs of their clients. The use of the new consultancy model allows for the monitoring and continuous improvement of outcomes, resulting in innovation, value

generation, and client orientation. To this end, it is important to ensure a competitive price offer and favourable payment conditions that are accessible to SMEs.

Recommendations for client companies: External consultants may assist in the development of organisations and the design of the best organizational structure. Employ external, outsider advisors to accomplish success because they, as outsiders, may see the factors that hinder the operation of the organization, other internal issues, and the possibility of implementing actions to ensure optimum value creation.

Recommendations for governmental measures: Consultancy companies are actively engaged in the development and dissemination of inventions, so project and tender opportunities for consulting must be made accessible to SMEs. Furthermore, the provision of programmes and tax incentives for SMEs that assist companies in achieving information and communication technology advancements, thus improving the sector's efficiency and competitiveness indicators would be essential.

Recommendations for educational institutions: Putting together a training programme that ensures employment and placement for fresh graduates together with up-to-date skills could be essential. Education should put a greater emphasis on the significance of practical education and the awareness of new technical technologies that will increase the popularity of institutional faculties while being adapted to the needs of the labour market.

5 NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

On the basis of my research, I have formulated the following new and novel scientific results (R).

- R1: I have defined the terminology, characteristics and conditions for applying the new consulting model developed as a result of the change in the economic and ICT environment. The new model is a consulting method used in today's consulting market. Its practical application is reflected in both public administration and client organizations operating in the private sector. The practical model contributes to enriching the consulting toolkit, which, in turn, increases client experience.
- R2: In the course of the research, I have revealed that the demand for services provided by the consulting industry is not affected by the economic development of the countries, nor does the impact of economic fluctuations affect the consulting services. Demand for services is influenced by the development of digital technologies, which has an impact on the development of consulting methods and changes in the portfolio of consulting services.
- R3: Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that using consultants is beneficial to customers. Consulting activities, in the case of client organisations, are part of the management decision support system, in which innovations are made accessible to the organizations. They together assist companies to improve the competitiveness of organizations, increase productivity and reduce their costs.
- R4: While examining the results of the research, I have revealed the cultural characteristics of Hungarian society, which can have a direct impact on the demand for consultancy. On the basis of the findings, it can be concluded that Hungarian society is partially reluctant to use the services provided by consultants, it typically avoids uncertainty, and it is the future orientation of society which ensures the change in demand for consulting services.
- R5: During the examination, I have analysed the role of the consultancy industry in the spread of innovation processes. Based on the findings, it can be assumed that consultants play a key role in the creation, employment, and implementation of technologies in all fields of economic life whether we are talking about public sector or private sector organizations.
- R6: The research has examined the effects of digitization on both consulting and client companies. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that digitalisation and the advancement of information and communication technologies cannot be prevented. As a result, at both the governmental and corporate levels, we must be ready for transitions. It becomes important to develop education, the competence sets of employees, and implement the LLL program, as well as digitally prepare and develop companies in order to remain competitive.
- R7: Based on the findings of the benchmark research, it can be concluded that the requirements for consultants are the same in both economically developed and developing countries, and that there is little distinction between Hungarian and international consultants.
- R8: Based on the research it can be stated that consulting portfolios are tailored to regional demands at the territorial level, whether in the private or public sector.

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