

Process evaluation and finding determinants for optimizing the functioning of the association ACRON

BACKGROUND

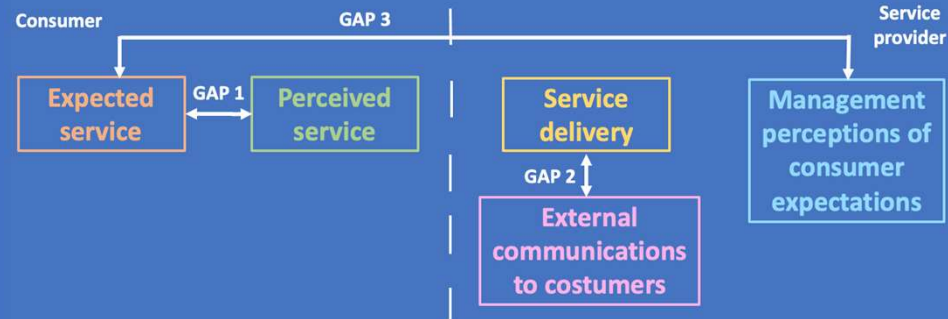
Professionalization of **ACRON** (Association for Contract Research Organisations in the Netherlands). Little is known regarding the expectations and perceptions of members and board members of the ACRON since the professionalization.

The **aim of this study** is to bridge this gap and to provide recommendations to the board members of the ACRON on improving their functioning by gaining an in-depth understanding of the expectations and needs of the ACRON members.

Research question: "What actions can the members of the board of the "Associatie van Contract Research Organisaties in Nederland" undertake to meet expectations of their members and thereby improve the functioning of the association?"

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure: Simplified gap model proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985)



METHODS



Qualitative study design using semi-structured interviews with
Three members of the board
Fourteen members of the ACRON



Interviews transcribed



Various types of organisations within CRO industry



Horizontal & vertical and thematic coding analysis

FINDINGS

Involvement in politics: "That the ACRON is more of a discussion partner in politics about legislation."

Change of focus: "I think that the ACRON, if they are a representative of clinical research in the Netherlands, that they should pay more attention to phase 1."

Transparency: "I do not obtain that much visibility of the ACRON itself or the activities at the ACRON."

Distinction between small and large affiliated companies

Lack of involvement of the board: "The thing I miss a bit is the connection with the board, for example, I am a member of the ClinOps group but there is no connection from us to the members of the board."

Low impact of communication: "Well I think the board can communicate a little more to the outside about what the ACRON is actually doing, I think for some parties it is not always very clear what is happening."

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS



This research included participants, except for one, with a management position while many of the association members are not positioned in a management job. Future quantitative research on a larger scale within the association can enable insight on a wider spectrum of the expectations of different member types

It is recommended to ensure **insightful representation** of the purpose of discussion partner in politics through communication, to apply an **explicit structure of communication** within the board to the committees and lastly, to enlarge **focus regarding phase 1** clinical research

CONCLUSION



The discrepancy of the **first gap** is due to expectations of the members regarding influence in politics, a change of focus and increased transparency. The **second gap** is caused by the lack of communication from the board members themselves and the lack of involvement of the board with the committees discloses the **third gap**.