

# **PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE RESEARCH IN AUSTRALIA:**

Commentary and Case Studies  
from Business, Education and  
Indigenous Studies

*Edited by*  
Peter Miller & Teresa Marchant

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# Foreword

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It is a pleasure once again to write the foreword for this book, which highlights the evolution of professional doctorate programs at Southern Cross University, and indeed across academe in general. There is no doubt that the professional doctorate has secured its place in the panoply of higher education awards, and this book is both timely and relevant. It also extends the University's first publication by Sankaran and Miller in 2007, entitled *Exemplary Practitioner Research in Management: Ten studies from Southern Cross University's DBA Program*.

Southern Cross University has established a proud history of achievement in professional doctorates that commenced with the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) in 1996 under the guidance of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Meredith. This program was one of the first business-related professional doctorates in Australia and its development as a dominant DBA program in this nation is a fine achievement. It has set the academic and service standards for other professional doctorates that followed.

Southern Cross University has extended its professional doctorates from Business to Education, and more recently, to Indigenous Studies. Additional professional doctorates are planned in future. This planning follows a trend across the university system nationally and internationally, where professional doctorates are expanding at a rapid rate. As demonstrated by Ellis and Anderson in Chapter 1, professional doctorates in Australia increased from only one, a Doctor of Education program in 1990, to almost 250 in 2008. Such expansion positions Australian universities to meet domestic demand for industry-based, relevant doctoral research training. Emerging needs in Brazil, Russia, India and China also represent an international source of candidates eager to expand their research expertise and demonstrate skills in evidence-based policy and practice in their discipline and profession. In turn, Australian expertise in cross-cultural research means that synergy between Australian universities and overseas partners can continue to the mutual benefit of stakeholders.

Many professional doctorate candidates from Southern Cross University are located overseas and undertake their research program in conjunction with our educational partners. As such, our professional doctorates are global awards with partners such as:

- The Hong Kong Institute of Technology
- Manukau Institute of Technology
- Management Development Institute of Singapore
- Unity College International Malaysia

As the book illustrates, having overseas partners enables Southern Cross University to assist practitioner-driven research. Such research has significant outcomes for organisations and industries in different cultural contexts.

Southern Cross University continues to build on the success of its doctoral program. On 1st January, 2008 the International Centre for Professional Doctorates (ICPD) was established to oversee the quality of professional doctorates and assist in developing a range of professional doctorates to better meet the needs of various disciplines, industries and candidates. Additional strategies are now underway to further strengthen higher degree research governance, completion rates, student service, attrition rates and uniformity of policies and procedures across Southern Cross University for both professional doctorate and PhD programs.

Peter Miller and Teresa Marchant have skilfully assembled this book in three parts. The first part—*Doctoral Research: Achievements and Realities*—addresses the current research milieu including trends in doctoral research, developing a successful doctoral program, and novel thought in research design, supervision and culture. Part Two—*Discipline Trends and Themes in Contemporary Doctorate Research*—analyses the context and rationale of professional doctorates in business and management, education, and indigenous studies. Part Three—*Research Examples: Learning from the Field*—showcases selected professional doctorate research projects and allows the researchers and their supervisors to reflect on the doctoral journey so that the reader can gain insights into this challenging but ultimately rewarding process.

I congratulate all contributors on this informative and practical work.

Emeritus Professor Paul Clark  
Former Vice-Chancellor  
Southern Cross University  
October, 2009

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The book would not have been possible without the support of the Director of the Graduate College of Management, Professor Ian Eddie, who we thank sincerely.

Finally, we would like to thank the contributors to the book for their insights and especially the researchers and their supervisors for their willingness to share their case study material and reflections on their projects and relationships in the final part of the book.



# Introduction

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This book extends its predecessor *Exemplary Practitioner Research in Management: Ten studies from Southern Cross University's DBA program*, which was built on Frost and Stablein's 1992 work, *Doing Exemplary Research*. It was written to extend understanding of doctoral research beyond management and business, and beyond Southern Cross University (SCU). It shows that scientist-practitioners in management, education and indigenous studies produce meaningful, relevant, evidence-based and rigorous research. This book illustrates practitioner and industry driven research that is student-focused and useful. Many of our students have the connections, cultural context and professional interest to make their research of extreme value to Australia as a nation on the brink of further engagement with Asian nations. Conversely, it also demonstrates how this nation's internal needs and problems can be tackled.

The book is divided into three parts. The first five chapters address today's research environment including trends in doctoral research, developing a successful doctoral program, and fresh thinking in research design, research supervision and research culture. The next three chapters summarise current knowledge and themes about professional doctorates in each of management and business, education and indigenous studies. These chapters provide a useful review of the state of the art in their field. The final six chapters are case studies of doctoral research with a summary of each research project and a retrospective reflection from the researcher and their supervisor. Readers will gain much from the window into the minds of these doctoral candidates, graduates and their academic supervisors.

In Chapter 1, Trends in Australian Professional Doctorate Programs, Allan Ellis and Alan Anderson provide excellent new data. They identify several major trends and idiosyncrasies in the Australian professional doctorate landscape. This research is very well done in that it shines the first light on the imbalance in professional doctorates between various disciplines and raises questions about the proliferation of tagged doctorates in health and medicine.

Following this, in Chapter 2, Success Criteria—Developing the Southern Cross University International Centre for Professional Doctorates, Peter Miller explains the lengthy and convoluted processes by which a world renowned centre for doctorates came into being at SCU. By detailing the genesis of the university from its roots as the Lismore Teachers College in 1971 to its current status as a premier provider of professional doctorates, the chapter explains how one university incrementally developed strategic capabilities and unique resources in this particular field of higher education. Establishing a reputation as a centre of excellence in offering professional doctorates did not happen overnight. It involved many stakeholders, along with an exacting and demanding process of academic review and the establishment of sound administrative and governance procedures.

In Chapter 3, Roslyn Cameron challenges existing models and discusses Changing the Paradigm—Emerging Research Designs in Professional Doctorates. This chapter heralds mixed methods research as the third methodological movement, straddling the traditional divide between quantitative and qualitative methods. The chapter shows that an either/or mindset

is inadequate. Mixed methods are more commonly used than might be perceived. In pursuing the genesis of mixed methods, also known as multimethodology or pluralism, the chapter looks outside business and management to find examples. It provides a brief and clear explanation of the human sciences' history and philosophy, showing where the emerging paradigm is situated. Interestingly, Cameron's own examination of doctoral research at SCU in the last decade indicates qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods represented approximately one third each. The chapter is a convincing argument for the relevance and indeed prevalence of mixed methods in business, management and other fields of research.

Peter Miller continues with Chapter 4 regarding Professional Development for Research Supervisors. This very informative chapter brings together different views on what supervision is; giving those with only one perspective, new ways of dealing with the process. The chapter assist supervisors to see themselves in the multiple roles of teacher, project manager, administrator, co-contributor to new knowledge and relationship builder. The chapter explains how a structured but flexible approach taking into account academic standards and candidates' needs has worked at SCU, including the systems and changes needed to facilitate an effective program. The other important subject of the chapter is self-knowledge, reflection and sharing ideas on practice, as supervisors learn together how to increase their effectiveness and broaden their scope of behaviour in working with students. This reinforces the point that there is no one best way to supervise. There is room for learning and new approaches.

This leads into Chapter 5, entitled Developing Research Culture—Overcoming Regional and Historical Obstacles, by Teresa Marchant, who draws on 12 years' experience in organisations, employee relations and management studies in at least six different universities to show how basic principles of leadership, management and organisation culture apply to developing a research focus in higher education as effectively as they do to the private sector, due to enduring principles underlying human behaviour. It is essential to think about the implications of the new, and not necessarily accepted, research performance framework for researchers. The reader will garner an understanding of the current Australian research context in which professional doctorates are completed. They may be interested to note that common obstacles to academic research activity are reported in the national and international literature. Students considering a professional doctorate will gain a feel for the institutional and governmental context into which they are stepping.

Chapter 6 returns to Peter Miller, who reviews Doctoral Research in Business and Management, exploring similar themes to the following two chapters but in a different field of study. This logical chapter offers a well-developed argument regarding differences between the DBA and PhD in business and management. It certainly challenges the reader to question what the differences are. Those who affirm the primacy of human resources in business and management will be pleased to discover that the soft (people) side of business and management features as the primary research topic in business and management professional doctorate studies.

The book turns to Chapter 7, Doctoral Research in Education, with Keith Skamp. The Doctorate in Education (EdD) has transformed into a second generation manifestation in Australia. It is further removed from the academic structures of the PhD and more orientated to a wider range of stakeholders. Where the future of the EdD degree may lie is discussed, making particular reference to the practitioner doctorate, carried out by researching professionals, rather than professional researchers. As well as exploring some of the differences between a doctorate and a PhD in education, the chapter tenders insights into the academic and practical challenges faced

by EdD candidates. The chapter draws together the literature on the EdD, providing a useful synthesis. Although the fields of study are different, there are many parallels with positive and negative aspects of the doctorate in business and management discussed in the previous chapter. Together with conceptual analysis of the nature and purpose of the degree, the chapter supplies three case studies of second generation EdDs from the University of Western Sydney, the University of New England and a personal account of an EdD graduate.

Chapter 8, the final one in Part 2, advocates for The Professional Doctorate—an Alternative Pathway to Doctoral Qualifications for Indigenous Scholars. Jeff Nelson supplies an overview of the professional doctorate program offered by SCU through its College of Indigenous Australian Peoples (Gnibi). The philosophy underpinning this program challenges the notion that traditional research parameters are not appropriate for indigenous research. It argues that, on the contrary, professional research, in situ, of the type reflected in most professional doctorates, may be the best way to provide the evidence-based policy and practice needed to improve the living conditions many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people endure daily. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have tacit skills and knowledge to conduct quantitative research due to their powers of observation, ability to differentiate between consistency and coincidence and a culture of knowledge sharing through various media, which relate to characteristics of research including measurement, probability, and reporting. One notable feature of this chapter is the emphasis on partnerships between the researcher, their employing organisation and the community, with a view to enhancing the scientist-practitioner model for the benefit of all stakeholders. A further feature is the emphasis on the researcher engaging in self-reflection and evaluation throughout their candidature.

The preceding chapters show that one common theme in doctoral research in management and business, education and indigenous studies is that researchers are required to integrate their professional interests with the demands of academic research. The book next turns to case studies, which show how each researcher and their supervisor met these demands. Paradoxically, as well as this common theme of meeting academic standards, the chapters also exhibit disparate subject matter, research methods and relationships.

Part 3 starts with Chapter 9, Mixed Methods—Performance Management for the Australian Football League, by Val Morrison and Dave Arthur. Val is in the early stages of research and therefore the chapter captures some of the ambiguity and moving goal posts that accompany the commencing phase of the professional doctorate journey. Val's topic will be of interest to anyone familiar with the numerous off-field scandals plaguing most football codes in Australia. The chapter also confirms the emergence of mixed methods in business and management identified earlier in Chapter 3.

Chapter 10 is entitled Mail Survey—What do Chinese Business Travellers Really Need?, by Xiao Han Xue and Carmen Cox. Xiao Han successfully extends Western research to a Chinese context, tapping in to the massive growth in Chinese business travel and hence research interest in this arena. While the research found similarities in preferences, at the same time there were some differences between the requirements of business travellers in the East and West. This chapter provides valuable insights into conducting business and management research in China and the nuances of what an Australian supervisor learns personally from supervising a DBA researcher in China.

Chapter 11, Organisation Survey—Retention in Government-Run Construction Enterprises in China, by Ying Zhang and Michelle Wallace, contrasts with the preceding chapter in that the issue of access to research respondents in China was handled quite differently, with organisational

cooperation in contrast to using a commercially-available database. It may be mistakenly perceived in the West that China has a plentiful labour supply but this research indicates that retention of skilled labour is relevant in China, albeit with different cultural imperatives and interpretations. This research is important because the scales are based on existing literature used in a non-traditional environment. Another feature of this chapter is the role of the supervisor in encouraging the researcher's academic development through conference presentations and publication.

Travelling next to another Asian nation, Chapter 12, Client Survey—Service Quality of Singapore Stock Brokers, by Lee Yik-Chee and Geoffrey Meredith, pursues the question of service quality with a previously under-researched cohort of professional service providers in a unique national context. Yik-Lee gained an excellent response rate through having questionnaires distributed by service providers to their clients—a tactic that has worked well for other DBA candidates at SCU. The findings of this research facilitate securities investors to have a better understanding of the key factors for assessing the performance of their stock brokers, which is extremely relevant in a global financial crisis. The research found considerable scope for improved service.

The topic of Chapter 13 is a Two Group Survey—Acceptance of Hybrid Electric Cars in Australia, by Martin Kunst and Stephen Kelly. With sustainability firmly on the business and management agenda, this research is a timely illustration of consumer attitudes to hybrid electric passenger vehicles. The chapter shows that lack of understanding and information, particularly about the batteries, is a barrier to acceptance. Another attribute of this chapter is the excellent commentary by Stephen Kelly, Martin's academic DBA supervisor, on the process of guiding the researcher to situate their industry-focused, professional interest in the topic within the academic literature on innovation adoption.

The examples of professional doctorate research conclude with Chapter 14, Interviews—Succession of Corporate Leaders in Australia, by Patricia Richards and Martin Hayden. Unlike preceding chapters, this EdD research relied exclusively on interviews, and the researcher completed the doctorate by publication rather than thesis. Patricia Richards capitalised on her professional contacts to gain unprecedented access to senior executives. The telling processes by which individuals are invited to fill leadership positions, in defiance of formalised organisational Human Resources policies for succession, make fascinating reading. This chapter illustrates the role of evidence-based practice in a topic where much of what has been published is anecdotal or journalistic in nature.

Taken together, the six chapters in Part 3 cover local and international research projects on matters of interest to the researcher, the business community and scholars by exploring hitherto unexamined topics, in new national and international contexts, with a variety of methods. The retrospective reflections from each researcher and their supervisor universally endorse the significance of their relationship, whereas the obstacles faced in each project reflect a range of distinctive personal tests.

## References

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# PART 1

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## Doctoral Research: Achievements and Realities



# CHAPTER 1

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## A Snapshot of Australian Professional Doctorates

*Allan Ellis & Alan Anderson*

### **Abstract**

Professional doctorates were introduced into Australia in 1990 and Neumann and Goldstein (2000, p24) state that they ‘...reflected not only the expansion of study at doctoral level study, but also the diversification of disciplines and modes of research.’ During the first decade offerings increased from one in 1990 to 48 in 1996 (Shanahan 1996) and to 105 in the year 2000 (Maxwell & Shanahan 2000). This paper reports a 2007–2008 survey of secondary data available on Australian university internet sites that show that this expansion and diversification has continued with a total of 227 professional doctorates now on offer. It also reveals that an increased number of tagged Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs compete to provide industry-focused doctoral training. An examination of elements of marketing effectiveness was part of the survey and it was found that access to information about many individual programs was often difficult and the information incomplete and often dated. Sadly if ratings were to be awarded for marketing of professional doctorate programs very few high rankings would be handed out. There is considerable potential for improvement. Given how individual awards are scattered across various departments, schools and faculties there is very little evidence of co-ordinating processes or organisation.

### **History of professional doctorates in Australia**

Pearson, Evans and Macauley (2008) provide a detailed review of growth in doctoral education programs in Australian in recent decades. They report that professional doctorates emerged at the time of the Dawkin’s reforms (NBEET 1989, 1990) that aimed to create a unified national system (UNS) of higher education. Maxwell, Hickey and Evans (2005) stated that the development of Professional Doctorates was, at least partly, an attempt to connect the doctoral enterprise with the demands of industry. By making more explicit connections with professional workers and their work places, it was anticipated that doctoral programs would be able to tailor their practices and outcomes to the particular needs of industry.

Green, Maxwell and Shanahan’s (2001) report contains evidence that developments in Australia were similar to those in the United Kingdom with both countries have governments having similar agendas to make research training more industry relevant. Universities no doubt saw them as means of raising revenue as targeted doctorates should have a high degree of market appeal.

In some discipline areas they were also seen as a way to quickly increase the number of staff with doctorates to address staffing shortages. Williams et al. (2002) in their report concluded that doctoral programs in Australia were under pressure to become more industry relevant.

From time to time the question surfaces: why do a professional doctorate when you can do a PhD? (Evans et al 2005). The point is made that while the number of individually named professional doctoral awards has increased overall, total enrolment numbers have remained relatively low. This lack of substantial growth in enrolments is contrasted with PhD enrolments over the same period that have continued to climb. Indeed Evans et al (2005), using data from a bibliometric study, conclude that the PhD has become more flexible and has produced a substantial number of graduates in the various professional areas that might be regarded as the obvious domain of professional doctorates.

Neither historical nor current data on professional doctorate programs is easy to collect. As these programs are fee-paying there is a degree of commercial competition between universities and therefore a reluctance to publish, or even release informally, the details of programs (particularly to potential competitors). Unlike PhD programs, the federal government does not directly fund enrolments in professional doctorate programs, which charge substantial fees. Entry requirements, fees and program structures are set by individual universities. The only government data collected for professional doctorates are completion statistics and only for those that have a two thirds or greater research component. As there are indirect funding implications it is not surprising that the majority of programs are set up to meet these requirements. Professional doctorate completion statistics are added to PhD completions and the total is used as a factor in calculating the overall level of research funding provided to each university.

## A survey of current offerings

### Method

Australian university websites were used as the primary source of data. Systematic searches of Australian university websites were conducted by state and territory. The aim was to identify and catalogue information on the types of professional doctorates offered by each university. General details on PhD offerings (research, coursework and ‘named’ or ‘tagged’ doctorates where the specialty is designated on testamurs) were also collected. Ratings were made in regard to the amount and quality of information provided and the easy with which it could be accessed. Clarification of details concerning admission criteria, research versus coursework components and other contextual information was obtained by a combination of email, phone and face-to-face interviews. Table 1.1 summarises the data with the number of named professional doctorates grouped into major disciplines, listed for each university.

**Table 1.1:**  
*Professional doctorate offerings by university and major discipline areas*

University	Arts	Social Sc/ Law	Education	Business	Health Sc/ Medicine	Science/ IT	Total
UWA	3	2	1	1	7	5	19
Latrobe		3	1		12	1	17
RMIT	2	2		3	1	4	12
Curtin	5		1	1	2	2	11
Sydney	2	3	1	1	2	2	11
USA			1	1	7	1	10

University	Arts	Social Sc/ Law	Education	Business	Health Sc/ Medicine	Science/ IT	Total
Melbourne	1	1	3		4		9
Victoria			1	1	6	1	9
UNE		1	1	1	3	2	8
QUT	1	3	1	1	2		8
Ballarat	1		1	1	3	2	8
Wollongong	6		1		1		8
James Cook			1		5	1	7
Monash		1		1	5		7
Griffith	1	1	1		3		6
UTS	1	1	1	1	2		6
Flinders	1	1	1		1	1	5
Charles Sturt	1	1	1		1	1	5
Swinburne				1	2	1	4
UQ					4		4
Edith Cowan	1			1	1	1	4
Notre Dame				1	3		4
Adelaide			1	1	2		4
Deakin				1	3		4
Macquarie	2		1	1			4
Murdoch			1	2			3
Canberra	1			1		1	3
CDU			1		1	1	3
Newcastle				1	2		3
USQ			1	1		1	3
UNSW	1		1		1		3
ANU	1	1			1		3
USC	1			1			2
ACU	2						2
CQU			1	1			2
SCU			1	1			2
Tasmania			2				2
UWS	1						1
Bond		1					1
<b>Total</b>	35	22	28	27	87	28	227
<b>Percentage</b>	15.5	10	12	12	38.5	12	100

All universities offer at least one professional doctorate award, which is a testament to the uptake of this type of degree since its introduction in 1990. For those with multiple offerings there is no common pattern. For example, those universities offering eight different professional doctorates may concentrate them in three different discipline areas or spread them across four or five discipline areas. Only two universities (University of Sydney and University of Western Australia) offer at least one professional doctorate in all six disciplines, while another eight universities offer professional doctorates in 5 of the six areas. The majority of universities are selective and offer professional doctorates in three or fewer major disciplines.

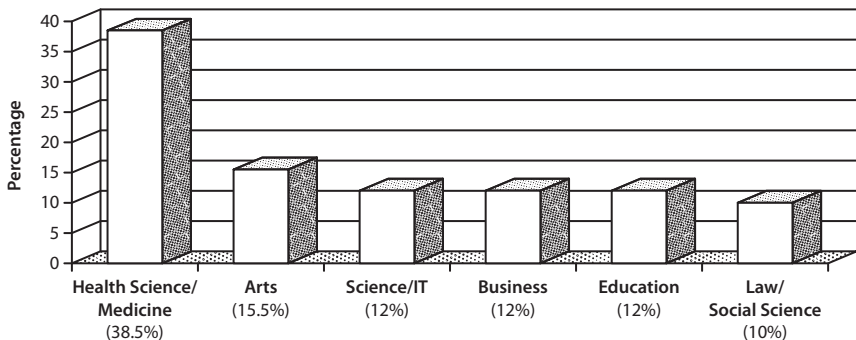
In each of the major disciplines there is a range of professional doctorate titles as shown in Table 1.2. These titles indicate the diverse foci of the programs. Also, nomenclature is not consistent across universities. In some universities named or tagged PhDs were present. These occur in several discipline areas.

**Table 1.2:**  
*Major discipline areas, professional doctorate titles and tagged PhDs*

Major discipline (total # offerings)	Professional Doctorates titles (with tagged PhDs noted)
Health Science/Medicine (87)	Doctor of Midwifery, Doctor of Nursing, Doctor of Psychology, Doctor of Psychology (Clinical and Clinical Neuropsychology), Doctor of Surgery, Doctor of Psychology (Forensic).
Arts (35)	Doctor of Creative Arts, Doctor of Visual and Performing Arts, Doctor of Music, Doctor of Music Arts and variations that cater for Theatre and Dance under the broader title of performing arts. Theology (Doctor of Ministry). Tagged PhD, that is Doctor of Philosophy (Creative Arts) and variations available at some universities.
Science/IT (28)	Doctor of Information Technology, Professional Doctorate in Science (Agriculture), Professional Doctorate in Science (Computer Science), Professional Doctorate in Science (Science).
Business (27)	Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Commerce, Doctor of Economics. Tagged PhD, for example Doctor of Philosophy (Economics) and variations available at some universities.
Education (26)	Education Doctorate (EdD) and Doctor of Education, tagged PhD, for example. Doctor of Philosophy (Education) available at some universities.
Social Science/Law (22)	Social Sciences, Law and Politics. Tagged PhD, for example Doctor of Philosophy (Social Work) and variations available at some universities.

Professional doctorates are not evenly distributed across the major disciplines, as illustrated in Figure 1.1. Notably, almost half of current offerings are in health sciences and medicine area. Some offerings are unique to a single university: for example the Doctor of Indigenous Philosophies at Southern Cross University.

**Figure 1.1:**  
*Grouping of current professional doctorate programs by major discipline areas*



Although the highest number of professional doctorates was in the health sciences and medical discipline it is interesting to note that 10 out of the 35 universities do not offer professional doctorates in this area. The lowest discipline group of offerings was in social science and law (22 or 10%). Interestingly 21 universities currently have no offerings.

Data on professional doctorates in specific discipline areas was also examined on a state-by-state and territory basis. The only real anomaly in the range of provision was the relatively high number of health science and medical professional doctorates in Victoria.

A comparison of offerings between long established Australian universities that constitute the group of eight (Go8 2009) and the remaining non-Go8 universities is presented in Table 1.3. Interestingly social science and law professional doctorates rank as the second most common offering in the Go8 universities yet the least common in the non-Go8. In the business discipline area professional doctorates rank last for the Go8 and third most common for the non-Go8. The Arts are ranked second lowest by the Go8 universities and second highest by the non-Go8 universities.

**Table 1.3:**

*A comparison by discipline area of professional doctorates offered by Go8 and non-Go8 universities ranked from the most common to least common*

Discipline grouping	Professional doctorates by Go8	Discipline	Professional doctorates by non-Go8 unis
Health Science /Medical	26	Health Science/Medical	61
Social Science/Law	8	Arts	27
Science/IT	7	Business	23
Education	7	Science/IT	21
Arts	6	Education	21
Business	4	Social Science/Law	14

Clearly there is a very different focus to the ranking of offerings between made by these two university groupings. It is suggested that different marketing strategies (national verses international) for different discipline groupings may account for some of this difference. For example, business programs are an area where the non-Go8 universities tend to market and provide distance education programs internationally. These programs provide both a pool of overseas graduates with the qualifications to move on to post-graduate study plus an infrastructure capable of supporting such professional doctoral programs.

## The internal structure of professional doctorates

Studies in the 1990s revealed that one of the main differences between professional doctorates at different universities and in different disciplines was the relative proportion of research work and course work (Maxwell & Shanahan 1996). While these differences still exist, the publically available information on professional doctorates does not always make clear how it applies to a specific program (and what options the potential candidate might have). In general the majority of professional doctorates for which detailed course information could be obtained were research degrees: that is, at least two thirds of the work to be completely was to be by thesis. Most had

coursework components, usually scheduled early in the program. At Southern Cross University all professional doctorates are structured as research degrees with up to eight coursework units, two-thirds of the overall program of study, must be completed before the thesis work commences.

Admission requirements are often not clearly or fully set out in online sources. It is a matter of locating and consulting current university rules (or phoning the local contact person) and even then a number contain discretionary clauses meaning the process may not be black and white. Course rules vary within and across universities. In many cases professional doctorates can be undertaken on an external basis with email, the internet and various information and communication platforms such as Blackboard, Elluminate Live! and Skype acting as resource delivery and communication mechanisms.

Most universities specify a minimum of two years full-time (or equivalent) study and a maximum of four years full-time (or equivalent) study to complete a professional doctorate. Provision for students achieving exceptional output in their early work to up grade to a PhD candidature is made in most programs although in practice it is only reported as happening in rare cases.

Advances in educational technology since the first professional doctorates were offered, including email, the internet, audio-graphic conferencing and 3D virtual world technologies, mean that it is now possible to offer certain types of professional doctorates online both nationally and internationally. Walker (2008) presents a detailed case history of a project management professional doctorate offered globally. He presents insights that will be useful to anyone considering a similarly formatted program. These technologies provide increased scope for the involvement for not just university staff but practicing industry professionals, perhaps even alumni, in the various aspects of the research training provided by the programs. It is now possible for an external industry-based supervisor to have literally as much contact and interaction with a candidate as an on-campus supervisor or for a candidate to be interstate or overseas and interact with an on-campus supervisor as much as an on-campus candidate would interact. These technologies are re-shaped the dynamics of how supervision and research training can be provided.

Only one institution, Southern Cross University, has initiated a co-ordinated approach with regard to its professional doctorate programs. In 2008 it adopted a single set of rules governing candidature in all professional doctorates. All professional doctorates are structured to be research doctorates. The degree structure consists of a 24 unit award (8 coursework units and a 16 thesis units). A number of the coursework units were designed to be selected by individual candidates based on their past experience and anticipated thesis focus while the remainder are to be taken from common research design and methodology units.

On 1st January, 2008 a new International Centre for Professional Doctorates (ICPD) was established to co-ordinate the administration, promotion and management of professional doctorate programs across the university. The ICPD also sought to improve the quality of supervision by providing an online, self-paced staff development program for supervisors (see Chapter 4). There were a number of reasons in favour of rationalisation of the processes used in the professional doctorates programs including:

- ability to develop a set of best practice processes
- enhanced capacity to attract candidates
- economies of scale in student administration
- avoiding duplication in areas such as process development, student administration, information systems, supervisor training and candidate support

- ability to increase resources targeted towards reducing attrition, increasing completion rates and, the publication and commercialisation of results
- improved student/supervisor service quality.

Currently three doctoral programs are offered: a highly successful Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) (see Chapter 2 for an overview), a Doctor of Education (EdD) and a new and innovative Doctor of Indigenous Philosophies (DIP). Others new programs in the areas of Osteopathy, Sports Science, Accounting are under consideration.

## Marketing of professional doctorates—11 points for success

The large majority of university websites dealing with professional doctorates (including their search facilities) were not user-friendly and did not allow a potential student to locate all the information needed to fully consider a specific program or plan an enrolment and course of study. Certain items, such as fees, were simply not listed anywhere on the sites. Given websites are now a major marketing tools for all universities there is considerable scope for improvement. The following points are suggested as a minimum set of details that should be available to potential candidates. Ideally these sub-headings should be on a single web page and linked to detailed sub-pages. Some thought should also be given to providing a print copy button of the entire site and a save as pdf file button.

1. Award title (including abbreviation)
2. Entry requirements
3. A CRICOS code (if the program is open to international students)
4. Clear fee information (including dates for payments)
5. Degree structure (including options)
6. Details of delivery modes (and candidate options)
7. If on-campus delivery or consultation sessions are required (mandatory) specify when and where these will occur
8. Any intake dates for group intakes (and corresponding application dates) or expected processing time for individual intake
9. Links to supporting documentation such as Higher Degree Rules or Scholarships
10. Contact name, email and phone number
11. Version numbers/date pages updated

To maintain a quality website it is important to task someone with the role of upgrading the site as soon as new information is released. It was common to view sections of many websites that displayed outdated information.

### *Authors' profiles*

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virtual worlds. Allan was the Chair of the AusWeb Conference series (<http://ausweb.scu.edu.au>) for 14 years and is member International World Wide Web Conference Committee ([www.iw3c.org](http://www.iw3c.org)) which he chaired for six years. Allan supervises post-graduate research students enrolled in Masters, PhD and Professional Doctorate degrees.

Alan Anderson is a lecturer in online learning at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia. In previous academic positions, at the University of Otago, New Zealand, and Southern Cross University, Australia, Alan lectured in music and in education and the social sciences. While completing his PhD at Southern Cross University, he lectured in the areas of leadership, organisational change and development, communications and educational computing. Alan has published articles in national and international refereed journals and conference proceedings, most recently in the areas of online teaching and learning.

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# CHAPTER 2

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## Success Criteria—Developing the Southern Cross University International Centre for Professional Doctorates

*Peter Miller*

### **Abstract**

The establishment of the International Centre for Professional Doctorates (ICPD) was the culmination of Southern Cross University's emergence as a major provider of professional doctorate education in Australia. Professional doctorates in this country have significantly increased in numbers and diversity since 1989 when the then Higher Education Council (NBEET 1989) gave its approval for professional doctorates to be offered. Chapter 1 of this book provided an overview of professional doctorates in Australia and the current state of play so it will not be repeated here. While the Doctor of Education (EdD) was among the first of the professional doctorates offered by universities in Australia, Southern Cross University (SCU) decided to first develop and launch a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program in 1996 under the guidance of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Meredith. The SCU DBA was one of the first business-related professional doctorate programs offered in Australia and its emergence as the dominant DBA program in Australia set the foundations for the academic structure and quality of other professional doctorates to be developed and offered by SCU. This chapter outlines the development of the DBA program as the foundation for the adoption of the generic structure for professional doctorate programs at SCU and maps the subsequent development of other professional doctorate programs and ultimately, the establishment of the ICPD. It outlines the candidate and supervisor support systems implemented for the doctoral programs, establishing a sub-culture suitable for research along with the external recognition given to the program over the last five years.

### **Key words**

Professional doctorate, research programs, research culture

I acknowledge the input of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Meredith, AM, PhD in the development of this chapter.

## Introduction

SCU was established on 1 January, 1994 following the dismantling of the University of New England (UNE) which had been established as a network university in 1989. The Lismore campus in that network was known as The University of New England Northern Rivers.

Originally, the tertiary institution in Lismore was the Lismore Teachers' College founded in 1971 and this institution was expanded and renamed the Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education in 1973. The Commonwealth Government of the day produced a White Paper on Higher Education in 1988 with an emphasis on developing larger institutions. The Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education agreed to an association with UNE and became a network member under legislation brought down in 1989.

During 1992, an Advisory Group was established to consider the possibility of the network (University of New England) being dismantled and the Advisory Group recommended that a new university be established in the North Coast region of New South Wales as an academically integrated institution incorporating the current UNE network centres at Northern Rives and Coffs Harbour, with the potential for establishing additional sites at other North Coast centres as required. In June 1993, the Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training and the NSW State Minister for Education and Youth Affairs announced that a new University would be established in Northern NSW incorporating campuses at Lismore and Coffs Harbour and appropriate legislation was passed by both houses of the NSW Parliament in October 1993, and received Royal Ascent on November 1993 leading to the establishment of SCU from 1 January, 1994.

Business studies were introduced at the College of Advanced Education in 1973 and over the iterations of the college to a College of Advanced Education and finally to a stand alone university, the Business Faculty developed to the point of offer postgraduate programs including higher research degrees.

Now, SCU is a dynamic Australian university situated on the North Coast of New South Wales. Its campuses are located at the Tweed Gold Coast, Lismore and Coffs Harbour, with a new campus currently being developed at the southern end of the Gold Coast. SCU has around 16,000 students and offers a diverse range of educational courses and programs, with a choice of delivery modes. There are currently around 200 professional doctorate students enrolled and around 250 PhD students. The professional doctorate programs have successfully graduated over 230 DBA and EdD candidates.

## Graduate College of Management

The Graduate College of Management (GCM) at SCU offers a range of postgraduate business courses and programs, including an MBA, DBA and a number of specialist masters degrees. The courses are delivered by highly qualified staff who possess both academic and industry relevant qualifications, skills and experience.

The courses offered combine professional relevance and academic quality with convenience, flexibility, and timeliness. The package of quality study materials and excellent student support, and competitive fees represents real value to those contemplating a major investment in their future. The lecturers and student support team are dedicated to helping students, providing personal attention and a level of service that is often not provided at other universities.

The large distance education program in Australia, and the personalised on-campus program, attracts students from around the world. The demand for our courses and programs has resulted in them being offered in a number of locations in the Asia-Pacific region, enriching curriculum development and adding to the study experience.

Graduates are successful professionals who report a high level of satisfaction with their study experience. Courses are rated five stars for getting a job and are rated highly for graduate satisfaction (Good Universities Guide Postgraduate Guide, 2009) and the DBA is consistently rated in the top three Australian universities for overall satisfaction in research experience (Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire, 2006).

## The DBA as the predecessor to other professional doctorate programs

The Business faculty decided to first develop and launch a DBA program in 1996 under the guidance of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Meredith. The DBA was one of the first business-related professional doctorate programs offered in Australia and its emergence as the dominant DBA program in Australia set the foundation for the academic structure and quality of other professional doctorates to be developed and offered by SCU.

The need for a professional doctorate such as the DBA was emphasised in a discussion paper prepared for Australia's Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Research) which identified the extent and range of professional doctorate programs available in Australia at universities during the early 1990s. Twenty-two Australian universities at the time were awarding professional doctorates and of the remaining fifteen universities responding to a survey, nine indicated that they were in the process of formulating policies to introduce these awards. Support for professional doctorates including a DBA was stated in the following terms:

1. To provide extended and advanced training in a professional field with projects and investigations applied in nature and oriented to practice in the professions and where the setting might be industry-based rather than campus-based.
2. DBAs serve different consumer markets to PhDs, keeping in mind that at the time, Australia had several thousand executive managers with a completed coursework Masters degree (including MBA) that would not qualify for admission to candidature in PhD programs.
3. There was an immediate demand for a DBA in the field of management consulting and for senior executives within public and private sector entities who had an *internal consultant* role in their organisations.
4. Many senior personnel who had completed a Masters degree that had complemented their first degree with a broad program of course units and often a minor project and these executives now wished to focus specifically on areas of importance for Australia and Asia with the opportunity of converting knowledge gained through advanced course units with the production of publishable research papers and a thesis.
5. The DBA would provide qualified candidates with a credible terminal qualification – the DBA would have relevance for senior executives in private and public sectors and also would have relevance in educational institutions.
6. Through the proposed specialist program in key cities in South East Asia, SCU had the opportunity of meeting the demand for a terminal award at Doctoral level with hundreds of senior public and private sector graduates who would see the DBA as an attractive terminal qualification.

7. In general terms, the DBA would meet a need in the field of business and related professional areas by providing post-graduate opportunities for candidates with appropriate background experience, providing extended and advanced training in professional fields associated with the faculty of business and computing, and furthering relationships between SCU and the business and professional communities to their mutual advantage.

DBA programs offered by Australian universities are diverse in terms of both curriculum and advanced standing arrangements. The SCU DBA is classified by the Australian government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as a doctoral research degree as the thesis component is a minimum of 66% of the program (that is 16 of 24 units of study). Most other Australian DBA programs are not considered to be research degrees as the coursework component of these degrees is much higher and in some cases candidates may submit portfolios of two research papers and are not required to undertake a major research project in the form of a thesis.

Comparisons between DBA programs are therefore difficult. However, the SCU DBA has been benchmarked against other Australian DBAs by the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM). Results show that the SCU DBA is the largest DBA program by enrolments and has the largest number of graduates when compared to other DBA programs (ANZAM 2005). Notwithstanding the difficulties in comparison, the following table illustrates the universities in Australia that currently offer a DBA.

**Table 2.1:**

*Universities in Australia that offer DBA programs*

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Canberra University
Central Queensland University
Charles Darwin University
Charles Sturt University
Curtin University of Technology
Deakin University
Gibran Business School South Australia
Macquarie University
Monash University
Murdoch University
University of Newcastle
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Southern Cross University
Swinburne University of Technology
University of Western Australia
Victoria University
University of South Australia
University of Southern Queensland
University of Wollongong

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Following the establishment of the SCU DBA in 1996, strong arguments were developed for a separate Graduate College of Management (GCM) and advantages were seen for the GCM to be established on the Tweed Coast with land made available adjacent to the Tweed City Council facilities at Tweed Heads. The then Director of the GCM and senior staff were located at the Tweed Campus although some administrative facilities, in particular organisation of distance learning programs, remained at the Lismore campus. The significant growth of the MBA since its establishment in 1990, and further growth in the number of Doctoral candidates with a launch of the DBA in 1996, provided sound justification for establishing a separate entity to cover the administration and delivery of all graduate programs in management and business including doctoral programs. When the GCM was formally established, it assumed administrative responsibility for the academic quality and delivery of the DBA program. The program has been reviewed many times since its establishment in 1996. It was originally established as a credit-based award and in 2006 had the structure shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2:**  
*Structure of the DBA program in 2006*

4 x	MBA units
2 x	Research methods units (Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods). <i>Doctoral supervisors are appointed at the near completion of the units above</i>
2 x	Preliminary units (Preliminary Literature Review and Research Proposal)
16 x	Thesis units
<b>Total 24 units</b>	

As indicated previously, the SCU DBA is classified by DEEWR to be a doctoral research degree. Therefore candidates undertake and produce a major thesis, usually of between 60,000 and 85,000 words. Like all doctoral research programs, a large and rigorous research project is undertaken by the candidate under the supervision of an experienced academic who is appointed to supervise the project.

In 2006, an internal course review of the DBA was executed to consider re-accreditation of the degree for a further five years. The review provided an opportunity to consider the governance and structure of the other professional doctorate program then in existence, the Doctor of Education (EdD).

To take advantage of the opportunity provided by the DBA formal review, a number of committees and working groups were established to consider SCU's professional doctorates and to decide the direction they might go forward into the future.

### The need for cultural change

The need for change leaders to understand the culture and climate of the organisation and the difficulties involved in change program implementation is well known (Dubrin, Dalglish & Miller 2006). Organisational culture has been defined as a system of widely shared and strongly held values and beliefs (Robbins et al. 2008). All change management programs are undertaken in a particular context and organisation culture. The change leader needs to be aware of the shared beliefs and values of existing staff. By 2004, the organisational culture of the GCM was predominantly anti-research and publication and dominated by full time academic staff that

did not have doctorates, were not research active and did not engage in scholarship. There was a perception that 'research took resources from teaching' and this perception permeated the shared beliefs of the majority of the then staff. The then Director of the GCM reinforced this culture by making yearly academic appointments to the GCM of junior academic staff who did not have doctorates and/or who were not research trained or research active. Such actions also diluted the pool of senior research staff available to supervise doctorates in the GCM and lowered the average publication output per academic staff member: a critical measurement factor for performance of the GCM and for benchmarking in SCU and with other institutions outside the university.

It was evident that a change in the overall culture of the GCM was not possible without the support of the then Director of the GCM who, in the author's opinion, did not appear to appreciate the need for a change and seemed unwilling to make it. Therefore, it was necessary to create a sub-culture in the GCM around the DBA program: a culture where research and scholarship were highly valued and pursued. This involved setting new academic standards and values in the DBA for research and scholarship that needed to be role modelled by the doctorally qualified staff involved in the program.

Inevitably, the two sub-cultures caused conflict and tension in the GCM and this tension continued throughout the change program due to the different academic standards in the two groups. The implications of poor academic standards at SCU was noted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA 2008, p4) in its 2008 Audit Report when it listed 'a comparatively low proportion of academic staff with doctoral qualifications' as a factor that may affect academic standards at the university. In addition, Professor Brian Stoddart (2008, p23), former Vice Chancellor of La Trobe University, in his review of the GCM DBA program noted:

Any entity entitled the Graduate College of Management might be expected to have a strong research culture with good research output... In future, the strength of the research reputation is likely to influence research student choice, so further research strengthening will be beneficial for GCM. In the period 2001–2007 inclusive, staff in the Graduate College of Management that hosts the DBA averaged 12.4% of Business and Law weighted publications, with a median production of 12.5%. Directly or indirectly, then, the DBA contributes to the research publication output component of RTS/IGS within SCU... Closer data examination suggests that a very small staff group provides most GCM production. With adjunct and emeritus staff largely out of consideration in calculations of official outputs, that puts considerable pressure on the relatively low number of GCM fulltime and equivalent staff.

The cultural change program was successful in lifting academic standards in the DBA program while, as reflected in the AUQA and Stoddart reports, academic standards in the GCM outside the DBA program remained unchanged. However, the doctoral sub-culture provided the necessary basis for establishing the ICPD.

## **The International Centre for Professional Doctorates**

The genesis of the ICPD originated in discussions during 2005 between the then Director of the Doctor of Education program, Associate Professor John Hammond and the Director of the DBA program, Associate Professor Peter Miller. Both Directors thought it desirable that the two professional doctorates be administered by one organisational unit. However, the then Deans of Education and Business could not agree on the financial model to be adopted and the matter was put on hold.

In April 2006, the Executive of SCU approved in principle a proposal from the then Executive Dean of Business, Professor Neal Ryan to establish a new centre attached to the Graduate College of Management. This was to be known as the International Centre for Professional Doctorates and would be achieved by renaming the existing DBA administration team. The Vice Chancellor provided \$20,372 in Strategic Initiatives funding to Associate Professors Peter Miller and Allan Ellis to research the expansion of the SCU professional doctorates program.

In May, 2006 Associate Professor Miller established an Administrative Review Group to investigate whether changing the current DBA structure to another structural option was feasible and practical and to consider an option of changing the structure of the program from its credit-based structure to a mixed time-based structure similar to the PhD program. The Administrative Review Group (ARG) was chaired by Ms Sue White. The ARG recommended a time-based structure for the thesis component of the program and this was adopted. Subsequently, the Academic Board in June 2006 established a working party chaired by Associate Professor Allan Ellis to investigate the expansion of professional doctorate programs at SCU. The working party delivered its report in April, 2007 making the following recommendations to Academic Board:

1. That the current DBA and EdD program rules (as revised post the recent review of the DBA program) form the basis of a generic set of rules for all professional doctorate programs. It was agreed that a course change submission rather than a new course proposal was the best and most expeditious way to proceed.
2. That the DBA and the EdD programs change their schedule of units to a new three stage structure recommended by the Doctor of Business Administration Review Panel and share core generic coursework units.
3. That the two existing DBA research units (Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods) be adopted as the generic research units for all professional doctorate programs.
4. That a new exit point be established in the generic rules to enable students to exit the program with an award titled Graduate Certificate in Research Methods after successful completion of the Qualitative Research Methods unit (single unit), the Quantitative Research Methods unit (single unit) and Professional Doctorate Research Proposal (double weighted unit).
5. That the current GCM DBA staff form the basis for the proposed ICPD to be located at the Tweed Gold Coast campus.
6. That the proposed ICPD be responsible for co-ordinating the development of professional doctorate programs across SCU to meet the strategies outlined in SCU's Strategic Plan 2005–2010.
7. That the proposed ICPD work with academic organisational units to research areas for new professional doctorates and allow for co-ordinated marketing both nationally and internationally.
8. That a new sub-committee of Academic Board be established to be called the Professional Doctorates Committee (PDC) with responsibility to be the principal advisory and working committee of the Academic Board on issues relating to professional doctorates across SCU and the ICPD.
9. That the course change submission for the DBA and EdD currently being considered by the School of Education Board of Studies and the GCM Board of Studies be endorsed by Academic Board.

10. That a new category to be termed Adjunct Professional Doctorate Supervisor be established under the policy for Adjunct, Visiting and Conjoint Appointments to recognise the contribution of academics engaged as contracted professional doctorate supervisors. Adjunct Professional Doctorate Supervisors would normally be senior persons in their field and possess academic qualifications and expertise comparable with those expected of a University employee at this level.

The ICPD was to be responsible for professional doctorates across SCU, and to be oversighted by a sub-committee of Academic Board, the PDC, equivalent to the Higher Degrees Committee (HDC) of the Research and Research Training Committee that is itself a sub-committee of the Academic Board. The HDC has responsibility for research masters and PhD programs across SCU. The PDC was to include members of the HDC and oversight the development and quality control of professional doctorates for SCU and report on a regular basis to Academic Board.

The Chair of the DBA Review Committee, Professor Martin Hayden was also the Chair of Programs Committee of Academic Board, with three external members. The outcome of the review was a recommendation to Academic Board that the DBA be reaccredited for a further five years and this was accepted by SCU Council in 2007. The review report included a number of recommendations:

1. That the DBA be more strongly promoted as a research higher degree qualification and that the focus of this promotion be upon its suitability as a qualification for tertiary level teaching and for problem-solving across a wide range of fields in business and management.
2. That a proposal for there to be three examiners for a DBA thesis be rejected.
3. That an intention to develop a Centre for Professional Doctorates be supported.
4. That an intention to apply a set of generic rules to all professional doctorates be supported.
5. That a policy of limiting to a maximum of ten the number of doctoral candidates per supervisor be supported.
6. That an intention to embed the two units: Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods, in all Masters degree programs that articulate with the DBA be supported.
7. That the DBA and fee paying PhD's be the principal focus of the Graduate College of Management's Higher Degree by Research activity.
8. That an intention to develop a Graduate Attribute to apply to the DBA program be supported.
9. That an intention for the GCM to embrace its alumni more pro-actively be supported.
10. That an intention to make the action research approach a significant vehicle for DBA theses be supported.
11. That an intention for the GCM to seek more research and development grants from large companies be supported.
12. That an intention for the GCM to explore industry partnership possibilities that would support DBA and MBA research be supported.
13. That the GCM investigate further the progression and attrition data and address this issue based on the findings.

The DBA Review Committee report concluded with a strong statement of support:

The SCU DBA Program is one of the largest and most successful programs of its type in Australia. It has a current enrolment of 180 students all full fee paying. It enjoys strong market demand from across Australia and the Asia/Pacific region. The program is making a significant contribution to SCU's strategic priorities. It is held in high esteem among business management educators across Australia. It is distinctive for its focus on the development of research skills, its high levels of candidate satisfaction, the quality of supervision, its vastly superior completion rates and its high overall quality standards.

In making its recommendations for reaccreditation for a further five years, the report commended the GCM for the following achievements:

1. The extraordinary market success, as evidenced by the strong demand for the program, its remarkable retention and completion rates and the high peer esteem in which it is held.
2. Its impressive commitment to continuous quality improvement as evidenced by numerous initiatives to provide better forms of support for candidates and supervisors, the decision to raise the International English Language Test Score (IELTS) required for admission to the DBA to 7 and the activities of the Course Advisory Committee in implementing internal course review procedures.
3. Its willingness to support a proposed Professional Doctorate Centre, which is likely to have benefits for other schools across SCU.
4. The uncompromising approach to the maintenance of high quality standards in the approach to the assessment of candidate performance in the DBA program.

Accordingly, the finalisation of the formal DBA review presented the opportunity to change the rules of the DBA program to introduce the time-based structure and apply it to the approved EdD program, so that the revised structure became the generic structure for all present and future professional doctorates. The revised structure adopted for all professional doctorates is shown in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3:**

*Generic Structure for all SCU professional doctorate programs*

4 x	Postgraduate units relevant to the proposed research project
2 x	Research methods units (Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods).
	<i>Doctoral supervisors are appointed at the near completion of the units above</i>
1 x	Professional Doctorate Research Proposal (2 unit equivalent)
16 x	Thesis units
<b>Total 24 units</b>	

A new Doctor of Indigenous Philosophies (DIP) was introduced using the generic structure in 2007. A number of other new professional doctorate programs are proposed. The ICPD assumed administration of the DBA, EdD and DIP programs from 1 January, 2008 with Associate Professor Peter Miller appointed as the foundation Director of the ICPD. The University Council formally approved the establishment of the ICPD in its minutes of 15th February, 2008.

The rationale for the current GCM DBA staff to form the basis for the ICPD and to be located at the Tweed Gold Coast campus included the excellent world-class administrative support systems the team had developed. It also made available to all professional doctorate candidates and their supervisors significant learning infrastructure to support the amalgamated programs.

## Candidate and supervisor support systems

Up until 2004, most of the DBA candidates worked on their own, with a supervisor with whom they shared and created new knowledge as they pursued the research project. The rapid increase in enrolments over the early years of the program and the concentration on admission and student growth meant that the administrative systems and infrastructure to support the program were a secondary consideration to the priority of the program's establishment and growth. As a result, the future success of the program and the ability of the program to sustain additional candidates were potentially restricted.

Accordingly, in early 2005, the then Director of the DBA program, Associate Professor Peter Miller developed and established a number of knowledge sharing technologies, techniques and practices, including an online Doctoral Candidates Centre, online Doctoral Supervisors Centre, doctoral symposia, and later in 2007, an online professional development program for supervisors. The cost of underwriting this project was provided by Professor Peter Baverstock from SCU's Graduate Research College. The infrastructure encouraged collaborative knowledge creation and sharing of doctoral research and supervision by the use of electronic networks permitting asynchronous distance learning in a real-time collaborative environment. Included in the initiatives was the Doctor of Business Information System (DoBi) that included a full client relationship management module and management of enquiries system. Self-service was also introduced, as all paper-based forms were web mounted and a new six monthly web-based reporting system for both candidates and supervisors was developed and implemented.

*Doctoral candidates centre*—the doctoral candidates centre was established where the candidates could locate relevant information and academic resources, network with other candidates, complete their progress reports and also get a better understanding of the processes, procedures and practices of the doctoral programs.

*Doctoral supervisors centre*—the doctoral supervisors centre was established as an online knowledge repository for doctoral supervisors to share their knowledge and experiences of supervision and locate required information and resources. The centre also aimed to facilitate supervisors' understanding of the processes, procedures and practices of doctoral programs that have an impact on both supervisors and candidates. All of the content areas in the supervisors centre are identical to those in the candidates centre, in order to provide supervisors with an appreciation of the resources available to candidates.

*Research symposia*—half-yearly doctoral symposia were held for both DBA and PhD students at the Tweed Gold Coast campus of SCU. Up to 85 candidates attend the symposia together with their supervisors and academic staff from the GCM. Similar but smaller symposia are also delivered at each overseas partner location. The main purpose is knowledge sharing between candidates and their supervisors, as well as with peers and other academics. The symposia were extended to include EdD and DIP candidates from 2007. Candidates are encouraged to present their research at each symposium and other candidates and supervisors critique the research in progress presentations giving the candidates the opportunity to learn from questions asked by peers and academics.

## External recognition

DBA programs offered by Australian universities are diverse in terms of both curriculum and advanced standing arrangements. As mentioned previously, the SCU DBA is a doctoral research degree and not a course work program. Most other Australian DBA programs are not considered to be research degrees as the coursework component of these degrees are much higher and in some cases candidates may submit portfolios of two research papers and are not required to undertake a major research project in the form of a thesis. As noted above, results show that the SCU DBA is the largest DBA program by enrolments and has the largest number of graduates when compared to other DBA programs (ANZAM 2005).

In 2005, the DBA leadership team consisting of Associate Professor Peter Miller, Director of DBA, Ms Sue White, DBA Administrator, Ms Chantelle Howse, DBA Administrative Officer and Ms Susan Riordan, DBA Administrative Officer was awarded the Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence and Achievement in the Improvement in Process category for the development and establishment of the web-based candidates' and supervisors' centres and the customer service management software developed specifically for the program.

In terms of candidates' recognition of the program, each year graduates from Australian universities are asked to complete an independent government initiated Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ). A report is released by Graduate Careers Australia and provides a national picture of selected aspects of graduates' research experience to allow national comparisons of education quality among the 39 Australian universities.

The 2005 report showed that in respect of post graduate research candidates (both DBA and PhD graduates), SCU achieved the following rankings:

- number 1—Overall Satisfaction
- number 1—Goals and Expectations
- number 1—Intellectual Climate
- number 2—Skill Development
- number 2—Thesis Examination

The 2006 report also showed a number 3 rating for overall satisfaction.

Further external recognition came from the Melbourne Institute, which was formed in 1962 under the leadership of Professor Ronald Henderson. It was the first economics research institute in an Australian university. The Melbourne Institute aims to be a major institute of applied economic and social research that is nationally and internationally renowned in academia, government, business and community groups. In November 2006, the Institute released its report titled *Rating Major Disciplines in Australian Universities: Perceptions and Reality*. In that report, SCU was listed as having the highest number of doctoral completions (principally DBAs) in Business and Economics over the period. Monash was ranked second and the UNSW third (Williams & Van Dyke 2006).

In April 2008, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications reaccredited the DBA for five years after an exhaustive review process that involved senior professorial staff from a number of overseas universities. In October, 2008, the Malaysian Qualification Agency and the Ministry of Higher Education approved the SCU DBA: the first for a foreign university DBA in Malaysia. Equally significant was that the accreditation was accorded a Category A approval which is usually reserved for PhD programs.

As noted earlier, in November 2008, Professor Brian Stoddart, presented his independent report 'An investigation into the structure, range of activities, performance and supervisory arrangements concerning SCU's DBA program'. The investigation coincided with the then Director, Associate Professor Peter Miller, stepping down from the position. The report concluded that:

Broadly, SCU may be satisfied that the DBA program is fundamentally sound. It consistently attracts good numbers of quality students from Australia and New Zealand as well as overseas, specifically in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. The program is conducted through a structured supervisory system that ensures students receive consistently high levels of supervision. The student support systems are excellent, with exemplary customer service readily available. Academic standards are high as attested by the time taken to complete, and by the evidence that a reasonable number of students are admitted to but do not complete the program. There is a strong process of continuous improvement imposed on the program (p2).

In addition, the Stoddart (2008) report made four commendations:

Commendation 1—GCM is commended for the construction of a professional development program for doctoral supervisors.

Commendation 2—GCM is commended for the consistently high customer service provided to students by both academic and administrative staff.

Commendation 3—GCM is commended for having created such a stimulating learning environment for students.

Commendation 4—GCM is commended for the high level of continuous improvement shown throughout the life of the DBA program.

The independent report was acknowledged by numerous academic committees at SCU as a tribute to the leadership and administration of the program over the previous five years.

## Conclusion

The establishment of the ICPD was the culmination of SCU's emergence as a major provider of professional doctorate education in Australia. The ICPD emerged and was built on the foundations of a successful and globally significant DBA program that set the benchmark for student and supervisor infrastructure and support systems.

This chapter has outlined the development of the DBA program as the foundation for the adoption of the generic structure for professional doctorate programs at SCU and mapped the subsequent development of the other professional doctorate programs and ultimately, the establishment of the ICPD.

The process utilised for establishing the ICDP can be a model for other universities wishing to develop a suite of professional doctorate programs. The model of first establishing one program and ensuring that it is well supported with appropriate educational infrastructure, suitable research culture, excellent administrative support systems and a solid record of graduates, enabled the university to leverage off the foundation and successfully move into other professional doctorate areas.

## Author Profile

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# CHAPTER 3

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## Changing the paradigm— Emerging Research Designs in Professional Doctorates

*Roslyn Cameron*

### **Abstract**

The emergence of mixed methods in business, management and organisational research has only recently begun to attract the notice of researchers and academics. There is relatively less literature and commentary on the use of mixed methods in applied business than there is in social sciences, health and education where mixed methods has witnessed higher levels of acceptance. Nonetheless, those who have researched the use of mixed methods in business and management fields have found an increasing utilisation. This chapter explores the emergent body of literature and research that is attempting to gauge the use of mixed methods across a variety of business and management fields. This will be followed by the presentation of research findings into the research designs and methods utilised in Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) theses from the International Centre for Professional Doctorates at Southern Cross University in Australia. The research points to mixed methods as being the most frequently utilised research approach by DBA candidates (39%). This exceeds the number of purely quantitative theses (32%) and purely qualitative theses (29%). Of all the DBA theses (n=186) examined, 41% have been Australian based.

### **Key words**

Research design, mixed methods, multistrand, qualitative, quantitative

### **Introduction**

A new era in research methods is emerging and has been quietly heralded by several emerging authorities in the field of mixed methods research as the third methodological movement. Like the mythology of the phoenix, mixed methods research has arisen out of the ashes of the paradigm wars to take its place alongside the more established traditions of quantitative and qualitative research (Cameron & Miller 2007). The fields of applied social science and evaluation are among those that have shown the greatest popularity and uptake of mixed methods research designs. Relatively speaking, there is less dialogue and literature on the use of mixed methods in applied business compared to other disciplines where mixed methods has witnessed higher levels of acceptance

such as the social sciences, health and education. Research in business and management has traditionally been undertaken in the quantitative paradigm, with some exceptions. It has only been very recently that mixed methods has been introduced and explicitly utilised within applied business research (Cameron 2008; Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela 2006; Molina-Azorin 2007). This chapter provides a brief overview of the rise of mixed methods research, its use in business and management, a discussion of the emergence of mixed methods research designs and empirical evidence of mixed methods usage in DBA theses at Southern Cross University (SCU).

## Literature review

The debates surrounding paradigms have a long history and were particularly active in the 1980s. Some commentaries on the debate contend that the struggle for primacy of one paradigm over others is irrelevant as each paradigm is an alternate offering with its own merits (Guba 1990, p27). Creswell (1994, p176) identifies several schools of thought in the paradigm debate or so-called paradigm wars. At one end of the debate are the purists who assert paradigms and methods should not be mixed. Another school of thought is identified as the situationalists who contend that certain methods can be used in specific situations. In direct opposition to the purists are the pragmatists who argued against a false dichotomy between the qualitative and quantitative paradigms and advocate for the efficient use of both approaches.

Proponents of mixed methods have been linked to those identifying with the pragmatic paradigm. Historically, pragmatism can be traced to an early period from 1860 to 1930 and the neopragmatic era from 1960 to the present (Maxcy 2003). Many mixed methods researchers and theorists draw strong associations with mixed methodology and pragmatism (Datta 1997; Bazeley 2003; Greene & Caracelli 1997, 2003; Maxcy 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). For example:

We agree with others in the mixed methods research movement that consideration and discussion of pragmatism by research methodologists and empirical researchers will be productive because it offers an immediate and useful middle position philosophically and methodologically; it offers a practical and outcome-orientated method of inquiry that is based on action and leads, iteratively, to further action and the elimination of doubt; and it offers a method for selecting methodological mixes that can help researchers better answer many of their research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004, p17).

Pragmatism has a strong philosophical foothold in the mixed methods or methodological pluralism camps. This chapter now looks more closely at mixing qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Research methodologies can be said to be categorised under two approaches: quantitative (positivist) and qualitative (postpositivist), each of which has its strengths and limitations. Positivist inquiry takes a realist position and involves a dualist epistemology that requires separation of the researcher from the researched. Postpositivist inquiry takes a relativist position and allows for multiple constructions of reality and a monist epistemology where the researcher and the researched interact and are bound together (Caulley 1994, p4). Neuman (2006, p177) provides the following argument in terms of these two methodological approaches and argues against a rigid dichotomy between the two:

The qualitative and quantitative distinction is often overdrawn and presented as a rigid dichotomy. Too often, adherents of one style of social research judge the other style on the basis

of the assumptions and standards of their own style. The well-versed prudent social researcher understands and appreciates each style on its own terms and recognizes the strengths and limitations of each. The ultimate goal of developing a better understanding and explanation of the social world comes from an appreciation of what each has to offer.

Mixed methods research is a growing area of methodological choice for many academics and researchers from across a variety of discipline areas. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p5) define mixed methods as follows:

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) refer to the eight stages in the history and philosophy of the human sciences. Stage 8 is referred to as the *Institutionalization of Mixed Methods as a Distinct Methodological Orientation (1990 to the Present)*. The authors refer to mixed methods as the third research community and state that there is a short but notable list of mixed methods publications that have appeared in the last 15 years. Mixed methods emerged in the late 1980s and grew in continental Europe and the UK, followed by an uptake by scholars in the US. Fields in the human sciences that have seen the spread of mixed methods include evaluation research, management and organisational research, health sciences, nursing, psychology, sociology and education (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009, p78).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) have also mapped a brief history of mixed methods research and its evolution to date and have posited four, often overlapping, time periods in the evolution. These four are the formative period (1950s–1980s), paradigm debate period (1970s–late 1990s), procedural development period (late 1980s–2000), and the advocacy as a separate design period (2000 onwards). Buchanan and Bryman (2007, p486) in reference to organisational research, conclude that:

The paradigm wars of the 1980s have thus turned to paradigm soup, and organisational research today reflects the paradigm diversity of the social sciences in general. It is not surprising that this epistemological eclecticism has involved the development of novel terminology; innovative research methods; non traditional forms of evidence; and fresh approaches to conceptualization, analysis, and theory building.

Mixed methods research as a third methodological movement is developing and evolving with recent studies of the use of mixed methods in the fields of counselling (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska & Creswell 2005), qualitative research conducted in Switzerland (Eberle & Elliker 2005), nursing (Twinn 2003), education (Niglas 2004), social and human sciences (Bryman 2008; Plano Clark 2005), evaluation research (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989) and business research (Cameron 2008; Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela 2006; Molina-Azorin 2007) providing empirical evidence of the extent of utilisation of mixed methods in contemporary research. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p18) concluded that ‘today, we see cross-cultural international interest, interdisciplinary interest, publication possibilities, and public and private funding opportunities for mixed methods research.’

Several authorities have been emerging as mixed methodologist researchers and theorists (Bazeley 2003; Bergman 2008; Bryman 2008; Creswell 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007; Greene & Caracelli 1997; Mertens 2005; Mingers & Gill 1997; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003). Interest in mixed methods has seen the recent emergence of several publications including academic journals, chapters in research texts (McMillan & Schumacher 2006) and research texts themselves that are dedicated to mixed methods. The most comprehensive publication of mixed methods to date has been the edited *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research* (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003). In January 2007 the first issue of the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* was published and this was followed by the first issue of the *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches* in October 2007. In 2009 a new online journal, *The International Journal of Mixed Methods in Applied Business and Policy Research*, will publish its first issue. Several texts solely dedicated to mixed methods have recently been published (Andrews & Halcomb 2009; Bergman 2008; Cameron & Miller 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007; Greene 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009).

In the field of management research, Mingers (1997) and Mingers and Gill (1997) have been strong advocates for multimethodology or pluralism, as has Bazeley (2003). There is a small but growing body of research investigating the incidence and usage of mixed methods in business research. Rocco, Bliss, Gallagher and Perez-Prado (2002) explored how mixed methods was approached in the fields of human resource development and adult education, and Mingers (2003) reviewed the information systems literature in reference to the use of multimethod research. Four similar pieces of research have aimed at discovering the extent and current role mixed methods plays in certain business and management fields through a process of systematic review of empirical studies. The first was a study conducted by Rocco et al. (2003) and reviewed sixteen online articles from 1999 to 2001 in the *Information Technology, Learning and Performance Journal*. The second study was undertaken by Hurmerinta-Peltomaki and Nummela (2006) and involved reviewing articles from four major journals in international business during the time span of 2000 to 2003. The third was a study of mixed methods in the field of strategic management and in particular resource based view (RBV) research (Molina-Azorin 2007). The fourth study involved a methodological scan of conference papers from the 2007 conference of the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM) (Cameron 2008).

A large study by Bryman (2008) of published social science journal articles from 1994 to 2003 found that just under half of those that used mixed methods did so by presenting the qualitative and quantitative data in parallel and only 18% of the articles genuinely integrated the two sets of findings. The studies by Hurmerinta-Peltomaki and Nummela (2006) and Cameron (2008) found similar results. Hurmerinta-Peltomaki and Nummela (2006) analysed mixed methods in international business journals from 2000 to 2003 and found that the majority of these (60%) used both qualitative and quantitative data collection but analysed each in their own tradition (that is quantitative data analysed using quantitative methods and qualitative data analysed using qualitative methods).

Cameron (2008) reviewed conference papers from the 2007 ANZAM conference (n=281). Quantitative papers represented just under one third (32%), followed by conceptual papers (30%). Qualitative papers represented 28% of the papers and mixed methods represented 10%. Papers were categorised as either conceptual or empirical (qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods). This process identified a total of 197 papers with an empirical research design. Of these empirical studies, 14% utilised a mixed method. The majority (78%) of mixed method type papers

were in the classification that analysed qualitative data qualitatively and analysed quantitative data quantitatively. The study of the use of mixed methods in strategy research by Molina-Azorin (2007) reviewed research in the RBV literature published between 1984 and 2006. Computerised searches of two databases along with manual searches of articles from all issues of the *Strategic Management Journal* between 1984 and 2006 was conducted. Molina-Azorin (2007) utilised the mixed method design categories of Morse (1991; 2003) to group mixed methods research designs in his study. The findings in RBV mixed methods studies pointed to the dominance of the qual→QUANT design. This is a sequential research design where the quantitative (QUANT) research is dominant and is preceded by less dominant qualitative (qual) research.

The results of these studies point to an over reliance of mixed methods research types on maintaining the quantitative-qualitative divide and the non-use of more integrated mixed method designs. A major challenge for researchers in business and management wishing to use mixed methods and those who build research capacity, is the level of integration between qualitative and quantitative methods that such research achieves or claims to achieve.

In summary, mixed method research is a growing area of methodological choice for many academics and researchers, especially in business and management disciplines where it appears that adoption is somewhat delayed when compared to other social sciences. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the emerging research designs employed in mixed method research, followed by preliminary results of a study into the design and methodological choices found in DBA theses from SCU.

## Mixed method research designs

Mixed methods research designs use both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single research project to gather or analyse data and several mixed method theorists have developed mixed method typologies (Creswell 2003, 2007; Greene & Caracelli 1997; Mertens 2005; Miles & Huberman 1994; Morgan 1998; Morse 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003).

Typologies are the study or systematic classification of types that have characteristics or traits in common and form part of models and theories. Neuman (2006, p55) defines typologies as a way to classify theoretical concepts that are created by ‘cross-classifying or combining two or more simple concepts to form a set of interrelated sub-types.’ Typologies are used by theorists to assist them in organising abstract and complex concepts. The mixed method typologies developed by three sets of authoritative scholars will now be presented.

Greene and Caracelli (1997) have published extensively on mixed methods in evaluation research and have developed a typology of mixed methods designs that includes three component designs and four integrated designs. Table 3.1 depicts these in tabular form.

**Table 3.1:**  
*The Greene and Caracelli designs for mixed methods research*

Component designs	Integrated designs
<b>Triangulation</b> Different methods are used to assess the same phenomenon toward convergence and increased validity	<b>Iterative</b> Dynamic and ongoing interplay over time between the different methodologies associated with different paradigms. Spiral type design
<b>Complementary</b> One dominant method type are enhanced or clarified by results from another method type	<b>Embedded/nested</b> One methodology located within another, interlocking inquiry characteristics in a framework of creative tension
<b>Expansion</b> Inquiry paradigms frame different methods that are used for distinct inquiry components. The results being presented side-by-side	<b>Holistic</b> Highlight the necessary interdependence of different methodologies for understanding complex phenomena fully
	<b>Transformative</b> Give primacy to the value-based and action-orientated dimensions of different inquiry traditions. Mix the value commitments of different traditions for better representation of multiple interests

(Caracelli & Greene 1997, p23)

Creswell (2003) has built on his earlier work in terms of mixed methods research designs and has developed a four type typology. These four major types are classified using categories associated with variants, timing, weighting and mix. The four designs are triangulation, embedded, explanatory and exploratory. Table 3.2 summarises Creswell’s mixed methods research designs typology as published in his latest work (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007).

**Table 3.2:**  
*Creswell mixed method design types*

Design Type	Timing	Mix	Weighting/Notation
<b>Triangulation</b>	Concurrent: quantitative and qualitative at the same time	Merge the data during interpretation or analysis	QUAN + QUAL
<b>Embedded</b>	Concurrent and sequential	Embed one type of data within a larger design using the other type of data	QUAN(qual) Or QUAL(quan)
<b>Explanatory</b>	Sequential: Quantitative followed by qualitative	Connect the data between the two phases	QUAN then qual
<b>Exploratory</b>	Sequential: Qualitative followed by quantitative	Connect the data between the two phases	QUAL then quan

(Adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark 2007, p85)

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) have developed a very comprehensive typology of mixed methods which results in six types of multistrand mixed designs. Mixed method designs involve mixing the quantitative and qualitative approaches only in the methods stage of a study, whilst mixed model designs involve mixing the quantitative and qualitative approaches in several stages of a study. This results in six types of multistrand mixed designs as depicted in Table 3.3. The authors of this typology assert that the multistrand mixed methods designs are the most innovative and widely used (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, p685). Multistrand designs use more than one method and are characterised by three dimensions. They have single or multiple approaches. They use two methods to answer either exploratory or confirmatory research enquiries. Another dimension is the stages of integration or the incorporation of both qualitative and quantitative data sets. The third dimension is the procedures for linking the strands either sequentially or concurrently. These dimensions create six types of multistrand research designs to which the sequential mixed model design has been applied. The methodologists also note parallels between this particular type and Creswell's explanatory and exploratory mixed method designs (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, p688).

**Table 3.3:**

*Tashakkori and Teddlie two-dimensional framework for conceptualising multistrand mixed designs*

Procedure	Mixed method	Mixed model study
Concurrent	Concurrent mixed method design	Concurrent mixed model design
Sequential	Sequential mixed method design	Sequential mixed model design
Conversion	Conversion mixed method design	Conversion mixed model design

(Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, p687)

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009, p265) note that the ever increasing number of mixed method research designs has begun to bewilder researchers:

Over the last several years, a plethora of research designs have been developed. However, the number of designs that currently prevail leaves the doctoral student, the beginning researcher, and even the experienced researcher who is new to the field of mixed methods research with the challenge of selecting optimal mixed methods designs.

These authors have developed a three dimensional matrix design that attempts to create an integrated typology of mixed methods designs. The three dimensions are: level of mixing (partially mixed versus fully mixed), time orientation (concurrent versus sequential) and emphasis of approaches (equal status versus dominant status). When these dimensions are crossed a matrix of eight research designs results (Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2009). The authors do not claim this integrated typology is exhaustive but state that most mixed methods studies can be categorised by one of these eight.

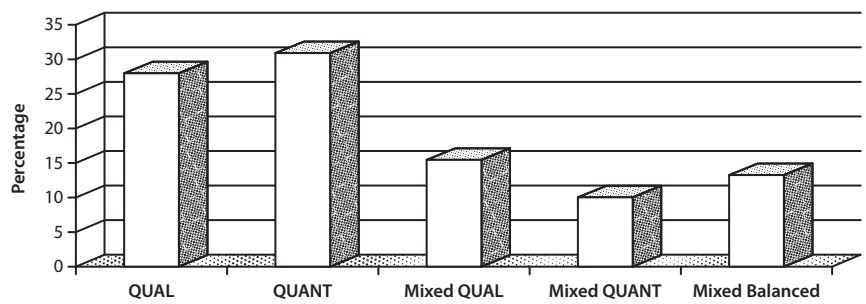
Mixed methods typologies and research designs are not without critics and McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p401) draw attention to their advantages and disadvantages. They list three disadvantages. The first is the need of the researcher to be proficient and competent in both qualitative and quantitative methods. The second disadvantage is the extensive data collection and resources need to undertake a mixed method study. The last refers to a tendency to use mixed

methods label liberally to studies that only superficially mix methods. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), Bazeley (2003), Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) and Earley (2007) have all attempted to address these issues through advocating for research education that explicitly covers mixed methods in the research syllabus for novice researchers.

### Empirical evidence from the SCU DBA

The study that analysed the DBA theses from SCU was funded by an internal research grant. The study investigated research designs and methodologies utilised by DBA candidates from 1997 to 2007. One hundred and eighty six theses were analysed and coded as either pure quantitative, pure qualitative, mixed but predominantly qualitative, mixed but predominantly quantitative or mixed with a balance between quantitative and qualitative. Of these only one had explicitly utilised a mixed method research design. Figure 3.1 provides frequencies for the research approaches utilised in this sample.

**Figure 3.1:**  
*Research approach employed in DBA Theses at Southern Cross University from 1997 to 2007*



(Cameron and Miller, forthcoming)

DBA theses that used a pure quantitative approach represented 32%. Those who used a pure qualitative approach represented 29% and a total of 39% used a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The mixed methods figure is the total of three categories (mixed with predominantly qualitative [16%], mixed with predominantly quantitative [10%] and mixed with a balance between qualitative and quantitative [13%]). The coding of these three categories is open to subjective interpretation and issues of inter-rater reliability had to be addressed during the study.

This study has only just been completed and a full analysis of the findings is pending. What can be gauged from this preliminary analysis is that for research conducted in the SCU DBA program from 1997 to 2007, the mixing of quantitative and qualitative research methods represents just over one third of theses under investigation.

The DBA theses were also coded for research design and methods. Coding the methods involved multiple response coding, as for many of the research studies more than one method was employed. Table 3.4 depicts the findings from preliminary data analysis on the frequencies of research designs and the three highest scoring methods for each research design.

**Table 3.4:***Research design type and methods used in DBA theses*

Research Design	Three highest scoring methods used (multiple response coding)			TOTAL Research Design
	Highest reported method	Second highest reported method	Third highest reported method	n = 145
<b>Exploratory</b>	Survey 57	Interviews 55	Case Study 30	82
<b>Case Study</b>	Case Study 55	Interviews 54	Survey 33	68
<b>Descriptive</b>	Survey 33	Interviews 19	Case Study 9	39
<b>Explanatory</b>	Survey 9	Interviews 7	Case Study 5	13
<b>Action Research</b>	Action Research 6	Interviews 5	Observation 3	11
<b>Experimental</b>	Survey 6	Experimental; Observation 4 each	Interviews 3	7
<b>Grounded Theory</b>	Interviews 6	Case Study 3	Survey; Grounded Theory; Focus Groups 2 each	6
<b>Longitudinal</b>	Survey; Case Study 2 each	Interview; Content analysis 1 each		3
<b>Quasi Experimental</b>	Survey 1			1
<b>Mixed Methods</b>				1

(Cameron and Miller, forthcoming)

Exploratory, case study and descriptive research designs were the most popular in DBA research, with the most frequently used methods being survey, interviews and case study. However, the projects were methodologically diverse with some projects utilising grounded theory, action research, ethnography and post-structuralism.

To gauge the use of mixed methods in current doctoral research studies a content analysis of the last four SCU Doctoral Symposiums, where candidates present their work in progress, was also conducted for 2007 and 2008. Some candidates present their research-in-progress at more than one symposium. This has been accounted for in the content analysis and referred to as 'repeats'. Table 3.5 presents the frequencies of categories of research methods at four Doctoral Symposiums.

**Table 3.5:**  
*Categories of research method presented at the SCU 2007 and 2008 Doctoral Symposiums*

Symposium	Quant	Qual	Mixed Methods	Not stated	Other
May 2007	5	2	3	2	15
Nov 2007	8	6	4	3	7
May 2008	6	5	6	1	6
Nov 2008	8	4	5	3	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Total minus repeat presentations</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>

(Cameron and Miller, forthcoming)

This content analysis suggest similar findings to the completed DBA theses in that mixed methods are often utilised by DBA candidates. In fact there is a relatively even spread across the three main categories of quantitative (n=18), qualitative (n=14) and mixed methods (n=15). The ‘other’ category included case study, action research, survey, meta-analysis and grounded theory. The relatively higher number in the ‘other’ category for May 2007 (n=15) as compared to later symposiums may be a reflection on the recent theme coming into play at the symposiums that the research design undertaken for a doctoral project needs to be explicitly stated in doctoral theses. The articulation of the research design in completed doctoral thesis in the business and management discipline is presented as problematic.

Australian based DBA theses represented the majority of completed theses when compared with overseas partners. Completed Australian DBAs represented 41% of the total completed DBAs at SCU between 1997 and 2007 (n=186). The majority of DBA candidates from Australia were male (77%) compared to female (23%).

For Australian based DBA theses the most frequently utilised approach was pure qualitative (n=28) followed by a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative research methods (n=20). This mixed methods figure is the total of three categories (mixed with predominantly qualitative [n=9], mixed with predominantly quantitative [n=4]; and mixed with a balance between qualitative and quantitative [n=7]). Pure quantitative was the least utilised (n=17).

Research methods used involved multiple response coding, as for many of the research studies more than one research methods was employed. Methods utilised by the Australian DBA theses were analysed as a sub-set and are displayed in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6:***Methods utilised in Australian based DBA theses at SCU 1997–2007*

Method	Frequency	Percent of Responses	Percent of Cases
Survey	38	26.8	53.5
Interview	38	26.8	53.5
Case Study	32	22.5	45.1
Content Analysis	12	8.5	16.9
Focus Groups	8	5.6	11.3
Observation	6	4.2	8.5
Action Research	5	3.5	7.0
Experimental	1	0.7	1.4
Correlational	1	0.7	1.4
Grounded Theory	1	0.7	1.4
Total	142	100.0	200.0

The most common methods were surveys and interviews (53% of cases respectively) followed by case studies (45% of cases).

## Conclusions

The empirical evidence presented hints at what Cameron and Miller (forthcoming) refer to as mixed methods transitional creep in the business and management discipline. Transitional creep is perceived as a periodic reflection of the evolution of mixed methods as a third methodological movement and of the fact that mixed methods as reflected in contemporary business and management research is emerging as a significant approach to applied research. Mixed methods usage in this area is still in its early stages of acceptance, maturation and sophistication. However, it is a trend that needs to be monitored.

Further qualitative analysis of the DBA data needs to be undertaken to determine the full extent and usage of mixed methods for that period. The research also needs to be extended in the future to monitor mixed methods usage and the process of transitional creep. The findings from such research could further inform future pedagogic approaches to building research capacity for applied business and management research. It may be that teaching research methods for doctoral candidates in the traditional form of quantitative and qualitative research methods as separate units needs to be re-examined.

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) appear to support the proposition that doctoral candidates need to be proficient in both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to prepare them to be pragmatic and competent researchers. However, they contend that the best way to accomplish that goal is to replace separate quantitative and qualitative methodology courses in research curricula with courses that teach both quantitative and qualitative techniques within a mixed methodological framework simultaneously.

Cameron and Miller (forthcoming) state that perhaps the approach needed for the future is the reframing of the pedagogic approach to research training for postgraduate research students. It

may well be that the suggestion of Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) to cease the teaching of quantitative and qualitative methodology as separate courses and to teach research design and methodology within a mixed methodological framework is the appropriate approach for the future.

### **Author Profile**

Dr Roslyn Cameron is a lecturer in the School of Commerce and Management at Southern Cross University. Roslyn teaches and researches in the areas of mixed methodologies, global mobility, leadership, skill recognition, skilled migration, recruitment and career development. She is the editor of the *International Journal of Mixed Methods in Business and Policy Research*. She has several publications relating to the use of mixed methods in business research and continues to research mixed methodologies in business discipline clusters and vocational education and training. Roslyn is a regular presenter of workshops on mixed methods at the Southern Cross University International Centre for Professional Doctorates Doctoral Symposium. Her own PhD thesis utilised a sequential mixed model research design.

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# CHAPTER 4

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## Professional Development for Research Supervisors

*Peter Miller*

### **Abstract**

There are no prescriptions for how a doctoral research project should be supervised and each supervisor will bring to the project their own experience and ways of doing things. Therefore, the process may never be systematically described or prescribed. Research supervisors often adopt the style of supervision of the supervisor that supervised their own doctoral research project if the experience was a good one. Where their own doctoral experience and relationship with their supervisor was not effective and beneficial, often supervisors learn from this experience and endeavour not to do the things their own ineffective supervisor did with them. In addition to these experiences, supervisors have natural and preferred ways of supervising research projects in much the same way that leaders or managers in organisations bring to their roles their own values, behaviours and styles of management (Dubrin, Dalglish & Miller 2006). Given these differences, the design and development of a professional development program for doctoral supervisors is an exciting challenge. It is further complicated when the professional development program needs to be appropriate and suitable for supervisors from diverse disciplinary areas. This is the case for the International Centre for Professional Doctorates (ICPD) supervisors who come from a range of backgrounds such as business and management, education and the social sciences. This chapter explores the design, development and delivery of an on-line professional development program for doctoral research supervisors who are supervising research theses for candidates under the responsibility of the ICPD. The chapter briefly outlines the curriculum of the program, the method of its development and provides some details on evaluating the program.

### **Key words**

HDR supervisor, supervisor training, professional development

The chapter is based on a published research article: Miller, P (2007) 'Problematising "good" HDR supervision: a case study of an international pilot of an on-line HDR supervisor professional development program', *The International Journal of Research Supervision*, vol 1, no 1, pp29–38.

## Introduction and context

The ICPD is responsible for the administration of professional doctorates across SCU. At present, three professional doctorates are approved:

- Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
- Doctor of Education (EdD)
- Doctor of Indigenous Philosophies (DIP)

The ICPD is oversighted by a sub-committee of Academic Board known as the Professional Doctorate Committee (PDC), equivalent to the Higher Degrees Committee (HDC) of the Research and Research Training Committee which is itself a sub-committee of the Academic Board. The HDC has responsibility for research masters and Doctor of Philosophy programs across SCU. The PDC includes members of the HDC, and oversees the development and quality control of professional doctorates for SCU and reports on a regular basis to the Academic Board.

A generic program structure is utilised for all professional doctorates programs. The structure consists of 24 units of study. Sixteen of the 24 units are the thesis component with an additional two units also involving preliminary work for the thesis. The generic structure for all programs is classified by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as a doctoral research degree as the thesis component is a minimum of 66 percent of the program.

The policy on the supervision of doctoral candidates is that all supervisors must meet the following criteria:

- have a doctoral qualification
- be experienced in research and/or in the supervision of research higher degrees
- have relevant knowledge and expertise for the research project
- have sufficient time and access to adequate resources to supervise the research project.

All supervisors must apply to be appointed to the professional doctorate supervisor register and undergo a rigorous review to ensure that they are experienced researchers capable of undertaking doctoral supervisory roles.

There are no prescriptions for how a doctoral research project should be supervised and each supervisor will bring to the project their own experience and ways of doing things. Therefore, the process will never be systematically described or prescribed. Research supervisors often adopt the style of supervision of the supervisor that supervised their own doctoral research project if the experience was a good one. Where their own doctoral experience and relationship with their supervisor was not effective and beneficial, often supervisors learn from this experience and endeavour not to do the things their own ineffective supervisor did to them.

In addition to these experiences, supervisors have natural and preferred ways of supervising research projects in much the same way that leaders or managers in organisations bring to their roles their own values, behaviours and styles of management (Dubrin, Dalglish & Miller 2006).

Given these differences, the design and development of a professional development program for doctoral supervisors is an exciting challenge. It is further complicated when the professional development program needs to be appropriate and suitable for supervisors from diverse

disciplinary areas and different national cultures. Such diversity is the case for supervisors in the ICPD where the supervisors come from diverse backgrounds such as business and management, education and the social sciences.

In 2007, the then Director of the DBA program, Associate Professor Peter Miller commissioned and participated in developing a supervisor professional development program. The wide ranging campuses of SCU and network of overseas partners necessitated an online program to enable Higher Degree Research (HDR) supervisors in a number of national and overseas locations to participate. The program needed to be relevant for HDR supervisors from all disciplines. The cost of underwriting this project was provided by Professor Peter Baverstock from SCU's Graduate Research College. The objectives of the HDR supervisor program were to:

1. Assist supervisors to examine the nature of supervision and to discuss what might constitute effective research supervision
2. Assist supervisors to articulate and reflect on their supervisory practice in a collegial environment
3. Expose supervisors to different models of supervisory practice
4. Assist supervisors to develop a critical understanding of the teaching and learning processes involved in effective supervision
5. Engage supervisors in a reflective process to challenge and extend their understanding of effective supervision
6. Expose supervisors to the resources available outside the SCU environment to assist effective supervisory practice.

There has been considerable discussion about supervision of HDR in the higher education literature for the past twenty years. In this context it has been acknowledged that professional development for HDR supervisors improves the completion rate of candidates (Conrad 1996; Manathunga 2005; Pearson & Brew 2002; Zuber-Skerritt 1994). This focus on completion has been accentuated by federal government interventions. Minister Kemp's (1999) funding formulae for higher degree research, essentially providing funding only on the completion of the degree, drew universities attention to factors that enhanced completion and emphasised the importance of professional development for HDR supervisors. Minister Nelson's (2002) subsequent changes to funding formulae reinforced the already established demand for professional development for research supervisors and added a new agenda of research training for research students. This second wave's emphasis on completions accentuated the importance of research training curriculum and also drew attention to training curriculum matters for HDR supervision training.

When universities acknowledged the importance of professional development programs for research supervisors they initially offered a range of face-to-face workshops (Conrad 1996; Zuber-Skerritt 1994). More recently, educational computer technology development in higher education has enabled the emergence of web-based resources and on-line programs for research supervisor professional development. The FIRST (for Improving Research Supervision and Training) resource, developed by the Australian Technology Network universities in 2002 was an example of one such resource. It offered a number of on-line activities to help research supervisors improve their practice.

This chapter describes the development of an on-line HDR supervisor professional development program that attempted to familiarise participants with existing on-line HDR supervision

resources, notably FIRST, and to advance participants in critical reflection of their HDR supervision practices by presenting them with multiple constructs for good research supervision.

## HDR supervision training curriculum

The Nelson (2002) federal initiatives drew attention to the importance of research training curricula. This focus also accentuated the importance of curricula for HDR supervisor professional development. Manathunga (2005) points out that prior to the pressure on improved supervision through the federal government policy initiatives, research supervisors learnt about supervision through their own experiences of being supervised. As universities began offering workshops for HDR supervisors, the content addressed such issues as matching of supervisors and prospective students, ensuring there are regular meetings between student and supervisor and bringing together groups of students where information can be simultaneously provided for them (Zuber-Skerritt 1994)

More recently, discussions about appropriate professional development for HDR supervisors have narrowed to explore the specific value of reflective practice and communities of practice in the professional development of HDR Supervisors (Pearson & Brew 2002).

Whether explicitly or implied, professional development in HDR supervision has been underpinned by exploring the question: what is good research supervision?. Answering this question is confounded by it being not a single question but a nested set of questions asking:

- What is good research?
- What is supervision?
- What is research?

The *What is Research?* question has been amply answered by others (for example Stenhouse 1981) revealing the history of debate associated with different paradigms impacting on individual views of research. This debate establishes the position that the term research represents disputed territory.

The *What is Supervision?* question is implicit in most of the literature about HDR supervision and gives rise to multiple perspectives. Manathunga (2005) describes one area of dissonance in the literature that distinguishes between administrative and pedagogical ways of investigating HDR supervision. This dissonance can be seen as answering the *What is Supervision?* question with different constructs of good supervision. In other words, good supervision may be seen from a teaching perspective or from a project management perspective.

Exploring all three questions emphasises the importance of adopting a curriculum approach that accommodates the multiple constructs of this topic, to recognise that there are no single answers but responses informed by many paradigms of research and research supervision that underpin these practices.

## A professional development program on higher degree research supervision

Pearson and Brew (2002) advocated reflection of practice situated in the practitioner's (research supervisor's) own experiences. This suggested a philosophy of the reflective practitioner (Dewey 1933; Schon 1983) indicating that when professionals reflect on their practice this enables them to identify ways in which their practice can be improved.

Manathunga (2005) advocated building on practitioner prior knowledge and understanding to open up the private space of research practice. This initially aligns with a philosophy of practitioner investigation (Anderson & Herr 1999; McNiff 2002) that shows that when reflective practice is undertaken in a rigorous and explicit way it helps practitioners to articulate to themselves and others the nature of their professional practice. In articulating their practice to themselves, professionals are then more open to investigating and changing them. It also implies a philosophy of community of practice (Wenger 1998; Wenger & Snyder 2000) where professionals meet for the purpose of sharing and making explicit their professional practice, enabling each of them to improve their personal practice.

Communities of practice (Wenger & Snyder 2000) are, as the phrase suggests, a gathering of practitioners with intent to share practice and ideas. This educational approach creates an opportunity for practitioners (in this case research supervisors) to impart their experiences of being practitioners. This initially helps to articulate the nature of that practice and makes explicit what is often tacit. It also helps a practitioner to become self-aware, a step towards essential critical reflection on practice.

The multiple construct nature of research supervision begged for a professional development program that exposed participants to the range of ways of thinking about good research supervision, helped them to identify which of the ways related to their own views of good research and good research supervision and helped them develop critical reflection.

Manathunga's (2005) distinction between administrative models of supervision and pedagogical models poses one set of constructs for exploring good research supervision. The *pedagogical* frameworks for practicing HDR supervision have been in existence since very early writing (Connell 1985) and have continued in recent times (Green 2005; Pearson & Brew 2002). The increasing number of examples of *administrative* models was in Vilkinas (2002) opinion, a response to the ever growing demands for thesis completion.

While the above two constructs of HDR supervision are well documented and understood in the literature, two emerging constructs of HDR supervision also require investigation. The two are supervision as epistemology and supervision as relationship.

## Supervision as epistemology

Most definitions of research and research degrees include reference to a contribution to knowledge. The implication is that research generically and research degrees specifically lead to a contribution to knowledge. This prerequisite in the definition then provides the basis for another construct of good research supervision in that good supervision enables a research student to make a contribution to knowledge. The nature of this construct, while appearing straightforward, is confounded by the disputable nature of what constitutes a contribution to knowledge. This dispute is in some ways being addressed by the emergence of research quality frameworks in the UK and Australia that have the potential to influence what constitutes a contribution to knowledge, by providing funding for the types of research listed in the framework, with associated implications of quality.

## Supervision as relationship

Research students' stories consistently point to the importance of the relationship with their supervisor. Salmon (1992) in her study based on stories from ten of her students pointed to the scientific traditions of research and how this generated often distant and product-driven

supervision. In contrast she advocated a process-driven approach based on a relationship that had mutual sympathy and trust. Vilkinas (2005), in a similar study drawing on the stories of students she had supervised, highlighted the students' desire that the supervisor have personal qualities such as faith in the student, reliability and being a risk taker.

## A curriculum for research supervision

Combining the two well known constructs of research supervision: HDR supervision as teaching (pedagogy) and HDR supervision as administration (project management) with the two emerging constructs: HDR supervision as a contribution to knowledge and HDR supervision as maintaining good relationships, offers a framework of four constructs of good HDR supervision. These are:

- good pedagogy
- good administration and project management
- good contribution to knowledge
- good relationships.

These constructs parallel Green's (2005) paper on the future of HDR supervisor thinking. The four constructs have some face validity and therefore would be recognisable to supervisors who potentially undertake the program.

## Method

It is said that organisations rarely provide their staff with the learning tools necessary for them to extract maximum learning from their experiences (Wick & Leon 1993). A research design and method was therefore adopted to allow the HDR Supervisors to not have just a skill building exercise in the traditional training sense, but also to provide an opportunity for maximum ongoing self reflection and learning aligned with the strategic directions of the organisation. Therefore, the development and evaluation of the HDR supervisor professional development program was based on an action research (Creswell 2008). This section reports on the outcomes of the first action research design cycle.

The SCU program developed and adopted the quadrant set of constructs in a program that consisted of eight modules delivered over five weeks and requiring an estimated 15 hours of work:

- Module 1 Introduction to the supervisor professional development program
- Module 2 What is good research supervision?
- Module 3 Supervising research to make a contribution to knowledge
- Module 4 Supervising research to lead to timely completions—well managed research
- Module 5 Supervising research through good teaching
- Module 6 Supervising research with a good relationship between the supervisor(s) and their candidates
- Module 7 Approaches to making research supervision better
- Module 8 Summary and optional assessment.

Each of the modules concerning the four HDR supervisory constructs (Modules 3 – 6) introduced the constructs to the participants, required them to read and respond to a case study (from the FIRST site) and then to participate in a facilitated discussion forum with the other supervisors.

The modules included some of the accumulated wisdom about how supervision might be approached and exposed participants to the philosophical and practical implications of reflecting on supervision from the particular construct point of view.

The program was designed to be self-contained, rigorous and do-able by busy supervisors. It was also designed to a self-paced resource or moderated as professional development. Participants were able to download a work book at the commencement of the program with guidelines and provision to make private reflective comments and with written instructions on how to access the FIRST web site so that they did not have to toggle back and forward for instructions in the on-line environment. The pilot program was moderated by an experienced doctoral supervisor and facilitator, Dr Geof Hill, who also developed much of the program as a consultant.

The program had an international pilot in February 2007 and has had several subsequent iterations. The pilot program drew from an international audience and included research supervisors from a number of disciplines and educational institutions other than SCU and of course included local supervisors from the various overseas partner institutions offering the SCU DBA program. Fifteen experienced HDR supervisors were recruited for the pilot program located in Australia, Singapore and New Zealand.

## Results

The program was formally and independently evaluated. Participants were asked to respond to a survey at the end of the pilot program. The survey items included the following questions:

1. Overall, how would you rate your experience in the program (rated on a seven-point Likert scale).
2. How often is your experience of the following true (rated on a five-point Likert scale):
  - a. The program is suitable for academics in my discipline
  - b. The length of the program is appropriate
  - c. The depth of the program is appropriate
  - d. The discussion forums were useful to my learning
  - e. The case studies provided were useful to my learning
  - f. The directions in the program materials enabled me to navigate it smoothly
  - g. The feedback and discussion from the moderator and other participants was helpful in improving my supervision practices
  - h. The program got me thinking about my supervisory style
  - i. The program will assist me to supervise more effectively in the future
  - j. I learnt things in the program about supervisory practice that I did not know before
  - k. The program assisted me to conceptualise my supervision differently
  - l. My students will benefit from me undertaking the program
  - m. I would recommend the program to my colleagues

Overall feedback was very positive as the summary of results in Table 4.1 shows.

**Table 4.1:**  
*Summary of quantitative findings from program evaluation*

Item	Scale used	Mean score
Participants overall experience in the program	Seven-point Likert scale	6.2
Average of 13 specific items concerning the program	Five-point Likert scale	4.5

In addition to analysing the quantitative items, a number of qualitative questions were asked including:

- What is one aspect of the program that you consider should be changed?
- What is one aspect of the program that you consider should remain the same?
- In your opinion, what other improvements to the program could be made to make the program more effective?
- Have you any other comments or suggestions you would like to make that might assist us in improving the effectiveness of the program in the future?

A selection of qualitative feedback representative of participants' comments included:

I liked the pace and composition. It made me reflect on the use of on-line learning and that is important for us. It would also be interesting to see what happens based on each group of supervisors.

I learnt a lot from the discussion board and it confirmed my supervision was on par or up to the mark.

The moderator's prompt responses are crucial to motivation in an online program like this one.

The general structure, length and depth of the program (should remain the same).

Some of the participants made some interesting observations based on their practice. It would be great if they could expand on these. I think (name removed) is considering developing more case studies based on the participants' experience for the journal. That should help continue the conversation.

I really enjoyed the program and thought it was about the right length for busy people.

## Discussion

Busy HDR supervisors often find it difficult to commit to a one-day workshop and such a training design is problematic for creating opportunities for self reflection. The situation is a paradox when one considers the known importance of self knowledge and self reflection if professional practice and leadership is to be improved (Dubrin, Dalglish & Miller 2006).

HDR supervisors are the research leaders in any research environment. Their research supervisory style (and their effectiveness as a research supervisor) will have a significant impact on HDR candidate success and on the research environment generally. Segal and Horne (1997, p56), when considering the issue of leadership made the following comment:

The pursuit of self-knowledge is the work of a developed personality and a characteristic of an enlightened leader. Self-understanding is the most secure bed-rock on which to shape one's life. Nothing is more important in conditions of turbulence and change than a secure sense of self. Self-understanding also provides a basis for understanding others – it is difficult to be conscious of another's need, motivation, and processes without first having awareness of one's own.

HDR supervisor professional development programs therefore need to offer supervisors the opportunity for self-knowledge and self-reflection if HDR supervisors are to be more effective and embrace their role as research leaders. Self-knowledge and self-reflection are foundations of the educational philosophies of the reflective practitioner, practitioner investigation and community of practice.

The results of evaluation demonstrated that the structure and design of the program was appropriate for busy HDR supervisors. Overwhelmingly, the HDR supervisors found that the program gave them opportunities to self reflect on their supervisory style, assisted them to conceptualise supervision differently, will assist them to supervise more effectively in the future and will be of ultimate benefit to the HDR candidates under supervision. While the perceptions of participants indicated that the program would translate into better supervision practice, no attempts have yet been made to evaluate if supervisory practice as been improved as a result of the program.

Those who attempt to study and measure social and organisational issues, often reduce difficult concepts to constructs in order to investigate and research them. HDR supervisory styles have been reduced to the four constructs outlined in this chapter because as researchers we are not able to directly observe what good supervisory practice is. That is, HDR supervisory practice does not exist as a single observable dimension of behaviour but rather reflects a variety of behaviours, skills, attitudes and beliefs. Constructs are therefore theoretical and latent (not visible or apparent) rather than concrete and observable.

Having now identified four theoretical constructs and introduced these constructs to supervisors as a means to enable them to reflect on their own supervisory styles and improve their practice, the next step in further growing the professional development program will be to operationalise these constructs and measure them.

Further research is therefore focusing on the development and testing for reliability and validity of a web-based self-diagnostic tool and taxonomy for HDR supervisors to assist them to become more self aware of their operational supervisory style. It is proposed to also develop an intensity index that will measure the intensity of the supervisor's dominant style and therefore the probable difficulty for a supervisor to move their style to a more balanced approach to supervision. Such a diagnostic instrument could be used as a pre- and post-test for the professional development program and for matching HDR supervisors and candidates.

## Conclusion

This chapter has briefly reviewed some of the international HDR literature about what constitutes good HDR supervision. A constructual framework of four constructs of good HDR supervision were developed and then used to form the basis of an on-line HDR supervisor professional development program. The four constructs were good pedagogy, good administration and project management, good contribution to knowledge, and good relationships.

While not every supervisor will be effective in each of the constructs, the program provides a method of allowing supervisors to be exposed to perhaps different ways of conceptualising supervisory practice. Theoretically, model supervisors are ones who can form good relationships with candidates, help the candidate to administer and project manage the thesis to timely completion, make a contribution to knowledge and teach students how to do a doctorate.

Building on the educational philosophies of the reflective practitioner, practitioner investigation and community of practice, an eight module on-line professional development program for HDR supervisors was developed and piloted. Evaluation of the program demonstrated that the HDR supervisor participants started to self reflect on their supervisory style, conceptualise supervision differently and supervise more effectively in future. The program will ultimately benefit the HDR candidates under supervision.

The professional development program has been delivered several times and research is continuing on developing and testing for reliability and validity of a web-based self-diagnostic tool and taxonomy for HDR supervisors to assist them to become more self aware of their operational supervisory style. Such a diagnostic instrument could be used as a pre- and post-test for the professional development program and for the matching of HDR supervisors and candidates.

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# CHAPTER 5

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## Developing Research Culture— Overcoming Regional and Historical Obstacles

*Teresa Marchant*

### **Abstract**

This chapter commences with an overview of the role of research in universities and then hones in on the specific details of the current research quality context in Australia. One question the chapter addresses is how research culture develops in universities, or their sub-units, where there is no tradition of research. Obstacles to developing a research culture come in many forms and are reviewed. More important, solutions are identified and ideas given on how culture develops. Southern Cross University (SCU) is discussed as an example of a successful regional research institution, with reference to the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA). The burgeoning interest in evidence-based-practice in the professions is introduced as an example of how research culture is needed in universities to further support graduates in their subsequent professional life.

### **Key words**

Australia, organisation culture, research quality frameworks, evidence-based-practice

### **Introduction**

What is research? Debating this question could fill the whole chapter. As soon as one starts to pin it down with a brief definition, voices can be raised in protest. Given that this book is about professional doctorates at SCU the definition adopted in this chapter loosely relates to that which research higher degree students are taught in business and management, which is to generate new knowledge by systematically and rigorously collecting and analysing information about a topic of interest and documenting the outcomes for others to read.

Should all universities do research? Many would argue that research, when defined as generating new knowledge is part of what distinguishes a university from a lesser teaching institution. For example, Shamai and Kifir (2002, p398) state that any higher education institution worthy of its name must promulgate research and a research culture that preserves its 'formal and substantive right to be the gatekeeper'. On the other hand, some contributors to recent debate in Australia argue that we have too many universities, some of whose research output is very low and that the country can not sustain research across them all (Lloyd 2009). Others argue that so long

as a university does some research, concentrating in areas of strength, then that is an acceptable situation (Universities Australia 2008). As we shall see there are some flaws in this argument since it looks at the university as a whole and it leaves some academic staff 'out in the cold' when it comes to gaining support for their research activities if they are not part of the select few on whom the university decides to concentrate. Practical ideas generated by the current debate in Australia are underpinned by various models of how research is organised within universities. Later in the chapter, SCU is examined as an illustration of how these models of research work and what the implications are.

## **Current state of play—research quality measurement by government**

A wave of reform in the 1980s and 1990s saw several institutions in Australia upgraded from teachers colleges, institutes of technology, or colleges of advanced education to university status. SCU's development in this regard has been chronicled in an earlier chapter. With this upgrade came the need to establish research in some institutions for the first time. The 1990s saw a concerted effort to upgrade staff qualifications and introduce research activity for new universities, with many success stories. Research cultures may be embedded in some institutions, and established or emerging in others, with the latter requiring a ten year evolutionary period (Ebbutt 2002).

In more recent times, as in the UK, Australian universities' research performance has been subject to increasing scrutiny and measurement. In May 2004 the then Howard government introduced the Research Quality Framework (RQF) to measure the value of taxpayer funded research, assess its impact in academe and the wider community, evaluate postgraduate research training quality and examine access issues. With the subsequent change of federal government, a new system was announced in February 2008, labelled Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA). Differences exist between the RQF and ERA but for the purpose of this chapter the main point is that measuring research quality and quantity is firmly on the agenda. The last five years have seen a burgeoning of centralised research administration positions to ensure compliance with government frameworks. Further, university research performance is now a matter for global comparison (Sebalj & Holbrook 2009).

Although the underlying intent may be that research is still understood as the process of creating new knowledge, research is defined differently by governments when they attempt to measure quality. By default, research comes to be known as a process whereby individuals compete for selective grant funding, preferably in collaboration with others inside and outside the institution, and where the results of the work funded by the grants are published in journals ranked and deemed acceptable by government. This leaves many academics who are indeed research active outside of the new, formal, recognised research agenda. Similar processes have been documented in the UK as a result of that country's REA (Deem & Lucas 2007). There are a range of models for how research is organised and structured in universities, some of which are more inclusive than others. We will turn to these models next.

## **Structure of research**

The 'ideal' structure and culture for research is that it permeates academic work. As Pratt, Margaritis and Coy (1999, p44) describe it:

Academics who are researching at the leading edge of their disciplines and are able to draw on this knowledge in their teaching. Graduate teaching programmes become a driving force for the development of the departments and the graduate students themselves help in developing new

knowledge and exploring the frontiers of the discipline alongside their supervisors. Graduate students, a thriving research programme, and publications in the recognised academic and professional journals and conferences are hallmarks of successful university faculties.

Note however this description only relates to postgraduate students and does not address undergraduate education and the role of research there. Further, universities, faculties or schools do not always conform to this ideal type. In practice, at least five different models can be observed:

*Independent researchers*—there is no central research core in the unit and research is carried out by a few individuals, usually operating alone with little or no budgetary support.

*Stars*—Most or all research is carried out by a very small number of ‘star’ performers. In this model research is limited to the scope and range of the stars’ interests.

*Independent centralised model*—a core group of academics carry out most of the research with other staff on the periphery and still others acting independently, but still no majority of research active staff.

*Collaborative centralised*—a core group of skilled academics promote research activity and gather others into the process, creating a critical mass at the central core.

*Multi-core*—several collaborative centralised groups can be found across the university (Shamai & Kfir 2002).

It can be seen that of the five models only the last two approach the ideal type outlined by Pratt et al (1999). Why then is it that despite tacit acceptance that university staff should do research and that the mission of a university includes research, some academic staff, schools or faculties are not research active or less research active than others? This question is addressed in the next section.

## Obstacles to research

The literature reports a range of studies into obstacles to universities’ research performance and these have been summarised in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1:**

*Classification of obstacles to staff research*

General	Details	Sources
Strategic issues	• a university mission that emphasises applied scholarship	Hermanson 2008
	• university as a whole is struggling to remain viable	Shamai and Kfir 2002
Culture and values	• a teaching focused culture	Shamai and Kfir 2002
	• curricular development and delivery seem as more critical	Brotherton 1998
	• disciplines with a vocational orientation	Thomas and Harris 2000
	• resentment of staff who were not there for their students because they were researching	Jooton and McGhee 2003
Limited institutional resources	• lack of staff whose research is of sufficient standard to succeed in top ranked journals	Hermanson 2008

General	Details	Sources
Lack of general research skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• legacy staff from earlier teaching institutions who were not required or developed to do research</li> </ul>	Deem and Lucas 2007
Lack of specific individual skills and expertise in 'playing the research game'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of skills in interdisciplinary research including holistic thinking, creativity, intercultural competence and communication</li> <li>• no grant writing skills or confidence</li> <li>• no skills to manage projects, staff and budgets once funding is obtained</li> <li>• lack of skills and confidence in writing for ranked journals</li> <li>• lack of commitment to persist with drafting, redrafting, receiving rejections and revising papers for journals</li> </ul>	Deem and Lucas 2007  Hermanson 2008  Manathunga 2006  Kamler 2008
No specific research budget or funding		Shamai and Kfir 2002
Workloads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high and exhausting teaching loads</li> <li>• high administrative demands</li> <li>• lack of time</li> </ul>	Deem and Lucas 2007  Tynan and Garbett 2007
Industrial arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff on casual, temporary, short term contracts for teaching-only duties</li> </ul>	Tynan and Garbett 2007

Overall, Table 5.1 suggests a common theme of a lack of resources at individual, group and organisation level, combined with a culture of intensive teaching that runs counter to productive research. In theory, the solutions to improving research activity and culture include addressing the obstacles outlined in Table 5.1, although removing obstacles is not necessarily the same as encouraging research and increasing output. Table 5.2 shows ideas for improving research performance (not necessarily drawn from the same literature or research studies) and suggests a broader range of interventions. It can be seen that most of the recommendations fall under the ambit of standard management practices required to bring about change in an organisation.

**Table 5.2:***Developing research and a research culture*

High level focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• governments that recognise the regional mission of local universities</li> <li>• distinctive culture that embraces research as part of the academic's role</li> <li>• the research culture is an item on important committee agendas</li> <li>• strategic alignment at all levels of the university</li> <li>• clear goals</li> <li>• participative governance</li> </ul>
Specialised research leadership and administration unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support from the Vice Chancellor, and a head of research with high status and power</li> <li>• a proactive and supportive research division or office that does more than ensure compliance</li> <li>• a centralised research office, promoting research clusters on which resources are expended</li> <li>• designated research positions</li> <li>• streamlined administrative procedures that make it easier to comply with government measurement and accounting frameworks</li> </ul>
Local or sub-unit factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong leadership, with research and management skills</li> <li>• decentralised organisations that enable the school or faculty to direct resources to research</li> </ul>
Human resource management policy, procedure and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a raft of human resource management and development including retraining or replacing original teaching staff with research focused academics through recruitment</li> <li>• individual and organisation performance indicators focused on research</li> <li>• rewards and value given to research</li> <li>• developing students to become research staff</li> <li>• specific assistance with grant applications and publications (including workshops)</li> <li>• providing internal, unattached or open research funding</li> <li>• reducing teaching and administrative workloads</li> <li>• collegiality, networks and informal seminars and research method sessions</li> <li>• mentoring</li> <li>• team research projects</li> <li>• frequent communication</li> <li>• positive group atmosphere</li> </ul>

(Adapted from Balint et al 1994; Bazeley 1994; Bland & Ruffin 1992 in Pratt et al 1999; Deem & Lucas 2007; Dodgson 2009; Hazelkorn 2004; Jooton & McGhee 2003; Pratt et al 1999; Shamai & Kfir 2002; Sibley 1995; Tynan & Garbett 2007)

## Culture change

What Table 5.2 doesn't capture is the more subtle culture change that is required. Culture reflects the personality of each university and distinguishes one from another. Crucially, it is a system of *widely shared* and *strongly held* values (Robbins et al 2008). Consequently, for a university, faculty or school to claim a strong research culture, research must be valued by a majority of its members. Culture serves many purposes including socialising new staff and guiding day-to-day activities. It influences universities' ability to implement strategy and deliver outcomes. Culture has received considerably more attention in recent years, as organisations gradually realise that changing culture is more significant (and more difficult) than changing structure. It is easy to restructure the organisation chart but hard to reconfigure the hearts, minds and values of individuals in the chart's boxes (Robbins et al 2008).

Culture originates from the university's founders and thus institutions with a long history of research already have an advantage. Newer universities that developed from teaching colleges or the like need to change an earlier culture (such as a teaching focus) to a new research-orientated culture. At the same time, since culture is about shared values they can not be imposed by top-down decree and will be resisted if they challenge historical, widely-held assumptions (such as academic freedom or student service). Existing culture is maintained and transmitted by organisation practices that keep it alive such as human resource policy, particularly recruitment, socialisation and performance management, along with leadership (Robbins et al 2008).

Borrowing from the transformational theory of leadership (Burns in Dubrin, Dalglish & Miller 2006), creating or reinforcing a research culture requires leaders who can influence academics towards the goal of creating and disseminating new knowledge. Transformational leaders demonstrate four specific behaviours: *idealised influence* by being role models of successful research. They develop, collegially in the case of universities, a shared vision about what a successful research school, faculty or university looks like and make sure they and others can articulate this vision to create *inspirational motivation*. Transformational research leaders also provide *intellectual stimulation* that allows and encourages questioning of the status quo. Finally they provide *individualised consideration* that meets each academic 'where they are' vis-à-vis research and provide tailored understanding, support or autonomy depending on that individual's particular needs and attitudes.

## The individual's perspective

Academics may feel pressured to do research in the new quality measurement environment and some find it hard to meet the new standards. For example:

I expect research standards to rise gradually, but I can't believe how abruptly the standards have changed here. It's a totally different set of expectations than when I was hired a few years ago, which doesn't seem fair. Now they are demanding publications in the top X journals for tenure and promotion, but few faculty members here have ever published at that level. I don't even think we have the resources to be competitive at the top X journal level (Hermanson 2008, p54).

However, many academics offer reasons for wanting to engage in research going well beyond pressure to enhance their resumes with entries that show compliance with the latest government quality framework. For example, Thomas and Harris (2000) found that staff gave the following reasons:

- their own personal development
- the intrinsic rewards of research including intellectual stimulation and job satisfaction

- making sure their knowledge was up-to-date for teaching
- credibility in front of students
- commercial potential of research.

## **Trends—the role of research and evidence-based practice in the professions**

Evidence-based practice for professionals in industry is another reason to encourage research in academe. Evidence-based practice is an emerging approach that promotes collecting, interpreting and integrating valid, user-reported, professional-observed and research-derived evidence, moderated by user needs and preferences in order to improve the quality of professional decisions and judgements (Brice et al 2005 in Greenwood & Cleave 2008). Research within the professions produces applied knowledge that is fundamental to evidence-based practice (Ebbutt 2002).

For example there is a great deal of energy going into encouraging UK school teachers to carry out research. (Worrall 2004, p 137), along with librarians (Greenwood & Cleave 2008; Todd 2008), nurses (Hill, Lomas & MacGregor 2003), physicians (Zemlo et al 2000), dietitians (Vaughn 2003) and other health professionals. In management, Jeffrey Pfeffer of Harvard and Robert Sutton of Stanford are strong proponents of evidence-based practice (Pfeffer & Sutton 2006). The relevance of this emerging approach is that it adds pressure to academics to know, understand and carry out research as well as passing this on to their students, in a way that may not typically characterise vocational or applied disciplines such as management and business.

## **Application at Southern Cross University**

For size, SCU is the number one university in Australia for research income from Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) that are applied, industry focused organisations, actively participating in nine CRCs (SCU 2008). Despite the fact that smaller organisations are at a definite disadvantage (Shamai & Kfir 2002), SCU has been successful by focusing on core strengths across a range of science and social science designated areas of research interest around sustainability and innovation, in partnership with many organisations. These interests fit with the university's location in a part of the country that embraces 'alternative' values whilst at the same time ensuring that its work has global significance. The university is well placed in that interest in sustainability may have been a confined to the 'alternative' individuals who flocked to the Northern Rivers of New South Wales over the preceding years, but it is now an issue of international significance.

The university has a straightforward, practical and realistic research and research training management plan. Reviewing the SCU 2007 Research Report it becomes obvious that the more successful research areas of the university work in teams, collaborate with other organisations and institutions and channel their energies (and those of their students) into key designated areas of research strength (DAORS).

Regarding the DBA, the Graduate College of Management has a DAORS in change innovation and organisational development, and as demonstrated in an earlier chapter, the largest percentage of candidates' research falls into this category. The university has a policy of requiring that Higher Degree Research students enrol in an existing DOARS and present their research to an annual off-campus DAORS meeting, which in the case of the DBA takes the form of twice yearly doctoral symposia.

These requirements can be seen as essential first steps in inculcating DBA candidates with some of the norms and processes of the 'scientific community' (Neuman 2000, p9), which should stand

them in good stead in later academic or professional life where they are required to conduct and present research. This is just part of the process and the DBA program also has a staff member designated to work with students and supervisors to achieve publications in ERA ranked journals, with some success. There is further scope for DBA projects to be linked to a larger collective effort on the part of academics to increase critical mass and capitalise on the synergies such collaboration generates.

Although the university's strategy of focusing on research strengths has been successful, SCU does suffer from some of the side effects of such an approach. Though it adopts the recommended multi-core model of research structure (Shamai & Kfir 2002) discussed above, one problem is that not all schools or faculties have a core (for example a CRC) and thus research opportunities are limited for some staff.

In a survey of SCU, staff O'Reilly and Rendall (2007) found that most (around seventy percent) wanted to be research active, but some found teaching workloads, administrative duties and lack of time were major obstacles. O'Reilly and Rendall also found there was limited evidence of undergraduate students being taught to develop research skills, which reinforces a point made earlier that the ideal type of successful university faculties (Pratt et al 1999) may be more applicable to postgraduate students and even then is far from universal. Based on the literature reviewed in Table 5.1 it would seem that SCU is fairly typical in the obstacles faced.

## Possible future directions

Research focus is likely to increase as the new Australian government ERA takes force. Some academics will be better placed than others to capitalise on it. Whether voluntarily or otherwise, some academics will continue to work in teaching only positions, whether these positions are designated as such or not. Eventually, as the current cohort retires they are likely to be replaced with research-qualified staff. However, unless work intensification and casualisation of the Australian academic workforce is significantly reduced, there will still be a cohort of academics in certain institutions who do not have the time or opportunity to be research active. Research activity in universities is likely to further coalesce around the core or multi-core model. The demand for management and business graduates who can use and 'do' research will increase and thus the DBA and other professional doctorates will retain their relevance and significance.

## Conclusion

Research in the form of creating new knowledge is central to the mission of universities. The Australian government, by introducing quality assessment processes, has created a strong focus on research, arguably transforming it into a bureaucratic compliance process as much as a quest for new knowledge. Research is structured in different ways within institutions, with an inclusive, multi-core model seen as preferable. One advantage of this model is that it creates the critical mass necessary to compete on the national and international stage and is therefore most suitable for the government's agenda. Universities that have traditionally been more teaching-focused face a range of obstacles including lack of resources, and of embedded research culture. Effective leaders can transform universities and sub-units by valuing and rewarding research and utilising a range of human resource management strategies to develop and encourage academics' research. SCU is a relatively small, regional and new university but it has done well to capitalise on the region's strengths and interests to conduct applied research of regional and international relevance, with industry partners. Evidence-based practice is an emerging approach in the professions that makes the SCU DBA and other research focused postgraduate programs of particular relevance.

## Author Profile

Teresa Marchant is a lecturer and coordinator of doctoral research publications in the Graduate College of Management, Southern Cross University, with 12 years experience in higher education. Following a career with IBM and in the public sector including in workplace relations, she was the first to graduate with a PhD from the (then) department of Human Resource Management and Employment Relations at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research on the effects of redundancy on managers' careers attracted extensive media coverage. More recently she has been in demand developing scholarly materials in public sector management and is currently researching links between human resource development, the skills shortage in the global financial crisis, women in management and higher education.

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# PART 2

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## Discipline Trends and Themes in Contemporary Professional Doctorate Research



# CHAPTER 6

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## Doctoral Research in Business and Management

*Peter Miller*

### **Abstract**

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programs offered by Australian universities are diverse in terms of both curriculum and structure. With a recent change in direction for many PhD programs in Australia from principally a generic degree to specific and named degrees, and a explosion of professional doctorate awards, there exists confusion in the discipline of doctorates in Australia. This chapter charts the development of the Southern Cross University (SCU) DBA and overviews the research undertaken in the widely defined field of business and management. It then identifies the dominant type of sub-disciplinary research undertaken in the program since its establishment in 1996. Examining the programs outputs over the last five years, the chapter identifies likely trends for future research in the DBA. Discussion on the purported differences between the DBA and the PhD in the business and management discipline leads to the conclusion that it may be time for Australian universities to consider establishing a new advanced higher research degree that clearly differentiates university research of a very high standard from other research.

### **Key words**

Professional doctorate, PhD, research higher degree, business, management

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to overview the research undertaken in the widely defined field of business and management through the SCU DBA. DBA programs offered by Australian Universities are diverse in terms of both curriculum and structure. The SCU DBA is classified by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as a doctoral research degree. Accordingly, candidates undertake a major and rigorous research project that culminates in a significant thesis similar to that completed for a PhD. The chapter overviews the emergence of the Southern Cross DBA and describes the result of research undertaken into disciplinary and topic areas for over 230 successfully completed theses in the program since its establishment. It also identifies current trends in research in the program over the last five years.

## The emergence of the DBA as a professional doctorate

DBA programs emerged in America in the 1970s and 1980s and then in the United Kingdom from the early 1990s. According to Sarros, Willis and Hardie (2004), the first university to offer the DBA in Australia was Victoria University of Technology in 1993. The SCU DBA was established in 1996 and was among the first developed. Presently, the universities in Australia listed in Table 6.1 offer a DBA program.

**Table 6.1:**  
*Universities in Australia that offer DBA programs*

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Canberra University
Central Queensland University
Charles Darwin University
Charles Sturt University
Curtin University of Technology
Deakin University
Gibran Business School South Australia
Macquarie University
Monash University
Murdoch University
University of Newcastle
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Southern Cross University
Swinburne University of Technology
University of Western Australia
Victoria University
University of South Australia
University of Southern Queensland
University of Wollongong

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As was outlined in the introduction, comparisons between DBA programs are difficult as DBA programs offered by Australian Universities are diverse in terms of both curriculum and structure. Most Australian DBA programs are also not considered to be research degrees as the coursework component of these degrees are much higher.

The SCU Business faculty decided to first develop a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program in 1996 under the guidance of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Meredith.

The need for a professional Doctorate such as a DBA was emphasised in a discussion paper prepared for Australia’s Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Research) that identified the extent and range of professional Doctorate programs available in Australia at universities during the early 1990s. Twenty-two Australian universities at the time were awarding professional doctorates and of

the remaining fifteen universities responding to the survey, nine indicated that they were in the process of formulating policies to introduce these awards. Support for professional Doctorates including a DBA was stated in the following terms:

- To provide extended and advanced training in a professional field with projects and investigations applied in nature and oriented to practice in the professions and where the setting might be industry-based rather than campus-based.
- DBA programs serve different consumer markets to PhD Awards keeping in mind that at the time, Australia had several thousand executive managers with a completed course work Master Degree (including MBA) that would not qualify for admission to candidature in PhD programs.
- There was an immediate demand for a DBA in the field of management consulting and for senior executives within public and private sector entities who had an “Internal Consultant” role within their organisations.
- Many senior personnel who had completed a Master Degree that had complemented their first Degree with a broad program of course units and often a minor project and these executives now wished to focus specifically on areas of important for Australia and Asia with the opportunity of converting knowledge gained through advanced course units with the production of publishable research papers and a thesis.
- DBA would provide qualified candidates with a credible terminal qualification – the DBA would have relevance for senior executives in private and public sectors and also would have relevance in educational institutions.
- Through the proposed specialist program in key cities in South East Asia, Southern Cross University had the opportunity of meeting the demand for a terminal Award at Doctoral level with hundreds of senior public and private sector graduates who would see the DBA as an attractive terminal qualification.
- In general terms, the DBA would meet a need in the field of business and related professional areas by providing post-graduate opportunities for candidates with appropriate background experience, providing extended and advanced training in professional fields associated with the faculty of business and computing, and furthering relationships between Southern Cross University and the Business and Professional communities to their mutual advantage.

## Entry requirements

Erwee (2004) reviewed the entry requirements for DBA programs across Australia and found that generally, the entry requirement consisted of an MBA or equivalent professional business qualification with a satisfactory grade point average. Little has changed for entry requirements over the years but generally, in addition to qualifications, most universities require the applicant to have some years of experience as a manager or professional to ensure that only experienced individuals are admitted to the program. The current structure for the SCU DBA program is shown in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2:**  
*DBA program structure*

4 x	Postgraduate units relevant to the proposed research project
2 x	Research methods units (Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods) <i>Doctoral supervisors are appointed at the near completion of the units above</i>
1 x	Professional Doctorate Research Proposal (2 unit equivalent)
1 x	Thesis units (16 unit equivalent)
<b>Total 24 units</b>	

Approximately 95% of DBA applicants are granted advanced standing for the four postgraduate units. The rules of the program provides that, where applicants have successfully completed Masters level units at another university, provided there is equivalence to the non-thesis units, the applicant may be awarded advanced standing for the non-thesis units. Accordingly, the majority of candidates commence their candidature at the research methods units stage where they receive training in research design and research methodologies in preparation for undertaking the research project.

The double weighted research proposal unit is designed to guide candidates through a structured developmental process, under the supervision of an experienced doctoral supervisor, whereby candidates undertake a preliminary literature review to enable them to survey the state of play in the literature around their proposed research topic and then to complete a formal research proposal.

## Differences between the DBA and PhD

Since the inception of DBA programs globally, much has been written to distinguish the DBA from the traditional PhD. However, such comparisons are, in my view, problematic as PhD programs, like DBA programs, are different across the globe and subject to wide variations in their nature and structure. For example, the typical American PhD includes significant components of coursework and often culminates in a dissertation rather than a thesis. The traditional English (and Australian) model for a PhD does not normally include course work and usually amounts to a thesis only, on a very specific topic.

There is also a recent trend where PhDs are moving away from a generalist degree (and the generalist nomenclature of PhD). Many universities are awarding PhDs that include specific nomenclature. For example, the University of Canberra has a Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Science and a Doctor of Philosophy in Commerce. Also, as was indicated earlier, like PhD programs, comparisons between DBA programs are difficult as DBA programs offered by Australian universities are diverse in terms of both curriculum and structure, further complicating comparisons. Harvard (2009) attempts to find a difference in the DBA and PhD in the following way, as shown in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3:***Apparent contrast between DBA and PhD at Harvard***DBA: Power in Practice**

Combining academic rigor and managerial relevance, the DBA program provides students with the flexibility to apply a broad range of disciplines and research methods to their chosen area of study. In addition, students benefit from the wide range of faculty expertise in management fields, such as accounting and marketing, and multiple opportunities to actively pursue field-based research.

**PhD: Disciplinary and Management Expertise**

The PhD programs are offered jointly by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) and Harvard Business School. They combine the disciplinary expertise of a GSAS department (eg Economics, Psychology) with the management expertise of HBS. As a result, students build a strong foundation in a particular discipline and then apply those methods and approaches to their research on relevant managerial problems.

While the headings for the descriptions of the two awards endeavour to promote a ‘practice’ element for the DBA, in reality, the descriptors for both are difficult to separate and do not distinguish one from the other. Accordingly, there is the ‘theory of perceived differences’ between PhD and DBA programs but the ‘actual differences’ for at least some DBA programs classified as research degrees, seem to be negligible.

Perry and Cavaye (2002) provided the rationale for the differences between DBAs and PhDs and listed three major distinctions between them in the business/management discipline. These were:

- qualifications and knowledge on entry into the program
- focus of the program
- the nature of the doctoral report.

As outlined earlier in this chapter, entry into a DBA usually requires an MBA or equivalent, as well as significant management and/or professional experience. PhDs usually require applicants to have considerable research experience, usually a first class honours or a research masters degree.

This differentiation has not changed and remains a distinct difference between the DBA and PhD. The SCU DBA provides the research training for candidates as course work units in the early part of the award. This research training brings DBA candidates to a rigorous research standard prior to them undertaking their research project and thesis.

The second difference identified by Perry and Cavaye (2002) between a DBA and a PhD was the focus of the program. The DBA was said to be a professional doctorate for *managers or management professionals*, focusing on an executive’s development and his or her practice, while the PhD was primarily for academics. While such a difference may have been the intention on establishing the SCU DBA, in practice DBA research projects are very similar if not identical in nature to the research projects undertaken by PhD candidates in the business and management discipline. Both degrees require a ‘contribution to knowledge’ and projects are inherently applied in nature compared to the more theoretical thesis undertaken in PhD programs in other non business or management disciplines.

The third difference was said to focus around the nature of the doctoral report itself, with the DBA thesis perceived as shorter than a PhD in length and focused on a management problem rather than the literature. The author’s experience as a member of both PhD and DBA examination committees over many years and as a supervisor of candidates for both awards does not support

such a proposition. According to Phillips and Pugh (1994), a PhD is normally about 50,000 to 60,000 words in length with a maximum length of 100,000 words. A survey of SCU DBA theses found that the average length was around 60,000 to 70,000 words with the occasional thesis being up to 90,000. As both DBAs and PhDs can be longer or shorter than the recommended word length, any difference in length does not serve as a distinguishing feature.

The nature of the thesis is also no longer a point of difference. Business and management programs at all levels by necessity must have a theory-practice link otherwise the business and management faculty will not be useful to the stakeholders it claims to serve. In summary, Table 6.4 describes the similarities and differences between the SCU DBA and PhD (for business and management only).

**Table 6.4:**

*Differences and similarities between the SCU DBA and PhD in business and management*

	<b>DBA</b>	<b>PhD</b>
<b>Similarities</b>		
Contribution to knowledge	Yes— required as one of the examination criteria	Yes—required as one of the examination criteria
Research project (thesis)	Rigorous	Rigorous
Supervisor	Doctorally qualified senior academic	Doctorally qualified senior academic
Focus	Usually on applied business issues/problems in the field	Usually on applied business issues/problems in the field
Thesis word length	In the range of 60,000–90,000 wds	In the range of 60,000–90,000 wds
Examination	2 external examiners moving to 3 examiners as in PhD program	3 examiners 2 of which must be external to the university
Governance	Soon to be governed under the Higher Degree Committee (Research)	Governed under the Higher Degree Committee (Research)
<b>Differences</b>		
Entry requirements	MBA degree/management experience	Research experience usually Honours or equivalent
Funding	Fee paying	Funded under the government's Research Training Scheme (RTS)

As shown in Table 6.4, the only significant difference, other than the funding source, is the entry requirements for the two awards, the DBA requiring a Masters degree or equivalent and the PhD requiring research experience, usually first class honours or equivalent. Professor Peter Baverstock, former Pro Vice Chancellor of Research at SCU, often went to great lengths to ensure 'that the DBA at SCU is equivalent in standing of the PhD' and was at the forefront with the then Director of the DBA program, Associate Professor Peter Miller in introducing equivalent processes (for example recommending that the DBA adopt the practice of three examiners at least two of whom are external) to ensure that there was no perceived quality or rigour differences between the two awards (pers. comm. 2007).

## Nature and motivation of candidates

The nature and motivation of candidates who wish to undertake a DBA are as diverse as the nature of the topics under research. However, a number of categories of candidates can be distilled and these are discussed briefly below. There also appears to be similarities in the applicants attracted to DBAs and PhDs in the business and management discipline. Traditionally, applicants for business and management related PhDs are not directly from undergraduate awards, as is the case in the hard sciences. Usually, applicants apply to study part-time and not full-time as they are mid level executives working in industry. PhD applicants are much more likely to already have had some business or professional experience and therefore, are similar to DBA applicants, who similarly have business or professional experience and bring with them empirical understanding of organisations and of business issues.

As research classified DBAs like the SCU program are afforded the same level of recognition by the federal government in Australia, and other universities as has been conferred to the PhD in the business and management discipline, the SCU DBA is increasingly being considered as an alternative to the PhD as a doctoral and research training award. Consequently, many of the candidates enrolling in the DBA are existing academics from other Australian and overseas universities. They are mature academics being pressured to obtain their doctoral qualification or are early career academics who have entered academe from industry and are looking for a relevant research degree that will be acceptable to their institution as a research doctorate for employment and promotion reasons.

A further high percentage of candidates are consultants from the private and public sectors who are looking to test models they have developed in their practice and that they are using in industry. Alternatively, the consultants are seeking to increase their own personal credibility with a doctoral qualification that they consider will increase the marketability of their skills and knowledge to better compete in a very competitive market place.

However, like the PhD in business and management, the majority of applicants are typically either interested in progressing their understanding of complex management issues or have a plan to perhaps move into academia when they burn out, have achieved all they wish to in their professional role or wish to semi-retire. SCU's large distance education program in Australia and the personalised on-campus program, attract students from around the world from diverse backgrounds and enables candidates to meet their objectives, no matter what the objectives might be.

Graduates are successful professionals who report a high level of satisfaction with their study experience. The DBA is rated along with the other GCM courses as five stars for getting a job and rated highly for graduate satisfaction (Good Universities Guide Postgraduate Guide 2009) and the DBA is consistently rated in the top three Australian universities for overall satisfaction in research experience (Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire 2006).

## Nature of research and research topics

The research undertaken in the SCU DBA program is methodologically diverse ranging from ethnography and grounded theory to traditional surveys and structural equation modelling. The emerging research designs in the DBA program were discussed in Chapter 3.

The topics under study are equally diverse. Research undertaken on over 230 completed theses from the SCU DBA program is discussed here. For convenience, the areas of study have been

combined and categorised into 13 sub-disciplinary areas. The percentage of theses undertaken in each sub-disciplinary area is shown in Table 6.5.

**Table 6.5:**  
*Topic areas and percentage of candidates researching in the area*

Sub-disciplinary area	% of candidates undertaking projects in this area
Organisational development and behaviour	17.0
Human resources and employment relations	13.0
Sales and marketing	12.0
Entrepreneurship, innovation and new venture creation	10.0
Strategic management	9.0
Small business management	7.0
MIS and ecommerce	7.0
Quality management	6.0
International and comparative management	5.0
Knowledge management	5.0
Accounting and finance	5.0
Technology management	3.0
Project management	1.0

As can be seen from Table 6.5, the areas of research are diverse but dominated by projects in the related fields of human resources and organisational development and behaviour. Sales and marketing is the next significant area of research followed by entrepreneurship, innovation and new venture creation.

One can only speculate why the fields of human resources and organisational development and behaviour are in such demand. Perhaps it is due to the candidate’s own experience related to people and organisational issues. Typically, mid-level executives spend most of their time on people issues or bringing about needed change and are therefore interested in progressing their understanding of complex management issues around change and leadership.

### Trends and possible future directions

An analysis of theses completed over the last five years in the SCU program was undertaken to identify the sub-disciplines where the majority of research was being pursued and to indicate any possible trends in contemporary research efforts. The sub-disciplines dominating the research agenda over this period included:

- Human resources and employment relations
- International and comparative management
- MIS and ecommerce
- Strategic management.

Topics that might be considered as ‘hot’ research areas were:

- Leadership
- Change in organisations.

While this chapter concentrates on the SCU DBA program, it is worth mentioning that there appears to be a significant change in the direction Australian universities are heading in regard to offering doctoral programs generally. For example, there is an increasing number and variety of professional doctorates being offered by universities and traditional PhDs are being re-branded to include speciality research areas designated on testamurs in the title of the award, with one example being the Doctor of Philosophy (Agriculture). Generalist nomenclature at the doctoral level, particularly for the PhD, is being overtaken by specifically named PhD awards, bringing about confusion as to what both PhD and professional doctorates are and claim to be.

As discussed in this chapter, the issue is further confused by many professional doctorates including the SCU DBA having been classified by the federal government in Australia as research degrees. The need for universities to drive the government’s Research Training Scheme (RTS) is at the core of the change in direction as universities endeavour to include professional doctorate completions (where the degree is classified by the government as a research degree) and attract candidates to specific PhD programs, as an input into their RTS formula for performance reasons.

Overall, it would seem that the meaning and value of the PhD vis-à-vis the professional doctorate is being confused to the point that any real distinction is becoming meaningless. Perhaps, it is time for Australian universities to consider establishing a new, advanced higher research degree that clearly differentiates university research of a very high standard from other research higher degrees. Such is the case in other countries including the UK, Ireland, and some Scandinavian countries. These countries have a higher tier of advanced research doctorate awarded on the basis of very high standard research and scholarship (for example the Doctor of Sciences (DSc/ScD) and Doctor of Letters (DLitt/LittD) degrees. This more advanced award might then become the standard or requirement for a career as an academic or researcher in most fields.

## Conclusion

There is confusion in the discipline of doctorates both in Australia and globally. Traditional doctoral awards like the PhD are being outnumbered by professional doctorate degrees and changes to the generic nature of the PhD. Re-branding to include a speciality research area designated on PhD testamurs is muddying the once-clear waters. There appears to be a significant change in the direction Australian universities are heading in regard to offering doctoral programs.

In the business and management discipline, much of the purported distinction between the DBA and PhD has been lost (if it ever was really there) as the nature of applicants for these awards and the nature of research projects undertaken converge.

The research undertaken in the SCU DBA program is methodologically diverse and the range of the topics under study is equally varied. Analysis of over 230 completed theses from the SCU DBA program found that research in the areas of human resources and organisational development and behaviour, sales and marketing and innovation and new venture creation dominate the research agenda.

It may be time for Australian universities to consider establishing a new advanced higher research degree that clearly differentiates university research of a very high standard from other research higher degrees (PhDs and professional doctorates), as is the case in some other countries.

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# CHAPTER 7

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## Emerging Trends and Themes in Professional Doctorate Research—Doctoral Research in Education

*Keith Skamp*

### **Abstract**

The emergence of the professional doctorate in education (EdD) in Australia is outlined and the characteristics of the degree, as it is currently implemented in Australian universities are overviewed. These aspects are contextualised within the international literature. Various EdD issues are raised as a consequence of several major reviews of Australian doctoral education. The development of first and second-generation EdD programs is described, including reference to evaluations where they exist. One of the main themes of the chapter is the relative role and significance of course work, academic research and situated professional practice in higher degrees. Challenges the EdD must overcome, including its doctorateness are addressed. Finally where the future of the EdD degree may lie is discussed by making particular reference to the practitioner doctorate.

### **Keywords**

Australia, first and second-generation doctorate in education, reflective practice

### **Introduction**

Initially, the characteristics of the EdD, as it is currently implemented in Australian universities, are overviewed and this is done in the context of the international literature. These characteristics include entry requirements, nature and motivation of candidates, structure of programs, type of research and topics and the nature of the doctoral experience. Various issues are raised against the background of several major reviews of Australian doctoral education (Neumann 2005, 2007; Pearson 1999, Pearson, Evans & Macauley 2008). The development of first and second-generation EdD programs is then outlined, including reference to evaluations of these degrees. Challenges the EdD must overcome are addressed. Finally, where the future of the EdD degree may lie is discussed making particular reference to the practitioner doctorate.

## Emergence of the professional doctorate in education

Dissatisfaction with the traditional PhD degree, based largely on a supervised research project and examined on the basis of a thesis, is one factor that led to the emergence of at least five types of doctoral awards of which the professional doctorate (the EdD degree) is one (Park 2007). Reasons underpinning this dissatisfaction included the perception by many professionals that completing a PhD would not be useful to them whereas an EdD could lead to them making a difference. Further, by employing different assessment processes and embracing breadth rather than depth, EdDs gave the promise of producing timely research results compared to an extended PhD thesis. This aspect was also considered to be an advantage by educational professionals who often deal with multiple issues that could be the foci of an EdD degree.

Although some researchers thought this overall dissatisfaction with the PhD was partially based upon incorrect perceptions of doctoral education (Pearson 1999), Gregory (in Taysum 2006, p329) believed the EdD could certify ‘attainment of professional competence grounded in theoretical understandings—something a PhD cannot always achieve’. Also, at a theoretical level, views of knowledge production were changing; for example, ‘professionals could be viewed as knowledge producers in their own right’ (Taylor & Maxwell 2004, p61). These theoretical insights were starting to influence the processes and outcomes of the EdD.

The EdD was therefore introduced to meet market conditions, including the perceived expectations of different stakeholders in doctoral education (Laing & Brabazon 2007; Park in Pearson, Evans & Macauley 2008; Park 2007), as well as evolving theoretical propositions. It was welcomed in Australia as ‘a means of reconstructing the relationship between theory and practice...’, although this was not always the case in the US and UK (Brennan in Park 2007, p34).

## The EdD in Australia

In Australia, professional doctorates have been defined by the Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (CASDDGS 2007, p1) as:

a program of research, scholarship and advanced study that enables candidates to make a significant contribution to knowledge and practice in their professional context. In so doing, a candidate may also contribute more generally to scholarship within a discipline or field of study.

Introduced into Australian universities in the early 1990s, the EdD is now offered by most Australian universities (Laing & Brabazon, 2007) and is ‘probably the most common disciplinary form of the degree’ (Taylor & Maxwell 2005, p60). It is an in-service rather than a pre-service doctorate.

## Characteristics of existing EdD programs

There is considerable variety in Australian EdD degrees. Scott et al (in Taysum 2006, p328) had stated ‘the overall aim of the degree (EdD) is to produce people who are skilled consumers, evaluators, commissioners and producers of research’. The distinction was drawn between professional researchers (PhDs) and researching professionals (EdDs). More recently it has been argued that it is more important for practitioner doctorate candidates to be ‘capable of leading high-level development and change’ (Lester 2004, p760).

Bowden, Bournier and Laing (2001) identified twenty ways in which EdDs in the UK differed from PhDs (also see Taysum 2006). These were espoused characteristics of EdD degrees and the

espoused features of Australian EdDs were virtually identical to those in the UK. Characteristics that most Australian EdD degrees had in common were they: included taught elements, often with groups learning in cohorts; were aimed at professional educationalists wishing to develop their knowledge, skills and experience but not necessarily wanting to become career researchers; and were focused on connecting theory to practice rigorously so that praxis is both research-based and research-driven—the intention was that such praxis will underpin the learners' professional practice (Taysum 2006, p330). These, and other features, are expanded next.

### ***Entry requirements***

Apart from usually requiring a Masters or suitable level Honours degree in an appropriate field, all professional doctorates include selection criteria related to professional practice which is not the case for the PhD. Some professional doctorates provide non-traditional paths from undergraduate study into their programs (Neumann 2005).

### ***Nature and motivation of candidates***

Butcher and Sieminski (2006, p62) comment that EdD candidates are 'not about acquiring new knowledge, rather (they wish) to capitalise and focus on a current aspect of work in which they already possess significant professional knowledge'. Neumann's (2005) study also found EdD candidates were motivated by the prospect of undertaking research and having a specific professional problem to investigate, rather than career advancement. They also appreciated the tighter course structure, the sometimes shorter thesis requirements and the perceived easier pathway to a doctorate, compared to a PhD (Neumann 2005). Clark's (2007) study of a cohort of Australian EdD candidates found they enrolled for complex and multiple reasons. For most it was for personal development and/or intellectual interest as much as for vocational reasons and this was especially so for retirees.

### ***Structure of programs—coursework and assessment***

Most EdDs include coursework and a research component. The coursework usually does not exceed one third of the award and generally involves units in research methods, developing a research proposal and, sometimes, additional content in the broad area of the thesis. As nearly 50 percent of PhDs also have coursework (Neumann 2005), this is not necessarily a distinguishing characteristic of EdDs, but EdD coursework is often more tightly structured and modularised (Bowden, Bournier & Laing 2002).

Assessment of the research component, in most EdD degrees, is by thesis, but several universities are now using a portfolio model that is often a selection of published works (Neumann 2005). The constitution of EdD portfolios is the subject of debate (San Miguel & Nelson 2007). In one EdD program some staff and candidates felt there was ambiguity about expectations and distinctiveness of tasks and that the publication requirement of some portfolios is onerous or problematic (Neumann 2005, pp181, 183).

An issue that still needs further research is the expectation that the EdD 'research text is meant to differ in significant ways from a PhD thesis' (San Miguel & Nelson 2007, p73). This is because the textual expectations of these new degrees remain quite vague. Some of the writing challenges confronting EdD candidates (and some supervisors), in locating their proposed professional project in the literature, were identified by San Miguel & Nelson (2007, p83). They included 'structuring the text so that the literature contextualises and illuminates (the) problem and linking action-knowledge with theory knowledge'. These researchers, by analysing student EdD texts, provide strong and weak examples of how candidates handled these challenges.

### ***Nature of research and research topics***

Research in professional doctorates is to be 'informed by real world problems in professional practice' (Park 2007, p34) and, in some instances, 'based on development projects which result in substantial organisational or professional change and... a significant contribution to practice' (Lester in Park 2007, p34). The research component is to be a 'more reflective, practitioner-oriented mode of research education, not necessarily based within the university' and intending to exemplify closer integration between universities and the profession and university-industry partnerships (Neumann 2005, p181). Assessment in EdDs by portfolio has been rationalised as consistent with these goals.

There are clearly still challenges in meeting these expectations in some professional doctorates as Neumann's (2005) professional doctorate case study data does not indicate they were being met. Some candidates claimed there was no difference in types of research topics between professional doctorates and PhDs, while other data indicated a 'lack of close involvement with industry or profession'. None of the candidates interviewed were undertaking work or work-based research (Neumann 2005, p182) even if most topics did derive from the workplace.

### ***Nature of the doctoral experience***

Cohort entry is advocated as a strength of professional doctorate degrees as it leads to peer support and cross-fertilisation of ideas. A decade ago 'professional students (were) often on their own researching their own workplace' (Pearson 1999, p273). Cohort processes were not found in Neumann's (2005) investigation of three professional doctorate programs. This may have altered in recent years.

Most EdD candidates are part-time, distance education candidates. Creating a community of researchers to support the research journey can be difficult. Although research findings on this issue are mixed (Butcher & Sieminski 2006) the Open University (OU) EdD reported cohorts that were very positive about their distance EdD. This particular program was oriented towards a candidature enrolled mainly for personal development (Butcher & Sieminski, 2006, p61). Its success was attributed to its 'highly systemised structure of blended doctoral learning characterised by a written program guide, individual support, regular formative correspondence feedback to students' progress reports, face-to-face residential conferences and e-conferences culminating in the submission of a thesis' (Butcher & Sieminski, 2006, p61). Mentoring of supervisors was a feature of the program and thought to be influential in the excellent completion rates (80 percent within three years).

A contrasting situation was the experience of twenty one international EdD candidates completing their degree at a distance: in Hong Kong through an Australian university in partnership with a local provider. Case study data found these candidates' identity as a community of learners was formed through fitting in to peer groups and 'developing fellowship with lecturers and supervisors', both electronically and when there were cohort meetings with staff who visited twice a year. A multi-layered learning community with different expectations in each community (namely, international, classroom and professional) is how Chapman & Pyvis (2006, p294) described these candidates' experience. The candidates considered this membership to be important, in contrast to earlier studies of international distance candidates (Chapman & Pyvis 2006).

## Trends in EdD candidature and degrees

### *Candidature*

There is evidence of increased enrolments in the EdD (Pearson, Evans & Macauley 2008). EdD graduation rates have grown from 1994 with 8 graduates to 2001 with 55 graduates. Pearson, Evans & Macauley's (2008, p366) interpretation that 'professional doctorates have not fulfilled their promise: graduation data in education (1990–2002) indicates that growth has been slow and uneven' is problematic. They note that the PhD in education was still attractive: 2000 completion rates for the EdD were 86 percent of the completion rates for the PhD in 1990. Pearson, Evans & Macauley (2008) express concerns about the viability of professional doctorates, but they do not single out the EdD.

Attraction and retention of EdD candidates has been difficult, especially if the degrees are full fee paying, although Neumann (2005) states this is not the case for many education professional doctorates. Three non EdD professional doctorates that were very successful in attracting candidates carefully targeted their clientele, used highly selective acceptance criteria, chose effective supervisors, established student networks and ensured relevant and structured coursework (Neumann 2005).

### *Changing nature of EdD degrees*

There has been considerable diversity in the characteristics of EdD degrees in Australia over the last decade. The nature of this diversity varies. It can be: systemic diversity, being related to the type of institution; structural, in that historical/ legal or other foundations are the underlying cause; programmatic, relating to differences in services and programs provided; or procedural where there are differences in the teaching, research and services provided (Pearson, Evans & Macauley 2008). Examples of these differences would be evident in the variety and changing nature of EdD degrees. The focus of the following discussion, though, will be on the distinction between first and second-generation EdD degrees.

### *First-generation EdD degrees*

Structurally, first-generation degrees have been a combination of coursework and a traditional thesis and have been dominated by academe (Maxwell 2003; Taylor & Maxwell 2005). Research involved the 'capacity to make a significant contribution to knowledge of professional practice' and graduates were 'knowledge producers in the field and for the field of educational leadership' (Taysum 2006, p328). 'Professional practice was approached from the perspective of the researcher working on a practice situation, rather than from that of the practitioner working on it' (Lester 2004, p758). The EdD degree (up to about 2000) at the University of New England (UNE) typified several of these features (Maxwell, 2003). The features were also common in about 30 percent of 79 Australian and New Zealand EdDs surveyed in 2000 (Maxwell 2003; Taylor & Maxwell 2004).

Knowledge production has been dichotomised into Mode 1 and 2 as one way to further distinguish first and second-generation EdD degrees, although most programs will include elements of each. Mode 1 knowledge production predominates in first-generation degrees. It is typified as coming from the university in which disciplinary knowledge holds sway. Typically research problems are set and solved within disciplinary communities with agendas set by

university academics. Mode 1 knowledge is 'homogeneous; hierarchical and form preserving; accountable to discipline-based notions of methodologically "sound" research practice' (Lee, Green & Brennan in Maxwell 2003, p286).

### ***Second-generation EdD degrees***

Second-generation EdDs characterise knowledge production as being 'produced in the context of application, transdisciplinary, heterogeneous, heterarchical and transient; socially accountable and reflexive, including a wider and more temporary and heterogeneous set of practitioners, collaborating on problems defined in specific and localised context' (Lee, Green & Brennan in Maxwell, 2003, pp285–6).

Knowledge results from practitioner agency and/or reflection on practice and the knowledge sites are socially distributed and point(ing) to the workplace. This Mode 2 knowledge is consistent with action (as) part of the research and it 'does not privilege academic knowledge over knowledge produced and held by the profession'. It also includes the notions of 'improvement, collegiality and ethical behaviour' (Maxwell 2003, p286; Taylor & Maxwell 2004).

An hybrid curriculum professional doctorate model brings together these features in:

a three-way model, where the university, the candidate's profession and the particular work-site of the research meet in specific and local ways, in the context of a specific organisation. The site for professional doctoral activity is the intersection of the Profession, Workplace and University spheres (the P/W/U site) (Lee, Green & Brennan 2000, p127).

About half of surveyed professional doctorates in 2000 indicated that their interests were centred on the key features of this model, with about 25 percent focusing on the P/W/U site response as a distinctive feature of their program (Maxwell 2003; Taylor & Maxwell 2005).

The nature of research in existing EdDs has been previously discussed. One view is that candidates use research 'to make a significant contribution to professional practice through research' (Bowden, Bournier & Laing in Taysum 2006, p328). If this is to produce 'knowledge within the field that is not disseminated beyond the practicum where the research was undertaken' then this is a 'barrier to the sociology of knowledge' (Taysum 2006, p328). A more common view is that EdD research 'connects theory and praxis rigorously' and this praxis is 'research-based and research driven' and underpin the candidate's professional practice (see earlier). Second-generation EdDs and doctorates in professional practice (Lester 2004) orient to the praxis position.

### ***Second-generation EdDs—three examples***

Maxwell (2003) describes the features of three professional doctorates, including the EdD at the University of Western Sydney (UWS), which capture various elements of second-generation degrees. The revised UNE EdD program is another example (Taylor & Maxwell 2004) while Owen (2006) reflects on her experiences as an EdD candidate.

The UWS EdD included training in research and applied studies. There was no coursework but candidates were required to conduct seminars with fellow candidates in their speciality. This was considered as not privileging academic knowledge and was part of a program comprising seminars, meetings and conferences. Assessment of the EdD involved a global judgement about the scope and quality of the award and included a portfolio as the major outcome of the research component (Maxwell 2003, p280). It comprised six pieces, of which four needed to be

published. These could include, for example, conference presentations. The portfolio had to have an integrating element that held the various pieces together in order to assist portfolio examiners assess its scope and quality. Student feedback appreciated the importance of the publications. An educational environment, which included access to external advisers, encouraged various forms of dissemination of research findings (Maxwell 2003). Although the literature about this EdD referred to it being based on a partnership between the university and employers in which candidates would be able ‘to demonstrate, through research scholarship, a set of outcomes reflecting the qualities prized in modern professional educators’ (Baumgart & Linfoot in Maxwell 2003, p280), early data found that few candidates took this route (Maxwell 2003).

The revised UNE EdD, focusing on the hybrid curriculum model, included units as follows:

- Professional Workplace Culture and Learning
- Professional Practice
- Applied Research in Education—now Advanced Research Methods for Education (1/2 unit) and Applying Research Methods in Education (1/2 unit)
- Professional Portfolio Proposal—now Paradigms and Professional Research (1/2 unit) and Research Proposal (1/2 unit)

These units are described in detail by Taylor and Maxwell (2004, p63) and updated in UNE (2008). They represent a distinct move away from traditional research methodology units towards content focused on the culture and climate of the workplace and the nature of the candidates’ professions and integration with the candidate’s workplace role. There was a focus on action research and what constitutes research for a portfolio or for a dissertation. There were no disciplinary units. A portfolio, similar to the UWS model, was introduced. At the time (2004) there were still various issues to be resolved. Seven are listed, for example, more involvement of the profession in examination processes needed exploring (Taylor & Maxwell 2004). Early survey feedback from 20 continuing candidates indicated increased satisfaction with the new EdD as it ‘enhanced their professional development and their ability to conduct research’. In general there was support for the new approach (Taylor & Maxwell 2004, pp64–5).

Owen (2006, pp114, 116), as an EdD graduate, outlines the impact of the degree. She reflects on her professional development as a teacher and the influence of ‘situativity theory, communities of practice and being a situated reflective practitioner’. ‘There was so much learning’. Owen describes how she lived theoretical propositions like ‘professional learning while situated’ and ‘learning and collaborating within multiple educational communities’, namely, academic, educational system, and school worlds and the value of communities of practice. Her account is partial support for the espoused merits of second-generation EdD programs.

### ***An alternative conceptualisation of the professional doctorate***

An empirical 18 month ethnographic study investigating research management, research supervision and research outcomes of a Doctor of Nursing program at an Australian university concluded that the hybrid model did not fit the data. Workplace was not accurately represented, the profession was not clear and the P/W/U overlap was not an appropriate way of representing the norms of current practice. Rather the ethnographic data suggested professional practice (as it underpins all professional work) and change (as this is the core of professional life) better represented the doctorate curriculum. Further, for these nursing candidates, the university rather than the workplace retained a dominant role (Malfroy 2004).

This study supported the replacement of the P/W/U model with a University/ Professional practice/ Change (U/P/C) model, in which these three themes do not have equal roles and are not static. Professional practice and the university are explicit themes but change is more subtle but evident in many degree components. Most candidates, for example, wanted to bring about change. Change also acknowledges the activities of the research but also the identity of the researcher. The situatedness of the researcher is a central aspect of researching practice and was thought to be critical in this re-conceptualisation of the degree (Malfroy 2004, p75). This view is supported by Stephenson, Malloch and Cairns (2006, p29) who argue, from interview data derived from graduates of the Middlesex practitioner doctorate (see below), that learner agency should not be overlooked in models that conceptualise professional doctorates. It is the agent who ‘creates the program, builds the alliance between the university and the profession and defines the workplace(s) where the program is made manifest’. As ‘there is every likelihood that other professional doctorate programs will have similar focuses’ (Malfroy 2004, p78) and that professional doctorates are still in a transitional stage, the hybrid model may need to be reassessed as an underpinning conceptualisation of the EdD degree.

Interestingly, in the OU EdD referred to earlier, Butcher and Sieminski (2006) derived, from research interview and other data, a four-part model describing the professional impact of the degree on its candidates. They posit that graduates will achieve all or some of the following over a short or long term:

- professionalisation—the impact on the professional self at the micro level
- professional change—referring to impact on colleagues at the department and institutional level
- being able to bridge the academic professional divide because of their impact on the wider professional and academic community.

Informing each of these three impact areas is growth in professional self-esteem. Further details and how the OU EdD assisted in the achievement of these outcomes are in Butcher & Sieminski (2006, pp64–7). This impact model appears to overlap with, and indirectly provide support for, aspects of Malfroy’s conceptualisation.

## **The practitioner doctorate**

Focusing more closely on the candidate as practitioner, the recently introduced Doctor of Professional Studies or Professional Practice (DProf) in the UK and Australia is not a third-generation doctorate but rather ‘a different kind of program—a practitioner or work-based doctorate which is geared specifically to addressing complex professional, organisational and social issues’ (Lester 2004, p759). It is ‘more focused on Mode 2 knowledge (or knowledge-in-use) than second-generation doctorates and on generating practical action which also represents high-level professional scholarship’... ‘(it) involves a form of “reverse colonisation” where universities move “much more to the territory of the practicum and adjust their way of working so that knowledge is produced which has practical applications”’ (Lester, 2004, p758, referring to Scott et al.).

### ***The DProf—the Middlesex experience***

This DProf works outside a field or discipline and hence promotes ‘transdisciplinary or post-disciplinary’ investigations ‘geared to adequacy for... the ‘wicked problems’ of real practice situations’ (Lester 2004, p759). Candidates, including teachers, enrol as part of a cohort.

Attendance at monthly seminars that relate to assessed submissions is required as is a course in practical research and development methods. Professional project work comprises the major component that may take various forms including a supporting portfolio of previously completed work. Support from leading practitioners and academics is integral to the program (Lester 2004). Stephenson, Malloch and Cairns (2006) provide another description of degree components and possible outcomes.

Outcomes from the DProf must include ‘high-level practical action, resulting in significant change or development in an organization or community of practice ... it (must have) a significant organisational or professional impact’ (Lester, 2004, p760). Further, evidence of meeting five generic criteria, consistent with national doctorate standards must be provided and these criteria form the basis of assessment by external examiners (Stephenson, Malloch & Cairns 2006). This doctorate focuses more on the candidate than the profession or discipline with the ‘individual candidates’ distinctive professional experience, current activities and future professional development, as defined by the candidates themselves...’ as the central focus (Stephenson, Malloch & Cairns 2006, p18). This provides challenges for candidates and does raise quality issues as discussed below.

### ***Reflections on the Middlesex practitioner doctorate***

Eight common and positive features of the Middlesex practitioner doctorate were derived from interviews with ten DProf graduates (Stephenson, Malloch & Cairns 2006, p23). These were characterised as:

- control—where the candidate has responsibility for making decisions relating to the elements of the program, with their persona and work at the centre
- justification—as the program repeatedly required candidates to justify decisions to academic and professional stakeholders
- legitimisation—in response to personal initiative and exposure the candidate’s previous and current experiences, achievements, abilities and professionalism are recognised as comparable to PhD level
- integration—of the candidate’s program with professional experience and the university’s generic doctoral level criteria
- support
- engagement
- reflection
- a forward direction.

This analysis led to the proposition ‘that the style of candidate involvement in the (DProf) program may be as significant as program structure and partnership between university and profession in the enhancement of candidate professionalism’ (Stephenson, Malloch & Cairns 2006, p27). Lester’s (2004, p761) review of the first two cohorts in the Middlesex degree supports this position. He concluded that the candidate is the author or architect of their practice and the resulting conceptual framework that underpins their project is one that is developed by the practitioner. Learner-managed learning and ‘the theory and research about pedagogy and sophisticated adult learning’ (Stephenson, Malloch & Cairns 2006, p27) would appear to be essential elements in exploring the development of practitioner doctorates and hence consideration of how EdDs may

evolve. Of further interest is the DProf candidates' view that research does not predominate in their thinking but is simply a contributor to their doctorate program and development. They see, as leading professionals, the degree as 'a vehicle for self-managed development taking forward an area of practice' (Lester 2004, p761).

## **'Doctorateness'**

Gilbert (in Park 2007) asks, in light of various challenges, whether the time is right to assess the capacity of the doctorate, and it could be added, professional doctorates (Park 2007). Apart from continuing to clarify the conceptual underpinnings of the EdD degree, a major challenge is to argue its doctorateness.

Taylor and Maxwell (2004) also saw a need for stronger quality assurance as the EdD requirements varied considerably across Australian universities. A difficulty is how to examine doctorateness in the EdD degrees when the ground rules are different (Park 2007). According to Laing and Brabazon (2007), it is an impossible task to expect the outcomes of all doctorates to be the same.

The advent of generic outcomes for doctoral degrees (Park 2007) poses the question whether research theses are a necessary requirement to complete a doctorate and hence portfolios and other doctoral assessment outcomes become plausible. Further, second-generation and especially the practitioner doctorates, primarily do not aim to produce researchers. Their graduates are 'foremost capable and thinking practitioners', even though they 'will necessarily be able to operate as practitioner researchers' (Lester 2004, p762). Related to this change of emphasis is the need for universities 'to develop a credible source of authority based on engagement with practice, rather than (or in addition to) engagement in academic research' (Lester 2004, p768). This will enable the negotiation of appropriate peer review of the rigour of alternative EdD outcomes. Although not an avenue for EdD degrees as yet, the platform of the Centre for Children and Young People at SCU, being based on education, advocacy and research, could meet these and related requirements (Lester 2004), especially with the Centre's strong focus on regional and international engagement.

By way of example, the standards required by the DProf at Middlesex could exemplify how doctoral rigour is evidenced in EdD degrees. The standard 'is defined through engagement in advanced learning leading to major organisational change and/or excellence in professional practice, the production of work of publishable standard and engagement in self-managed or collaborative research and project development'. There are also outcome indicators specified in twelve areas (Lester 2004, p762). There is a related approach in a DBA at RMIT in Melbourne. These various points suggest that the pivotal feature of this doctorate is 'methodological (or process-led), but it is about methodologies of development and systemic change rather than principally those of research' (Lester 2004, p763). Lester outlines a conception of the DProf that has 'adequacy' for the 'mess' and 'wicked problems' of the real world and that will meet the scholarly robustness required of doctoral studies. He continues that the output from a DProf:

might be better conceived as having an impact on a community of practice wider than that in which the doctoral work was set... The disseminable elements... (could) more often be either contextual experiences that can be drawn on or reformulated to inform other practice situations, or drawings-together of experiences and ideas into formats that give them value to wider readerships (Lester 2004, p765).

This is clearly scholarly robustness associated with change in more than one setting.

## The path ahead

Some EdD programs are translating the espoused goals of second-generation professional doctorates into reality more convincingly than others. Even so, these second-generation doctorates, according to Lester (2004, p758), are 'still essentially research-oriented programs, but they take a more situated view of the research process and the centrality of the practitioner within it'. Middlesex University's practitioner doctorate may be the next step in the EdD journey.

The status of the professional (and other) doctorates has been queried, for example, on the basis of their length and assessment requirements, by various commentators. The Bologna agenda that seeks agreement that doctoral degrees be at least four years in length has added to this debate. However, one of the most recent outcomes from the Bologna discussions also contends that 'doctoral training must increasingly meet the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia' (Park 2007, p22). To add to the complexity of this matter, an emphasis on industry led or channelled research and its relationship to innovative scholarship has been questioned (Laing & Brabazon 2007).

Advocates of the EdD degree do not deny there are unresolved challenges as universities move in the direction of second-generation and practitioner doctorates (Lester 2004; Taylor & Maxwell 2005). They would continue to argue that the EdD is a degree that can certify 'attainment of professional competence grounded in theoretical understandings—something a PhD cannot always achieve' (Gregory in Taysum 2006, p329). This professional competence would help develop 'stewards of the field' (Richardson in Taysum 2006, p329). Taysum believes these stewards' professional competence should include developing the leader holistically, where holistic refers to learners acquiring 'thinking tools that may provide insights into symbolic systems' so that they can question system assumptions and feel empowered to have an impact on them (Taysum 2006, p329). In the Middlesex practitioner doctorate, candidates must provide evidence that their doctorate outcomes are 'concerned not only with knowledge, but with capability (the ability to create effective change) and wisdom (the ability to see beyond the immediate and integrate the needs of the present and the future, the local and the distant)' (Lester 2004, p766). This supports Taysum's holistic EdD position and is an exciting goal towards which EdDs can aspire.

Where do EdD programs progress from here? The underlying assumptions of the practitioner doctorate (in education) require considerable variations from current PhD practice in most universities. Provided strong arguments can be advanced that sustain the scholarly robustness of the EdD degree in its second-generation and later emergent forms, the future for the degree looks exciting if its goals can be realised. However, the challenges are many and it may be another decade before EdD degrees in most Australian universities have established a recognisable character that attracts candidates because of their distinctive purposes, rather than, for example, their different structures or processes. For this to occur there will need to be a similarity of vision among professional doctorate stakeholders, namely, candidates, supervisors, academic departments, institutions, disciplines and fields of research and practice, funding bodies, employers and the nation concerned (Park 2007, p8). This is not a straightforward task.

## Conclusion

Ways in which to distinguish the EdD degree from the PhD (in education) have been outlined, as well as how various forms of the EdD exist and are continuing to emerge in Australian universities. Perceived dissatisfaction with the PhD led to the EdD, partially as a response to market conditions. In theory, EdD programs have more inclusive entry criteria, although candidate motivation is

varied and perhaps does not support the perception that they seek the qualification for different reasons from PhD candidates. The requirement for coursework does not necessarily distinguish between EdDs and PhDs. The EdD and other professional doctorates are assumed to be more industry based and practitioner focused but again, the evidence does not unequivocally support this proposition. Espoused differences between the two doctorates have not always been supported in practice (Neumann 2005, 2007). Two way transfer between professional doctorates and PhDs has further complicated distinctiveness. Evidence for successful completion of EdDs compared to PhDs is mixed. Recent developments, though, suggest that there are sincere efforts to change the character of the EdD degree, moving from first to second generation versions of this degree, with the latter being characterised as less university centric and more practitioner focused. However, the hybrid model may need to be reassessed as an underpinning conceptualisation of the EdD degree. Whether this has been achieved in practice is a moot point at this stage. Nonetheless examples such as the DProf from Middlesex suggest that the practitioner led professional doctorate is an exciting model towards which to aspire.

### **Author's Profile**

Dr Keith Skamp is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Southern Cross University. He has been the School's Research and Research Training Director for many years as well as its EdD coordinator. He has examined many doctoral theses, including EdDs, from a range of Australian universities and was a visiting advisor in the University of Western Sydney's EdD program. His current research interests are in environmental and sustainability education as well as science education, areas in which he has published extensively.

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# CHAPTER 8

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## The Professional Doctorate— an Alternative Pathway to Doctoral Qualifications for Indigenous Scholars

*Jeff Nelson*

### **Abstract**

There is a substantial and immediate need to recruit and promote Indigenous<sup>1</sup> Australian people to decision-making levels in government departments, especially when there is an over-representation of Indigenous people within their client group. This need will only be met if current recruitment policies requiring higher-degree qualifications are changed or if more Indigenous students are supported to achieve the mandated levels of university education. The professional doctorate program has developed to meet this need. This program, through its blend of coursework, mixed-method research, and thesis or monograph preparation will provide its graduates with a diverse range of skills; evidence to assist service provision and to inform government policy; and the qualifications so desperately needed by Indigenous people. The professional doctorate program will encourage a team approach to research with individual researchers investigating issues at the micro level and collaborating to provide solutions at the macro level.

### **Key words**

Indigenous studies, pathways, scientist practitioner model

### **Introduction**

Southern Cross University (SCU) offers a professional doctorate program through its International Centre for professional doctorates and the Doctorate of Indigenous Philosophies (DIP) through the College of Indigenous Australian Peoples (Gnibi). The DIP has been tailored to suit the needs of people working in the private and public sectors who wish to achieve doctoral-level qualifications through research and coursework. Candidates are required to select and research an issue that affects or is affected by Indigenous people and for which a deeper or additional understanding is desired. Candidates are encouraged (although not required) to conduct research within their

own areas of expertise and experience and to include their employers and colleagues as much as possible in the process. Candidates are required to successfully complete four post-graduate units, two research-methods units, and submit a thesis or four interconnected monographs to graduate. The coursework is designed to provide the candidates with a comprehensive array of fieldwork and research skills, an understanding of and appreciation of the scientist-practitioner model of effective community engagement and the confidence required to be consummate practitioners.

## Current state of play

The College of Indigenous Studies at SCU (Gnibi) comprises three separate but interdependent entities. The first, The School of Indigenous Studies is a dynamic educational centre that offers diploma, degree, and postgraduate level programs that focus on trauma and healing, and other Indigenous issues. The second, The Indigenous Student Support Centre provides support to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in units and courses at SCU and is a home away from home for all Indigenous students using our facilities. The third, The Collaborative Indigenous Research Centre for Learning and Educare (CIRCLE) is responsible for the college's fieldwork and research activities. CIRCLE links the college's community engagement programs with a research philosophy to meet the aim of providing best-practice services to Indigenous peoples and making evidence-based policy submissions about Indigenous issues. CIRCLE works across the breadth of Australia and South-East Asia responding at the individual, family, and community level (as requested) to help overcome the psychological, behavioural, and spiritual effects of trauma. Members of CIRCLE are optimistic that offering the DIP will create opportunities to forge productive relationships with industry partners, to provide a pathway for Indigenous students to achieve qualifications in their area of interest and expertise, and to develop protocols and policy that create sustainable positive changes for people in need.

To be admitted into the program DIP candidates are normally required to have completed an undergraduate degree with first or second class (first division) Honours from SCU, have completed a Masters degree and show evidence of a research component in that degree or possess a qualification of equal standing to the previous two. Candidates without formal university qualifications may be granted entry into the program or to a feeder program (PhD Qualifier) if they can demonstrate to the Professional Doctorates Committee that their previous field experience deems it likely that they would successfully complete all of the requirements of the doctoral program. Candidates must successfully complete four post-graduate units that are relevant to their research topic (as approved by the Director of Professional Doctorate programs), two Research Methods units, and their Research Proposal and Research Thesis. Candidates may be granted advanced standing and be exempted from having to complete the four post-graduate units if they can demonstrate that their previous experience has afforded them superior knowledge about their topic and that participating in the units will be of negligible benefit. All candidates are required to complete the Research Methods units prior to commencing their fieldwork. These units provide them with a comprehensive overview of their ethical responsibilities as researchers, a practical introduction to qualitative and quantitative research methods and tuition about research design and how to be maximally effective in the field.

The Doctorate of Indigenous Philosophies has only been available since the beginning of the 2009 academic year and Gnibi already has two enrolled students; an Aboriginal man and an Aboriginal woman. The program focuses on investigating issues that affect the everyday lives of Indigenous people and while this aspect of the program has been applauded, potential candidates have voiced

concerns about its full-fee paying status and its requirement for candidates to successfully complete the quantitative research methods unit. Abstudy provide funding for eligible students that covers tuition fees, provides a travel allowance and an allowance for the duration of the candidature. This policy is generous but it should be reconsidered to include funding for government departments and community organisations that participate in the program, to enable sponsorship participation in the higher degrees study initiative. Gnibi offers this program to experienced practitioners working in organisations who provide child safety, community corrections, and health services in the belief that involving organisational networks will provide greater and more timely outcomes for people in need. The current funding policy does not cover people who are already employed in organisations or who do not identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The candidates who do not qualify for Abstudy or organisational funding would have to either leave their workplaces or take unpaid leave to participate and find other sources of funding to cover the costs. If the Australian government invested more fully in this program by supporting the participating organisations they would quite possibly reduce costs in the longer term by having a reduced requirement for these social services.

The second issue that was raised as a matter of concern was the requirement to successfully complete the quantitative research methods unit. There is a perception shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that quantitative research is foreign to their culture and that they are incapable of mastering this necessary research method. While this belief is undeniably false, its mistaken acceptance has led to candidates avoiding courses that include quantitative content and to others withdrawing for the same reasons. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have informally practiced quantitative research for as long as they have been on this earth. Most of their practical skills have been built on their powers of observation, their ability to differentiate between consistency and coincidence and their culture of knowledge sharing through spoken word, song, and dance. These practices are equivalent to the three fundamental properties of quantitative research: measurement, analysis, and reporting. The two students who are currently enrolled in the DIP program are very anxious about the ‘white-fella’ statistics unit and have almost accepted defeat before they trying to succeed. It is very important that this misperception is overcome and that students are provided with the support they need to successfully complete the program. Gnibi is committed to this task and is in a position to do so at the student and program level by ensuring that the unit is taught in a style that is consistent with the Indigenous students’ previous experiences. Gnibi is strongly invested in this program and is as eager as its students and their employers to celebrate the successful graduations of students as Doctors of Indigenous Philosophies.

## Contrast with the PhD

In contrast to observations earlier in the book about similarities between a DBA and PhD, the DIP program differs from Gnibi’s PhD program in a number of important ways. It imposes a different set of demands on its candidates and provides slightly different benefits to the school, industry partners, and candidates. The DIP program is marketed to and anticipated to appeal to people who are already working in the private and public sectors who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or whose work focuses on Indigenous issues. DIP candidates are expected to have had extensive workplace experience, be likely to conduct research on a topic related to their current workplace, involve their current employers and colleagues in the research process, and remain as a member of their current workforce for the duration of their candidature. The DIP program is industry focused and has been designed with service provision in mind: to

positively impact on the lives of Indigenous people in Australia in a timely manner. The second purpose of marketing the DIP program at the organisational level is to demonstrate the value to the employer of providing a scholarship or bursary to one or more of their employees. Gnibi is committed to working with members of an organisation that sponsors one or more of their employees through the program for the duration of the candidature and beyond to improve their operational effectiveness. The candidate should be afforded all of their normal workplace benefits and opportunities should be made for the candidate to present their findings to colleagues. SCU also provides support to the candidate and ensure that their academic and project needs are met in the normal school structures.

The return on investment for the organisations will not be immediate but is potentially immense. It is expected that the research process will provide employers with information that could be used to make their services more effective, less expensive to implement with better outcomes, and to up-skill other members of their workforces. Organisations who work with Indigenous clients, especially in areas of Indigenous over-representation (healthcare, child safety, correctional services), would benefit from having, and be seen to be having, suitably qualified Indigenous employees at management levels making decisions based on evidence they have collected in their candidature. Organisations can expect their graduates to provide formal and informal professional development and to take an added interest in the performance of their Indigenous colleagues. There will be indirect benefit for organisations who invest in this program and who advertise their participation in their increased attractiveness to potential employees who value professional development and a secure career path. Services should be able to capitalise on their increased attractiveness by improving the overall competence of their teams through selective hiring and workforce reforms. When the demand for entry into the DIP program through employer sponsorship increases Gnibi is committed to making submissions to government to fully-fund or substantially subsidise the organisations' investments. A larger-scale uptake of this scheme would put pressure on organisations to ensure that their Indigenous employees are suitably supported and encouraged to increase their qualifications and become leaders for their own people.

## **Scientist practitioner model**

Gnibi is committed to the scientist-practitioner model and believes that fieldwork can only be maximally effective if it is accompanied by online evaluation and is embedded in a structured research approach. Practitioners must be skilful enough to evaluate their own effectiveness and objective enough to know when their methods are failing. Evaluation will inform decisions about whether to persist with current treatment methods or to trial an alternative method whose effectiveness has been previously established. Embedding evaluation in practice not only improves outcomes at the dyadic (practitioner–client) level but also at the general practice level by informing policy and advocating for service revisions. Gnibi encourages its fieldworkers to critically analyse their own performance, document the comparative strengths of different methods, and forward de-identified evaluation reports to a central point for collation, analysis, and possible inclusion in research documents. Best-practice fieldwork evolves and is shaped by experience, the speed of which is determined by the availability, depth, and accuracy of evaluative information. DIP candidates with industry backgrounds are encouraged to share their field-based knowledge with peers and other members of Gnibi so that the educational aspect of the program will be as up to date and comprehensive as possible.

## Relationships with other organisations

Gnibi is very interested in developing and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships with organisations who are already working with Indigenous communities and whose work focuses on social and emotional wellbeing, personal and community empowerment, and child safety. Members of CIRCLE are currently implementing a number of community rebuilding, leadership and healing programs in the rural and remote Aboriginal communities of Kalumburu in Western Australia, Toomelah/Boggabilla in New South Wales, and Coober Pedy and Port Augusta in South Australia. Their capacity to respond to additional communities has been seriously compromised by the lack of suitably-qualified experienced practitioners who are not otherwise engaged. Recent additional requests for assistance have been received from Palm Island in North Queensland, Roma in South West Queensland, Amata in South Australia, and Balgo in Western Australia. This limitation could be overcome by collaborating with other organisations, developing more practitioners through the normal undergraduate and Masters' courses or through engaging the services of experienced practitioners who are enrolled in the DIP program. Entering into and working in remote Indigenous communities is sometimes a daunting experience for otherwise highly qualified experienced practitioners. The skills that are required to be effective practitioners in communities, although not highly specialised, are not readily learnt in the lecture theatre. It has been the author's experience that those who are effective are usually Indigenous, have had extensive experience and are aware of and respect local rules and practices. It is unfortunate that the people who have these skills are often under-utilised and under-valued because of their lack of formal qualifications. The DIP program provides a pathway for people in this situation to formalise their skills into a qualification that affords them the respect, responsibility and position they deserve. The successful completion of this program is not only good for the individual but also for their employers, their colleagues and their clients.

## Trends in the discipline

The disproportionately low representation of Aboriginal students in doctoral-level courses in Australian universities (0.76 percent of enrolments in 2006) was recently highlighted (Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) (2008, pp7, 8) and flagged as requiring immediate attention. The IHEAC report included twenty six recommendations that the authors argued would build Indigenous research capacity and Indigenous research leadership. These recommendations varied in specificity and nature from 'foster(ing) a research culture among Indigenous academics and students'(p7) to 'build(ing) interdisciplinary research links and relationships with key stakeholders including the private sector, government, Indigenous communities and organisations' (p8). By offering the DIP program SCU is already implementing many of the IHEAC initiatives but not for the purpose of raising Indigenous participation in higher education. The primary motivation behind offering this course is to assist people to gain the skills and qualifications required to generate positive changes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people and to do so expediently. Expedience is of uppermost importance: the living conditions that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people endure daily can be vividly described but are possibly only truly understood through experience. Many of the people who are working in communities for government and non-government agencies already have this understanding and as such are prime candidates for enrolment in the DIP.

## Possible future directions

The federal government claims to be a friend and supporter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is quick to highlight their efforts to reduce Indigenous disadvantage (Closing the Gap). Indigenous disadvantage is a reality in all Australian states and territories and is obvious across a multitude of different indicators including lifespan, hospitalisation, incarceration, household income, employment, education, sexual and domestic violence (both as perpetrators and victims), and child neglect. The importance of having suitably qualified and experienced practitioners working to eradicate the problem behaviours and attitudes, and lack of opportunity, that underpins Indigenous disadvantage is well documented. The availability of suitably qualified personnel is very low and government needs to support any opportunities they have of increasing the pool of available people if they are really attempting to Close the Gap. Supporting organisations to participate in this program by sponsoring Indigenous practitioners to gain higher qualifications, refine their fieldwork skills, and gain research skills and a scientist-practitioner philosophy is only one of many ways that the government could contribute to reducing Indigenous disadvantage.

## Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the professional doctorate program that is currently being offered by SCU through its College of Indigenous Australian Peoples. This program is in its infancy but is being promoted as the preferable pathway to doctoral-level qualifications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Gnibi's support of the scientist-practitioner model of service provision and its interest in developing evidence-based practices necessitates that it restricts the focus of its research to service-based interests. Gnibi is comparatively small and believes that it will maximise its effectiveness by linking its research efforts to its undergraduate and Master's level programs in trauma and healing. Further, Gnibi desires to be in a position, through its research, to base submissions on evidence, to more reliably inform policy development and delivery. Gnibi's support of the DIP program is clearly evident in this chapter as is the view that participation in the program will provide opportunities for ongoing relationships between service providers and universities. Collaborations of this type provide great promise of improving the living conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and reducing Indigenous disadvantage in a timely manner. This is our greatest challenge and our driving force.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we use the word Indigenous within an international context of human rights and as recognition of our links to other Indigenous nations. In other sections of the document we use the terminology Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in reference to the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

## Author's profile

Dr Jeff Nelson is the Director of Research and Research Training at the College of Indigenous Australian Peoples (Gnibi) at Southern Cross University. Jeff completed an undergraduate degree with First Class Honours at the University of Western Australia before continuing on to complete a PhD that assessed the effectiveness of current neuropsychological assessment techniques. After working as an academic at universities in Perth he ventured into a career in the field doing most of his work in rural and remote Indigenous communities. He was responsible for a state-wide enquiry into the factors that contribute to amputations in Indigenous patients with Type-2 diabetes; for

evaluating an early-childhood program intended to increase school-readiness in children living in the remote Indigenous community; and for working with community people to overcome the problems associated with child sexual abuse and neglect. Jeff is well suited to his role at Gnibi because of his interests in research methodology; in assisting the development of community strength and autonomy, and in using research to develop evidence-based best-practice services. He is a strong advocate for mutual obligation believing that the only way to overcome community issues and to sustain positive change is for community people and external service providers to invest in mutually beneficial partnerships.

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# PART 3

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## Research Examples: Learning from the Field



# CHAPTER 9

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## Mixed Methods—Performance Management for the Australian Football League

*Val Morrison & Dave Arthur*

### **Title of the study**

Mixed Methods: Developing a Performance Management System for Australian Football League Players

### **Abstract**

The Australian Football League (AFL) has been the subject of much controversy surrounding off field player conduct. This raises question over the AFL having relevant performance management (PM) processes in place for its employees. Reportedly there have been as few as 12 studies on the AFL, and only one in Human Resources Management (HRM) which further justifies a need for research in this area. The present study is in its infancy, having only recently secured willing participants through strong networks and relationships in the difficult to access AFL. I have selected a mixed research method for this study, using informal interviews, focus groups and surveys. However, an overriding action research approach will be taken to ensure a collaborative effort in developing a PM system addressing all stakeholder needs. This is the expected outcome of the project, combined with a useful contribution to the limited amount of research devoted to professional athlete development and preparation for transition into retirement.

### **Keywords**

Australia, performance management, sport management, professional footballers, organisational behaviour, industrial relations

### **Introduction to the study and brief literature review**

After spending several months as a consultant working with one of Southern Cross University's corporate clients, assisting with the implementation of a revised employee PM system, it became apparent that while the overall concept of PM is perceived as being a good

tool in the attraction, development and retention of staff, the actual process itself can be flawed in many aspects. Some of those flaws that emerged during the consultancy process included:

- lack of clear measurement standards such as key performance indicators and key reporting areas
- ambiguous job descriptions
- no defined career path
- varied literacy levels amongst employees
- inconsistent appraisal process across different areas of the organisation
- time constraints on managers and staff
- lack of relevancy in several sections of the PM process
- lack of clear instructions and required skills to carry out PM from managers', supervisors' and employees' perspectives
- lack of leadership and support from senior management
- failure to follow up and monitor employee progress determined by the PM process

That experience prompted me to undertake a preliminary review of the literature on employee PM which revealed numerous studies dating back over several decades that discuss its ineffectiveness (Kay, Mayer & French 1965; Thompson & Dalton 1970). Later research by Longenecker and Goff (1990) showed that while ninety percent of organisations carry out some form of performance appraisal and review, less than twenty percent are effective. Cook and Crossman (2004) discuss dissatisfaction with performance systems from the perspective of both the appraiser and appraisee which is linked back to lack of skills and training in the actual process.

The findings from the preliminary literature review were sufficient to secure my motivation for a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) topic in this field. However, as the topic of PM is quite broad and varied across different industries, I decided to identify one industry to focus on for the study, and I chose Australian sport.

A brief review of the literature on Australian sport management revealed that this industry is less well-advanced than mainstream business in uptake of formal HRM and that HRM in sports organisations is not as evident as would be expected (Doherty 1998; Kellett 1999; Taylor & McGraw 2006). Fewer than one quarter of sports organisations have formal human resources policies (Taylor & McGraw 2006). I then decided to further narrow down Australian sport to an even more focused research project, and chose Australian professional football because at that time, the AFL was attracting much media attention about the poor off-field performance (or behaviour) of several of its players from various teams. This prompted further speculation on my part about the effectiveness of HRM and PM in the AFL. Also, the fate (or future) of retired professional players was (and still is) under scrutiny with a perceived lack of support by clubs and player associations as well as a clear understanding about who holds ultimate responsibility for player behaviour. These issues were raised by several delegates and speakers at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Australian and New Zealand Sports Law Association Conference in 2007.

This perceived lack of support of professional players by their clubs is not unique to professional football or Australian sport in general. In fact according to Tinley (2003, pi), 'few areas of sport are as misunderstood by the mainstream as that of the plight of retired professional and world class athletes'. Tinley, an American, retired professional world class athlete and academic has written

many articles and a book on this topic and although the focus of my research is on Australian teams, there will be reference and comparisons to international football clubs who have faced similar problems for some time, with those problems yet to be solved. For example, in the US, several retired players from the National Football League have attempted to take legal action against the clubs they once played for and even lobbied the US Senate to seek compensation for the clubs' failure to take adequate responsibility for their wellbeing during their employ. This relates to physical injuries and psychological issues associated with player retirement, the latter now becoming more common in Australia (Webke 2008). Tinley (2003) also discusses the implications for athletes in retirement which he links back to the importance of preparedness during an athlete's professional term of employment. In the case of Australian football, similar issues have also been raised. In fact, in the case of drug-related behaviour in sport in Australia, academics and lawyers Davies, Fridman and Amos (2007) point out that market forces and political pressure will soon force sports to take a hard stance on this (drug) problem, as sponsors who pour millions of dollars a year into sport will not be willing to be associated with the public use of illicit drugs.

Referring back to the AFL, despite the attention the sport receives in Australia with the media investment alone valued at \$100 million per year (Hoye 2005), there are only 12 endorsed studies being conducted on the AFL. It has rarely been the subject of serious academic scrutiny, with only one of those studies focusing on human resources in the AFL (Morris & Cherry 2007).

Therefore, it seems there is a valid case for research into PM in Australian professional football and at this stage of the project the research question posed is:

How feasible is the implementation of a formal employee performance management process into Australian football clubs, for players?

## Proposed method

Deciding on an appropriate method for this study has been quite challenging. In fact it is still not complete. Taking into consideration the few endorsed studies already conducted, the fact that the AFL as an organisation has been likened to a 'cartel' (Stewart, Nicholson & Dickson 2005) because of its highly regulated structure, the AFL's perceived ideological image by the 1 in 39 Australians who are a member of an AFL club (Booth 2007), and the high possibility of the AFL not recognising the need for a study into its PM processes, selecting a valid method to fit with the AFL culture has proved to be a task in itself.

Because of this, my initial intention was to use an action research method due to its flexibility and responsiveness to the situation (Dick 2001). In my case, heavy reliance will be placed on relationships and networks which fortunately I do have, presenting an ideal opportunity for the collaborative efforts of an action research process.

Already I have managed to secure networks in the AFL with individuals who share a similar passion to me in understanding and improving their PM processes. This is particularly the case for players in the junior development squads where there is a need for more focus on an athlete's development and performance 'from the neck upwards' not 'from the neck downwards' as is traditional with professional sport. Securing these networks did take time and it was during the process that the research focus shifted from the original idea of only working with 'A' league professional players. While 'A' league players will still be a vital part of the study, more emphasis will be on younger players coming through the ranks who are yet to have their career path defined and who through

injury or unsatisfactory on field performance may not make the major league at all, with their football careers over before they graduate from high school. Of course, where appropriate, an holistic approach will be taken, where all aspects of a professional player's responsibilities including on-field and off-field performance will be addressed. This may well become one of the more interesting outcomes of the research, holding discussions with younger generation players and garnering their perceptions about the current status of professional footballers' and their behaviour.

Throughout the research it is important that an open, collaborative approach is taken, where those involved will be able to have ownership of the problem and the solution (Carson et al. 2001). Stakeholders initially identified included AFL players, their coaches and senior management of the participating AFL clubs. In the case of junior players, parents would also be included. However, as I drafted out the research process model and compared this back to my preliminary literature review, several other stakeholder groups and networks were identified who will be crucial to the success of the project. They include sports lawyers, retired players, sponsors, representatives from other football codes, government departments and player associations.

Having got to this point, the challenge now is to align the many loose ends to a valid research method. What was originally an action research project (and still is) has now evolved into using more traditional forms of research as well. However, according to Dick (2001, p7) 'within an overall action research approach, a researcher can choose other methodologies to suit the demands of the research situation' so I am comfortable with my decision to use a mixed method.

At the time of writing, the process that I have loosely proposed to Dr Dave Arthur, my supervisor is outlined below. At this early stage, his advice is to 'go along with it and things will soon begin to take shape'.

## Proposed research process

*Stage 1*—meet informally with representatives from each of the key stakeholder groups to explain the purpose (and benefits) of the research project. This is an important first step as it is at this stage that I must secure buy-in from each group. Some have already committed to their involvement in the project.

*Stage 2*—assuming a successful outcome from Stage 1, the next step is to conduct a series of focus groups with the representative stakeholder groups, to brainstorm areas of importance and relevance to each of them, in a loose PM framework. For example, while emerging players from the junior development squads may have already devoted several years to the sport of AFL and see this as a career, should this not eventuate due to injury or not 'making the cut', where do they go from there? What welfare and alternative career planning can be put into place, and who should be responsible for managing this? This abrupt career ending is not uncommon. Recently I was speaking to an AFL development officer who was about to break the bad news to two young players. He said they will be 'gutted' as for years their whole purpose has been to play professional football.

*Stage 3*—based on what emerges from the focus groups, a survey can be constructed and distributed to similar stakeholder groups in the AFL fraternity to ascertain what degree of importance is placed on those issues and by whom.

*Stage 4*—with the results of the survey and Stages 1 and 2, I will again consult with representatives from each stakeholder group and form a working party whose goal will be to

develop a comprehensive PM process that addresses each representative group's needs. Here, action research will play a significant part in the process of critical reflection (Dick 2001) as the athlete PM model evolves.

## Expected limitations

With optimism, limitations to this study should be few. Already participation by several of the representative groups has been confirmed. However, some reluctance is expected from professional sources such as sports lawyers, senior club management and coaches who would rather not have their players 'distracted' from their main agenda of playing professional football. The other limitation is that the AFL may not see the need for a project such as this. This is where networks and relationships will play a key role, by calling on 'favours' to gain access to the more stoic, traditional levels of management in the AFL.

## Researcher's retrospective

### *Relationships*

As I am still in the early stages of the project, most of the discussion with my supervisor, Dr Dave Arthur has been idea generation. However, his strong background in sports management and long involvement in rugby union is certainly favourable to my area of research. As we are both employees of Southern Cross University this also allows for more informal discussion and brainstorming coffee breaks which many DBA candidates are not privy to. That is a bonus!

Having got to this stage in the project, I cannot emphasise how much the success of this project will rely heavily on networks and relationships in the football fraternity in order to 'break through' barriers to entry that are evident in the industry. Fortunately, my role as advisor member of the Gold Coast City Council Sports Business Taskforce should help to permeate some of those barriers, so too will the strong networks of Dr Dave Arthur. Another good source of support I have found is through contact with authors of research papers which emerged from the preliminary literature review. I have recently been in communication with Tinley (2003) and Morris and Cherry (2007) which has proved to be really worthwhile.

In summary, I must say that although the actual commencement of this project has been a long time coming, professional and personal commitments are now more manageable which should allow me to move forward with the project at a reasonable rate. This will be dependant, of course, on the availability and willing participation of so many others who will contribute to the study.

### *Researcher's profile*

In 1990 Val Morrison moved from Sydney to the Gold Coast to study at Bond University for an MBA. During her time at Bond, Val also worked as External Relations Manager for the university and Marketing Coordinator for the School of Business. Prior to her academic time, Val lived in Sydney where she worked mainly in sales and marketing roles. She moved to the US for 18 months working for a publishing company and on returning to Sydney, launched and operated a large retail sports store before expanding into the manufacture and distribution of sportswear. In 2000, Val joined Southern Cross University's Graduate College of Management as lecturer in marketing, organisational behaviour and entrepreneurship. Her role includes teaching at domestic and international locations with regular travel to China and Malaysia. She is also Senior Business Development Manager of Corporate Programs for the Graduate College of Management and

is involved in the design and delivery of executive programs for organisations nationally and internationally in both public and private sectors. Val is an advisor member of the Gold Coast City Council Sports Business Taskforce.

## **Supervisor's reflection**

Although this particular research is still in its nascence I have supervised and continue to supervise Masters, DBA and PhD students some to completion. Without doubt my single biggest aim is to establish a relationship with the candidate that hopefully stands the test of time. There simply must be shared values between the two or else the relationship will founder and with it the research itself. In terms of Val's research this is relatively simple given we work in close proximity at Southern Cross University but for many this is not the case.

Much work can be done prior to commencing supervision. As a general rule I endeavour to meet candidates prior to accepting the role and I will only agree to supervise if I believe we can 'hit it off'. The subject matter can be largely irrelevant - it is the essence of the relationship that drives me as a supervisor. After all it is the student who becomes the acknowledged expert. I am there to provide guidance and advice: something which is easier to do if the relationship is strong. This has come about largely through my own experience of having suitable mentors in many aspects of life including my academic career. Without exception, where relationships were strong and enduring the results have been good.

I am also fairly laid back in terms of my supervision style. I will drive a candidate to achieve what is best for them, however it is incredibly important that the candidate rather than the supervisor drives the research. They are the person becoming the expert, they are the person who will research and articulate the thesis and they are the person who will need the interest and passion for the subject matter if they are to prosper in the tough times that inevitably develop. Of course the supervisor can help. Sometimes this laid back style can lead to problems especially early on as the candidate strives to find a suitable, specific topic for investigation. Not having a defined topic can lead to wandering. For me however the pros outweigh the cons. Wider reading can only lead to a better thesis and such reading inexorably leads to investigation of the candidate's passion. Val's work is testament to this with many avenues examined but settling on a basic topic related to her particular passion. This is very satisfying from my point of view.

To sum up, for me the relationship is king! Without it tough times will be tougher and occasionally too tough. With a good relationship the journey becomes all the more pleasurable for both parties during the research and for many years after.

## ***Supervisor's profile***

Dave Arthur (PhD, BHMS (Hons)) is a senior lecturer in sport business overseeing and lecturing in both the Master of International Sport Management and the MBA (Sport Management) in the Graduate College of Management at Southern Cross University. In addition he heads up the newly-formed sport business unit and is currently leading a feasibility study into the establishment of an Asia Pacific Football Institute on the Far North Coast of NSW. His work has been published in a range of internationally renowned journals including *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, the *Journal of Sport Management* and *Festival and Event Management* and he currently sits on the editorial board of *Sport Management Review*. In addition he has written a number of book chapters on various aspects of event management, sport business and sport marketing. In 2008 he co-edited a book titled *International Cases in the Business of Sport* with Coventry University's Professor

Simon Chadwick. Dave also has a long record of major consultancy and recently finished a significant project with the National Rugby League (NRL) that recommended the use of two referees in NRL games. In addition he is a freelance sportswriter who has contributed over 700 columns to the Lismore-based Northern Star. He has appeared on the ABC's 7.30 *Report* as a specialist on sponsorship in sport and has a weekly slot on both ABC Radio's *Statewide* program and ABC North Coast's *Morning Show*.

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# CHAPTER 10

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## Mail Survey—What do Chinese Business Travelers Really Need?

*Xiao Han Xue & Carmen Cox*

### **Title of the study**

What do Chinese Business Travelers Really Need?

### **Abstract**

Business travelers have needs and preferences that differ from those of leisure travelers when selecting a hotel. Business travelers are more concerned with time and efficiency, require higher service quality and have more traveling experience. They are less cost-sensitive, have a higher budget, account for about half of the hotel annual stay and provide repeat business. Hotels understand the impact of business travelers on their operation and usually target these customers in their marketing strategy. China's hotel industry has developed rapidly during the last 20 years. Compared to a global growth rate of four percent, China's business travel market is expected to increase at ten percent in the near future. This fast growth should elevate China to become the world's third-largest business travel market (People's Daily 2005). The main purpose of the study was to identify the most important criteria on which Chinese business travelers base their hotel selection decision. A questionnaire was developed for this study from previous studies but applied specifically to Chinese business travelers. A mail survey was distributed via the Zhe Jiang Chamber of Commerce. A total of 497 questionnaires were returned. The main findings were that Chinese business travelers have different hotel selection criteria from Westerners. While most previous researchers have suggested that location is the key factor affecting business travelers' hotel choice, this study shows that hotel image is the most important issue to Chinese business travelers. This study offers practical solutions in a real-world situation with customer interest in full focus. Since the preferences and expectations of business travelers during the hotel selection process are studied in the Chinese environment, the results of this survey will help participants of China's hotel industry gain a better perspective on the operating conditions that would satisfy their most important customers.

### **Keywords**

China, business travelers, image, hotels

## Introduction to the study and brief literature review

Tourism is the world's largest industry, has crucial economic and social impacts on a region or country, and is responsible for more than one in ten jobs globally (Swarbrook & Horner 2007). Business tourism is a lucrative, fast-growing segment of the travel industry and is considered to be one of the hottest growth markets in the years ahead (International Trade Forum 2001). At present, one-third of all tourists worldwide are business travelers, and approximately sixty percent of many international hotel chains' guests are business travelers (Deloitte & Smith Travel Research 2005).

Globally, the business travel market keeps on growing. American and European hotel chains are still dominating the market, but the Asia Pacific region is gaining ground with a faster growth rate. Among Asian countries, China has the fastest growth (People's Daily 2005).

The continuous growth of the business travel market requires a thorough understanding of business travelers' selection criteria and satisfaction levels for hotel performance in order to provide the right products and services to this important market segment.

Global tourism revenue surpassed US\$622 billion in 2004 and became the third-largest retail industry behind the automotive industry and food stores (World Tourism Organisation 2005). Out of this total, the hotel industry generated over US\$307 billion and became the largest service export industry (Deloitte & Smith Travel Research 2005). In the hotel industry, business travelers are considered the most important customers. They account for almost half of hotel annual stays and contribute significantly to the percentage of hotel annual revenue (Matte 2000). In addition, business travelers are less cost-sensitive (International Trade Forum 2001) and often travel on a higher daily budget than leisure travelers (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007), as they spend approximately twice as much as their tourist counterparts on each trip (International Trade Forum 2001).

According to an Accenture survey, business travel is on an upward trend as its volume grew more than four percent in 2004 and strong growth is expected over the next few years (Travel Industry Association of America, National Business Travel Association & Institute of Business Travel Management 2005). In 2005, the volume of the business travel market was estimated at US\$652.9 billion (Sparkers 2004).

Another significant development during the last 20 years is the emergence of China as the fastest-growing economy in the world (Cushing 2005). As a result, in 2004, approximately fifty percent of travelers in China were business travelers, both domestic and international. These travelers generated US\$21.1 billion of revenue (American Express Business Travel (AEBT) 2005; Feng 2005). The potential of China's business travel market is promising with an expected average annual growth rate of ten percent in the next decade (People's Daily 2005a). In addition, as AEBT (2005) forecast, by 2020, the revenue from China's business travel will be US\$115 billion, which will surpass the US and become the largest business travel market in the world.

Many surveys have been conducted in Europe and United States to identify the preferences and demands of business travelers. The most important attributes include location, cleanliness, comfort of bed, service quality, value-added items, gym facilities and programs. However, Hoon (1992) revealed that cultural differences between Asian and Western travelers result in them having different expectations regarding hotel facilities and services. Chu and Choi (1997) and Dolnicar (2004) found that Asian travelers place their emphasis on the basic hotel facilities and security, while Western travelers consider service quality as the most important hotel attribute.

## Method

Based on a review of previous studies, a survey questionnaire was developed to explore what criteria are important to the Chinese business traveler when selecting a hotel. The survey was distributed to Chinese business people via the commercially available database of the Zhe Jiang Chamber of Commerce, which is the one of the largest Chambers of Commerce in China with over 20,000 members and offices in all major cities. The survey questionnaire contained three sections. The first dealt with business travelers' activities and their hotel selection behaviour. The second section included a list of variables that have the potential to influence hotel selection criteria and also asked respondents to indicate how satisfied they were with the delivery of each criteria by China's existing hotel industry. A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure the importance of each criteria and the satisfaction levels. The questions in the third section were designed to obtain demographic information about respondents.

A pilot study was conducted first to test the reliability and validity of the survey instrument with 100 questionnaires sent to a group of business executives in Shanghai. Forty three questionnaires were returned in the pilot study, equating to a satisfactory response rate of 43%. The responses indicated that the questions were clear and understandable, and that the length of the questionnaire was appropriate, taking approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Next, a sample size of 400 business travelers was targeted for this research since Cooper and Emory (1995) suggest that a sample size of 400 is appropriate and gives almost the same precision in a population of 200 million as it does in a population of 4,000. In addition, according to Ticehurst and Veal (2000), a 25% to 30% response rate of mail questionnaire-based surveys is considered normal and acceptable. Therefore, 1600 questionnaires were sent to Chinese business travelers, in the expectation of a response rate of 25%.

In this study, stratified sampling was chosen because it is geographically representative of the population and it provides differentiated information with respect to each subgroup (Malhotra 2002). Data collection occurred over a two month period from 25 June 2006 to 15 August 2006. Of the 1600 questionnaires mailed out to the members of Zhejiang Chamber of Commerce all over China, 174 questionnaires were received by 17 June 2006. Because of this low response rate, a follow-up mailing was initiated. By 15 August 2006, another 323 questionnaires were received. From the two mailings, a total of 497 questionnaires were returned representing a 31% response rate.

Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 15 key criteria that influence hotel selection were developed using factor analysis. The 15 factors were hotel location, image, common facilities, work environment facilities, assistant facilities, bathrooms, front desk services, in-room services, phone services, business services, security, leisure facilities, supplementary hotel facilities, special floor facilities and programs. Reliability of each scale was tested using Cronbach's alpha scores, with all factors showing an acceptable level of reliability. To assess the relative importance of each factor in the selection of a hotel by the Chinese business traveler, an average 'importance' score was calculated for each of the 15 factors which then allowed the levels of importance to be ranked.

## Findings

The results of this study indicate that front desk services, hotel image, security, guest room common facilities (for example air conditioning, phone, etc) and bathrooms are the five most important composite hotel attributes that influence the choice of Chinese business travelers.

The findings are quite similar to those of many previous studies on business travelers. Several researchers suggested that cleanliness, security, quality of service, comfortable bedding and quality of bath and wash towels are the most important hotel selection criteria (Crowne Plaza Hotels 1998; Lewis 1985; McCleary & Weaver 1992; McCleary, Weaver & Lan 1994; Mehta & Vera 1990; Taninecz 1990; Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) 1995; Travelocity Business 2003; Weaver & Oh 1993).

On the other hand, while many researchers suggest that location in general is a very important attribute when selecting a hotel (Accenture 2005; Andorka 1998; Baum 1990; Knutson 1988; Stephens 1990; TIA 2005), it was not a major concern for Chinese business travelers in this study. This is explained by the differences in cultural and social background between Western and Chinese business travelers. Given the emphasis in Chinese culture on 'face' (the Chinese concept of public respect, honour, and prestige) the better the hotel's image, the more important (or richer, or more powerful) the person is in the eyes of others. Chinese business people also tend to have less-developed time management skills (Smith 2006). Westerners are more concerned with speed and efficiency, as the convenient location of hotels can allow business travelers to ensure that they are on time for meetings as well as save time on traveling on the road to go to the commercial centre, meeting site, airport and railway station. On the other hand, for Chinese business travelers, hotel image is much more important for them than location. For example, a Chinese business traveler on a limited budget prefers a hotel with a better image at a less convenient location than a hotel with worse image and a better location.

## Implications

Business success depends on understanding customers' needs and expectations. This survey's findings indicated that front desk services, image, security, common facilities and bathrooms are the most important attributes for Chinese business travelers in hotel selection. On front desk services and image, as explained earlier, hotel image is important to Chinese guests (Smith 2006), and Chu and Choi (2000) discovered that service quality is the key choice-determining factor of both Asian and Western travellers. Therefore, hotels in China should allocate their resources more to the maintenance and improvement of basic facilities, front desk services and image. That is, to what the Chinese business travel seeks when choosing a hotel.

## Limitations

Doctoral dissertations are often constrained in their scope by a lack of resources, time, or funding. This research study was limited by all of these factors and additional factors applicable to China and its environment.

China's hotel industry has transformed rapidly during the last 20 years. New hotels and new services have changed the competitive conditions as well as customers' expectations. China's economic growth has created a new class of customers in age and gender, especially when business travellers are considered, with changing tastes and preferences. New government policies and regulations have also impacted on the industry. As a result, changes are happening faster than research studies can capture. The results of this research were developed based on data that was collected in late June 2006, when the business climate was at its best. The hotel industry as well as customer needs may change, and any changes can influence the sentiments and the behaviour of Chinese business travellers and skew the research results. Therefore, further studies should be conducted on a regular basis to maintain an accurate reflection of the situation.

Another limitation is the cultural mindset of respondents. Unlike Westerners, Chinese people are not used to openness and frank expression of their opinions. The old habit of being extra nice to strangers and the emphasis on ‘face’ and ‘ego’ might alter the research findings slightly (Smith 2006). Therefore, to overcome this potential limitation, data in this study was collected on an anonymous and confidential basis.

In addition, respondents tended to be located in the prosperous cities along the coast of China. They are upwardly mobile executives whose lifestyle might be different from their counterparts in the inland areas. Therefore, the results might not be representative of the whole country.

Finally, all respondents are busy, impatient executives. The survey questionnaire was limited to enable completion within 15 minutes. This meant that it could not be constructed to explore more in-depth or complex issues relating to the decision-making process. As a result, research findings were limited to only those issues that could be assessed in this reasonably short survey.

## **Researcher’s retrospective**

### ***Genesis of research***

When I grew up in China during the 1990s, deluxe hotel properties were always a symbol of a new economy and a new future for Chinese business. Walking into a five-star hotel lobby, I was excited and fascinated with the atmosphere and the working environment for the hotel staff. Right then, I told myself that the hotel industry is where I am going to be.

When I worked for the investment banking firms of Hartcourt and Fintel, I always volunteered for any assignment relating to the hospitality industry. In addition, I was asked to travel throughout the region and I was able to stay in many of the hotels I had dreamed about.

From this desire and this experience, my topic for the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) research naturally involved the hotel industry and its most important customers, the business travellers. The preference and criteria of Chinese business travellers in hotel selection became my specialised subject due to my Chinese background and experience.

### ***Hurdles that had to be overcome***

The first problem related to the focus of the literature review. I was too ambitious in trying to cover too many subjects. Luckily, with help and guidance from my supervisor, I was able to select only useful items significantly related to my topic. The second problem was the initially low response rate of my mail questionnaire. I responded by initiating a follow-up mailing. This was the right solution as a much greater response was received following this reminder. My third problem was my English writing skills. It took many long hours of editing and corrections. My supervisor and my editor helped out too.

### ***Relationships***

Dr Carmen Cox, my supervisor, has been the guiding force during the whole process. She was readily available to assist, to encourage, to advise and to correct my work at every stage of the project. She had the biggest impact on my successful completion of the thesis.

The DBA director, Associate Professor Peter Miller, was another gracious contributor of advice, suggestions and assistance on my topic selection as well as other subjects of the research. The hard-working administrators, Ms Sue White and Ms Susan Riordan, helped to smooth the paperwork and other office procedures for this thesis and made my life much easier during the working period.

## ***Reflection***

Even though I had worked for three years in investment banking, the topic related to the hospitality industry was quite new and challenging. My thesis has added greatly to my personal knowledge of the industry and created some unique and exciting prospects for my career.

It took me three years to complete the DBA program, and the results gained from this experience were very valuable, from research method to data analysis, from personal time management to creative writing.

The completion of my DBA program brought me a new skill set, valuable knowledge, and best of all, exciting opportunities. I felt all my sacrifices during the research project were worthwhile and my selection of Southern Cross University as a learning environment was excellent.

## ***Researcher's profile***

Dr Xiao Han Xue is currently a business consultant for a private consulting firm in Sydney, Australia. She graduated from Southern Cross University in July 2008 with her doctoral degree (Doctor of Business Administration). Her MBA was also from Southern Cross. Before coming to Australia, Dr Xue worked for Hartcourt, an investment banking firm in Shanghai and for Fintel, another investment firm in Hong Kong. She grew up in Shanghai and attended Shanghai Normal University.

## ***Supervisor's reflection***

### ***Genesis of the research***

The candidate, Xiao Han (Landy), already had a very clear vision of the research issue that she wanted to investigate when she first came to discuss DBA supervision with me. She was keen to change her career path and focus on an industry in which she had no previous experience—the hotel industry. Conducting an intensive research project to explore how Chinese travellers select a hotel when travelling for business was an ideal way for her to learn about the industry while also developing knowledge that would help the hotel industry in China and elsewhere. Landy was also keen to research how satisfied these travellers were with the existing standards of hotels in China and to uncover what factors relating to hotel facilities and guest services were most important to the Chinese business traveller. Embarking on a DBA when the researcher already has a clear idea of what they want to explore (and why) makes the whole research process so much easier—for both candidate and supervisor.

### ***Hurdles***

The typical hurdles were experienced in the early stages of the research—for both candidate and supervisor. For Landy, this involved sourcing, locating and understanding the vast amount of previous research literature in the relevant areas of the hotel industry, hotel selection criteria and guest satisfaction. As with many research topics, there was a large volume of material that had to be read, digested and summarised in order to write a solid literature review chapter before the specific research questions could be developed. I know, through discussions with Landy, that this caused some frustration as she was eager to conduct her own research, but had to jump through the literature hurdle first to ensure that she was not about to conduct research that had already been done. Summarising and critiquing the work of other researchers can be a daunting task for any researcher.

A second hurdle, for both the candidate and myself as supervisor, was working out how to access a useful sample of relevant respondents (that is, Chinese nationals who travelled within China for business reasons), that matched the typical characteristics of this market segment, particularly in a country with such a huge population. Having not conducted survey research in China myself, as the supervisor I had to be guided by the candidate who understands both the culture of China as well as the way to access members of this market in her home country. Fortunately, Landy was able to use her previous business contacts to gain access to a suitable business association database that allowed her to conduct a mail out to people who were known to travel within China for business reasons. This was a great solution to overcome this research hurdle—resulting in a good response rate from relevant respondents, which were critical to obtaining meaningful results for her study.

Another hurdle, from my perspective as the supervisor, was keeping pace with Landy's progress. As a full-time, on-campus DBA candidate, she progressed through her 'tasks' very quickly—which made keeping up with chapter revisions, reading drafts of new chapters and getting feedback to her as quickly as she moved through the various phases of the research quite a challenge for the supervisor!

### ***Relationships***

From the first day that Landy arrived on my office doorstep looking for a supervisor, there was a very good rapport between us. She was able to articulate very clearly what she wanted to achieve through her DBA research and early discussions suggested we had very compatible interests and approaches to work. Throughout the DBA candidate-supervisor relationship, communication was easy between us and a very relaxed and enjoyable series of meetings evolved. Getting the research done and guiding Landy through the DBA process was a relatively easy task due to the fact that we were able to meet regularly in person and have some fun along the way. Open communication is such a key ingredient to the doctoral research melting-pot! During a visit I made to China for work while supervising Landy, I was able to catch a glimpse of her life 'away from the studies' as she showed me around her home town, Shanghai. This was a rare experience, having the opportunity to see the non-student life of an international DBA candidate. Learning about Landy's life in China and getting to know her as a person was all part of the process—I learnt a lot from her too. This, to me, is an ideal outcome from a research candidate-supervisor relationship. The outcome is not just about the completion of a major piece of research, but also about learning about the person behind the student guise. It was a pleasure supervising Dr Landy and getting to know her, and I look forward to staying in touch with her and seeing 'what comes next' for her career and life away from work.

### ***Reflection***

Supervising Landy was a really great experience. Her research unearthed some interesting and useful knowledge about China's hotel industry, and it has been recognised by academic peers through pending publication in the *Journal of China Tourism Research*. Through her hard work, commitment and determination to complete the DBA program, she has produced a really useful study from which other researchers and hotel industry practitioners can benefit. As a supervisor, she was the ideal DBA candidate. She was driven by both a desire to learn the complex process of conducting doctoral level research and her aim to gain an in depth knowledge of a new industry in which she hopes to work. A driven candidate, a viable and topical research focus, and an effective candidate-supervisor relationship all helped to ensure a smooth path to successful completion of Dr Xue's research.

## Supervisor's Profile

Dr Carmen Cox is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing in the Graduate College of Management, Southern Cross University. Carmen completed her PhD in tourism management in 2001 through Griffith University's School of Tourism and Hotel Management. Carmen's industry experience has been in the hotel and tourism industry where she has worked as Marketing Manager and undertaken a number of consultancy projects for clients during her employment with the Centre for Tourism and Hotel Management Research. She has worked with clients on projects including forecasting tourism arrivals to Australia, assessing the performance of tourism destinations, sustainable development, social impacts of tourism and various marketing issues.

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# CHAPTER 11

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## Organisation Survey— Retention in Government-Run Construction Enterprises in China

*Ying Zhang & Michelle Wallace*

### **Title of the study**

The Relationship between Motivation Factors and the Retention of Key Management and Professional Technical Staff in Government-Run Construction Enterprises in China

### **Abstract**

As the issue of skills shortage becomes more prevalent, finding ways to engage existing talent and retain key staff has become the top priority. However, there is scant information on this topic in China especially for government owned organisations. The purpose of the research was to test a retention model developed within a western context and determine whether the model can be adapted to government-run construction enterprises in China. The research presents the results of a retention survey undertaken with 400 key management and professional technical staff from 200 government-run enterprises in China. Nine of 11 motivation factors were found to be positively correlated to retention. One factor, responsibility, was only partially correlated to retention and one factor, job security, presented no relationship. The results also indicated that two of the nine positively correlated factors, fair treatment and the opportunity for learning and development, were imperative to retain both groups of key staff. Two factors, cash payment and challenging and interesting work, were considered important to employees with lower-level positions or more years of experience. In contrast, benefit rewards and responsibility were more powerful to retain higher-level employees or those with less work experience. The research explored reasons for this apparent anomaly and made recommendations about suitable retention strategies in government-run construction enterprises in China.

### **Keywords**

China, retention, motivation, government-run enterprises, construction industry

## Introduction to the study and brief literature review

The skills shortage is a contemporary issue of critical importance around the world (Watson 2006) and retention of staff has become the top issue in human resource management (HRM) (Hopkins 2008). Like many other nations, China is currently experiencing a shortage of managerial staff with the skills and experience necessary for industrial modernisation and the number of available high-level management and professional technical staff are far from adequate to meet the needs of development (Zhang, Yhang & Zhang 2002), especially in the construction industry (Liu et al. 2007).

Although there is some literature on retention of employees in western contexts, there are very few published papers on retention of employees in the Chinese context. Due to the differences in culture, regulations and policies between western countries and China, and because of other factors including Confucian Heritage Culture and the 'three iron policies' including the iron rice bowl, iron positions and iron wages, there may be differences in what influences the retention of key employees. Therefore, the researcher assumed that not all retention theories and practices from western contexts could be directly applicable to China. In order to fill the knowledge gap and improve the development of government-run enterprises in China, this research focused on answering the following research problem:

*What is the relationship between motivation factors and the retention of key management and professional technical staff in government-run enterprises in China?*

The term 'construction' is semantically different in China compared to western countries. The research adopted the Chinese definition for the construction industry, which includes the two western terms of 'construction' and 'utilities'. According to a review of previous literature, this research summarised four main motivation structures, which included 11 motivation factors that can be controlled by organisations and can positively relate to staff retention. The four motivation are direct financial rewards, indirect financial rewards, job related factors and environment related factors. These structures consist of 11 elements include cash payment (Camilleri 2007), benefit rewards (Huff 2006), challenging and interesting work (Slagter 2007), responsibility (Butler & Waldroop 2001), advancement (Huang, Lin & Chuang 2006), performance feedback (Snape & Snape 2006), fair treatment (Chebat & Slusarczyk 2005), recognition (Gentry et al. 2007), opportunity for learning and development (Booth & Hammer 2007), open and frequent communication (Cleveland 2005), and job security (Harris & Simons 2005; Min 2002, 2007).

My research thus addressed retention in China, utilising the 11 motivation factors discussed above, which were developed into the hypotheses that follow and the retention model shown in Figure 11.1.

H1: Direct financial rewards (cash payment) have a positive correlation with retention

H2: Indirect financial rewards (benefit rewards) have a positive correlation with retention

H3: Job related factors have a positive correlation with retention

H3a: Challenging and interesting work has a positive correlation with retention

H3b: Increasing employee responsibilities has a positive correlation with retention

H3c: Advancement has a positive correlation with retention

H3d: Good performance feedback has a positive correlation with retention

H3e Recognition has a positive correlation with retention

H4: Environment related factors have a positive correlation with retention

H4a: Fair treatment has a positive correlation with retention

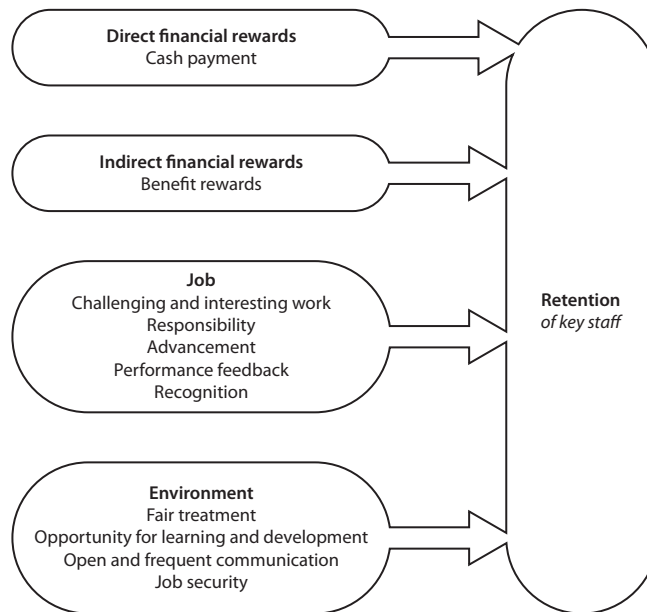
H4b: Opportunities for learning and development has a positive correlation with retention

H4c: Open and frequent communication has a positive correlation with retention

H4d: Job security has a positive correlation with retention

**Figure 11.1:**

*The model of motivation factors affecting retention*



## Method

Correlation research and a quantitative method were utilised for the following three reasons. Firstly, this research focused more on measuring the relationship between motivation factors and retention rather than building a new theory (Kumar 2005). Secondly, data was collected from a large sample and data analysis was based on statistical techniques. Finally, generalisation of results was expected.

## Population and sample

The total population of this research was approximately 120,000 management and professional technical staff in government-run construction enterprises in China (Beijing Municipal Construction Committee 2007). To target this population, the research focused on government-run construction organisations with Level 1 qualifications because approximately 80 percent of their employees are key management and professional technical staff and these organisations win major construction contracts. The participants were chosen by a simple random method and a sample size of 400 was deemed adequate.

## ***Questionnaire design and development***

The questionnaire used closed questions. Part One focused on the attitudes of employees and Part Two on personal details. A seven-point Likert-type scale was used in Part One and nominal and ordinal scales in Part Two. The researcher used several methods to increase reliability and validity. Firstly, all items of Part One were developed in terms of the literature review and some relevant scales were adapted. Secondly, the number of items for each construct was at least five in order to measure every variable because higher reliability and validity are associated with an increasing number of items (Bordens & Abbott 2005). Thirdly, the questionnaire was pilot tested (Davis 2005). SPSS software was used to do the statistical analysis for checking the correlation and homogeneity of the composite variables to ensure reliability and validity.

## ***Data analysis in the full survey process***

In the full survey, the paper-based questionnaires were distributed to 1300 potential participants who were key staff in the two organisations. These organisations had staff in all parts of China, and in fact comprised 200 separate enterprises allied with the parent organisation. Four hundred questionnaires were returned and the response rate was 32.5 percent.

## **Findings**

### ***Preliminary data analysis***

Before doing the analysis on the relationship between motivation factors and retention, the 12 composite variables were checked and proven to have good reliability and validity. Therefore all 12 scales could be used and discussed in further analysis by the *t*-test, correlations and multiple linear regression.

### ***Results from *t*-tests***

In this research all returned questionnaires came from the two government-run construction organisations, which had numerous subsidiaries around the country. The results of the *t*-test indicated that the majority of data about motivation factors came from two different populations. Therefore, the data from the two organisations, called Organisation 1 and Organisation 2, were first analysed separately and then analysed together. In order to identify the differences between the two groups, the *t*-test was used for the demographic analysis. The test found that the participants from Organisation 1 had higher-level positions and fewer years of work experience than those in Organisation 2.

### ***Conclusions about hypotheses***

The results from the correlation test, as Table 11.1 shows, indicate that nine of the 11 hypotheses were supported, signalling that the motivation factors they tested were all positively related to retention. The nine motivation factors were cash payment, benefit rewards, advancement, recognition, challenging and interesting work, performance feedback, fair treatment, opportunities for learning and development, and open and frequent communication.

**Table 11.1:***Conclusions as they relate to the various hypotheses*

Hypothesis	Results
Cash payment is positively related to retention	Positive relationship (supported)
Benefit rewards is positively related to retention	Positive relationship (supported)
Advancement is positively related to retention	Positive relationship (supported)
Recognition is positively related to retention	Positive relationship (supported)
Responsibility is positively related to retention	Partial positive relationship (partially supported)
Challenging and interesting work is positively related to retention	Positive relationship (supported)
Performance feedback is positively related to retention	Positive relationship (supported)
Fair treatment is positively related to retention	Positive relationship (supported)
Opportunities for learning and development are positively related to retention	Positive relationship (supported)
Open and frequent communication is positively related to retention	Positive relationship (supported)
Job security is positively related to retention	No significant relationship (rejected)

However, one hypothesis related to responsibility was found to be only partially supported. Responsibility was significantly related to retention in Organisation 1 and its aggregated organisations, but was not significantly related to retention of employees in Organisation 2 who had lower-level positions but more years of work experience.

In addition, the results did not support the hypothesis that job security was positively related to retention. The results related to job security from this research differ from prior studies in western contexts, possibly because of the following reasons: the investigation was aimed at staff who worked in government-run construction organisations and those enterprises had previously followed the ‘iron rice bowl’ policies, which were abolished in the 1980s. However, some inherited idea of ‘job-for-life’ may still influence employees’ thinking (Yu & Egri 2005). This research focused on key management and professional technical staff who commonly had more ability and work experience, rather than unskilled workers. These highly skilled groups therefore did not seek job security and they preferred to have the freedom to look for other jobs if they so choose (Smithson & Lewis 2000).

### ***Results from multiple linear regression***

The results of the test for multiple linear regressions reveal three significant findings, as Table 11.2 shows.

**Table 11.2:**  
*Comparison of results from multiple linear regression*

Organisation	Motivation factors that uniquely contribute to the relationship with retention					
<b>Organisation 1</b>		benefit rewards	responsibility		fair treatment	learning and development
<b>Organisation 2</b>	cash payment			challenging and interesting work	fair treatment	learning and development
<b>Aggregated organisations</b>				challenging and interesting work	fair treatment	learning and development

Fair treatment and opportunities to learn and develop have the greatest power to motivate employees, and these factors contribute more significantly to the retention of key management and professional technical staff than other motivation factors. Fair treatment may be important because of the influence of Confucian values. Once employees feel they are not receiving fair treatment in their organisation, they will feel that they have lost face (Tang & Ward 2003). The importance of opportunities for learning and development may also be due to the influence of traditional Chinese culture, because Confucian values emphasise the importance of education and obedience to authority (Whitley, Cheung & Quan 2000).

Cash payment and challenging and interesting work were each found to have made a unique contribution to the equation of retention, with higher levels of retention of employees with more professional technical staff (or lower-level managers) and more years of work experience amongst employees. The reasons for this result may be that cash payment is the lowest need in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and that lower-level employees tend to be motivated by lower-level needs (Stone 2005). Challenging and interesting work was also found to be a good motivation factor for the retention of employees who have lower-level positions and a great many years of work experience. The reason for this may be that challenging and interesting work is more attractive to employees who have more work experience.

Finally, in this research it seems that benefit rewards and responsibility uniquely contribute to retention, and most significantly to the retention of employees with higher-level positions and fewer years of work experience. The reason for benefit rewards being important to this particular group of employees may be due to the fact that China has some benefit rewards, such as housing, which are only aimed at high-level managers and not at general staff (Chiu, Luk & Tang 2002). Responsibility is another factor that has uniquely contributed to employees who have higher-level positions and fewer years of work experience. This could be because higher-level employees believe they have greater capabilities and therefore want to be in charge and take on more duties in their job (Ituma & Simpson 2007).

## Implications

This research makes some valuable contributions to literature and methodology. Firstly, in response to the findings in previous literature, I established a theoretical framework that filled in the knowledge gap regarding retention in China, and this linked motivation factors with retention. Furthermore the findings show considerable similarities between motivators for Chinese employees and western employees (with one notable exception—that there is no relationship between job security and retention in government-run construction enterprises in China), even

though there are significant cultural differences between China and western countries. This research proposed recommendations to potentially help government-run construction enterprises in China retains different employee groups. The findings for this research could be applied to all government-run enterprises in China because they all have similar operating methods and organisational structures. Finally, this research used and tested the 12 scales derived from western contexts in the Chinese context. This research is important because the existing scales are based on literature being used in a non-traditional environment. It has therefore contributed to further development of the scale. Furthermore, the finding that job security is not a significant motivator for this group of Chinese workers is new knowledge and warrants further investigation.

## Limitations

As with any research, there are several limitations related to this study. Firstly, this investigation was only based on government-run construction enterprises with Level 1 qualifications in China, and was influenced by the fact that only two typical construction organisations agreed to do this survey. Due to this, the findings and conclusions may not apply to construction organisations that are different in size, qualification levels and location. Secondly, fair treatment and the opportunity for learning and development were found to uniquely contribute to the retention of key management and professional technical staff in government-run construction organisations. However, this study did not identify the underlying factors that bring about fair treatment and promote opportunities for learning and development.

Based on the above limitations, and in order to complete the motivation and retention theory and practice in organisations, further research could explore whether this model could be used in construction enterprises with other levels of qualifications, (such as Level 3 or Level 4), or in different industries or different countries. Moreover, further research could investigate the underlying aspects of fair treatment and the opportunity for learning and development, which have been proven to significantly influence retention in the Chinese cultural context.

## Researcher's retrospective

### *Genesis of research*

There were two primary reasons for my fostering an interest in researching retention of key management and professional technical staff in China. The first was derived from the work experience of my family members and myself. As an employee in the banking industry, I found that high employee turnover rates occurred in general commercial and state-owned banks and the managers suffered from having no effective means of retaining key management staff and outstanding employees. These phenomena also took place in the construction industry, according to the experience of my family members, who hold senior management positions in various government-run construction enterprises. When employees move on to other enterprises, they take with them vital skills and customers and so profits also transfer to these enterprises, which thus become powerful competitors. However, even when faced with this challenge, the majority of managers had no effective way to solve this problem. Most believed that increasing the income of key staff was the only sure way to effectively motivate employees. For this reason, my personal curiosity drove me to find the answer to how to retain those key employees.

Secondly, after a review of the literature, I found that the issue of how to retain key employees had become the top issue in HRM and much attention had already been paid to this by many scholars and managers who worked in various types of organisations. Some literature was found

on retention of employees from western countries, however, there was very little literature on retention in China and there were no published papers on retention in the construction industry in China. Due to differences in culture, laws and policies between the western and Chinese contexts, it was possible that these elements could impact on the results of retention of employees. Thus the literature and identified gaps in knowledge informed my research.

## ***Process***

This research took over 22 months of full-time study to complete, with my supervisor, Michelle Wallace, working with me. I commenced the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program following the completion of my MPA. To amend a lack of basic knowledge of HRM I read several books and articles on HRM from references that were provided by Michelle. Once I had gained some basic knowledge, I was able to concentrate on the theory and practice of retention. In total, the process of completing a draft of the literature review, Chapter 2, took approximately six months. Under the guidance and organisation of Michelle, one conference paper was submitted during this period.

Quantitative methods were adopted in this research. In order to increase the quality of questionnaire design, the expertise of Dr Margo Poole was called on by Michelle to gain additional academic support in research design and development of survey items. The suggestions from Margo and Michelle were very helpful and this process then built a good basis for the data analysis. The process of designing the questionnaire, drafting the method (Chapter 3), and seeking approval from the ethics committee took a period of three months, and were accomplished by September 2007.

The data collection was completed in China in the following two months of 2007. At the same time, the first conference paper that had been submitted in June 2007 was accepted and I attended the international conference in China. With my collected data in hand, I came back to Australia at the end of November 2007. It then took two months to carry out the data analysis, and five and half months to update the literature, finish the conclusion chapter (Chapter 5) and complete an additional three, international, double-blind, peer reviewed conference papers, which were submitted following my supervisor's guidance. Finally, after some final editing and revision in accordance with Michelle's recommendations, and following the feedback from the three conference papers, the final thesis was submitted in October 2008. The conference papers were presented in November and December of 2008.

## ***Hurdles that had to be overcome***

There were a number of changes in direction, the first being that I preferred to focus on building and testing the model that would be run through the whole process of recruitment and selection, motivation, and retention. After reviewing and summarising the relevant literature, this research then only concentrated on establishing and testing a retention model. Furthermore, after I completed the preliminary draft for data analysis, according to the results from the *t*-test, it was found that all participants were from different populations. This research then, not only focused on finding simple relationships between motivation factors and retention, but also focused on finding different retention methods with regard to different groups of employees. This was an element that was not forecasted before. In accordance with the direction changing again, the literature review was further revised.

The other hurdle I faced was that it took longer than expected to design the questionnaire. In the elementary project for questionnaire design, I tried to design all of the questionnaire items by

myself and that was quite difficult to do. After meeting with Michelle and Margo, a new design plan was used following their suggestions. I adapted the existing scale from previous literature instead of using my original ideas to measure the variables. Although the questionnaire design took longer, it proved to be worthwhile, as the outcome of the preliminary data analysis was positive.

## ***Relationships***

There were several relationships that were necessary for me to successfully complete this research. These key relationships included the close association with my supervisor, with my fellow DBA candidates and with my family.

I was fortunate to have had Michelle Wallace as my supervisor. Our relationship has always been harmonious and positive. In the beginning, I lacked confidence to carry out this research. Michelle made me aware of the big picture and the planning time schedule for the whole DBA program. She then made regular fortnightly face-to-face meetings with me in order to guide me, and to ensure my preliminary design was on track. She also gave me encouragement and motivated me to work hard during this period. After I completed the data collection, I gained more confidence with my research, and so my supervisor then gave me the opportunity to think more independently so as to build my independent problem solving abilities. She also provided constructive suggestions to promote my individual development. For example, she encouraged and supported my decision to contribute conference papers and journal articles and to attend international conferences that helped me to open my eyes to the academic arena and so gain many benefits. As a tolerant supervisor, Michelle always provided me with prompt feedback and high quality academic suggestions in order to move my thesis forward.

During the whole DBA program, I felt that the core relationship between supervisor and DBA candidate was very important. Key academic suggestions and recommendations can only come from the supervisor in order to direct and improve my research. Following my supervisor's suggestions to revise and reformat my thesis in the final stage, the content of my thesis now appears more logical and the thesis is swankier.

The good relationships I formed with my fellow doctoral candidates were also important in the DBA program. Although my topic was different from other DBA candidates, the moral support and numerous academic discussions we took part in were a good motivational factor to support me to be successful. Other key relationships that stimulated me to successfully carry out my research include the benevolent connection with my family, even though all of my family members, who continually give me powerful mental support and encouragement, live far from me.

## ***Reflection***

I attained many more benefits than I expected when I decided to commence with the DBA program. This research has provided me with a general perspective on the whole research process and has increased the extent and depth of my knowledge in the discipline of HRM. The whole process from reviewing previous literature, shaping the preliminary retention model, to collecting and analysing data, gaining the final results and linking all the sections of the thesis, helped me to gain a sound understanding of how the theoretical model can be used and practiced in different cultural backgrounds. From the results of this research, I learnt some unique motivation and retention methods that will provide useful knowledge in preparation for seeking good employment opportunities in the future.

Secondly, I have enjoyed the whole research process, especially working with Michelle. I am impressed with my supervisor's organisational abilities. As an expert guide, she always helped me to organise my time and minimise expenses by encouraging me to simultaneously carry out my research and take part in conferences throughout the whole DBA program. For example, Michelle suggested I use Endnote software for referencing, which helped me to save time when checking references. I also collected data and participated in an international conference at the same time in 2007, which was both time and cost effective. This efficient plan also helped me avoid wasting time while I was awaiting the results from the questionnaires. Before the final revision of my thesis, I received feedback from another three conference papers and this feedback came from six academic experts. After completing the important step of revising my research after taking this feedback into consideration, I felt more confident in submitting my thesis. Therefore, based on conscientious guidance from Michelle, I now feel that I would be interested in undertaking another research project that may once again focus on the area of HRM.

In addition, after the two years studying the DBA, I feel that I have become more confident and independent than I anticipated before. These positive changes in my personality and attitude will undoubtedly benefit me in my future life.

### ***Candidate's profile***

Ying Zhang was born in Beijing, China and has been a doctoral candidate at Southern Cross University. She has received the Master of Professional Administration and Bachelor of Management and Professional Studies from Southern Cross University, and other qualifications from the Beijing Institute of Civil Engineering and Architecture and the Capital University of Economics and Business in China. Ying Zhang has two years work experience, as a manager in the Beijing Branch of the Shanghai Pudong Development Bank. Her research interests include human resource management, motivation, retention modeling and practices and talent evaluation.

## **Supervisor's reflection**

### ***Relationships***

Although a doctoral thesis is a result of a student's labours there are many who contribute to the student's development as a researcher. In Ying's case the Graduate College of Management's research methodologist at the time, Dr Margo Poole, was an incredibly valuable support to both of us. She was part of the expert panel that reviewed the survey and provided in depth statistical advice during the analysis and write up phases. Regular three-way face-to-face meetings helped our communication during the survey design phase and email communication supported the relationship during writing up of the analysis chapter. Margo and I worked within defined roles so it was not the case of 'too many cooks' and Ying followed up on all suggestions.

Another valuable relationship for Ying, especially in the early stages of the literature review was with our highly skilled library staff, Di Clarke and Jill Dombrow, who could provide development in advanced search skills. While there is now quite a literature on business, organisations and HRM in China it tends to focus on commercial enterprises and there is less on government owned organisations. Ying has gathered an exemplary bibliography on HRM in China that is a resource to other researchers.

Students for whom English is not a first language encounter challenges with expression in academic language and the subtleties of syntax. Ying has worked with the English language specialists at Southern Cross University and like most of our students has had an editor proof her final draft. These professional relationships are also vital for a student.

Ying also developed a good relationship with other DBA students and, because she was a little further ahead time wise in her studies in comparison to my other four on-campus international DBA students, was able to help guide them in our group meetings/seminars. This also provided her with valuable opportunities to mentor and teach others.

The literature suggests that students from Confucian Heritage Cultures (CHC) have an expectation of a warm, guiding relationship with their teachers, who demonstrate interest in the student as a whole person (Watkins & Biggs 1996; Watkins 2000). Fortunately, this is in synergy with my educational philosophy although I do not have a CHC background. I have been able to discuss personal and cultural issues with Ying, which has enhanced our relationship and inter-cultural communication skills (Teekens 2003; Wallace & Dunn 2005). This is a benefit for me as I teach a number of international and transnational students and benefits Ying for future employment.

## ***Reflection***

Ying came to the DBA process with highly developed numerical skills and an excellent grasp of statistics. Her natural bent was to undertake a survey. As she was exploring an area on which there was little specific literature this was a very appropriate approach. However, she needed to develop a good understanding of the HRM discipline and retention specifically. I also introduced Ying to literature relating to national culture as this is a mediating factor in HR practices. Her topic thus expanded to include a positivist survey on retention and a more nuanced analysis of cultural factors that may influence retention, adding depth and another string to her academic bow.

All DBA students must present at symposia and this is demanding especially early on in candidature. For students whose first language is not English the prospect of presenting to thirty or forty peers and professors is even more daunting. What I did with Ying (and all my students) is give feedback on the clarity of her written PowerPoint presentations in the weeks prior to the symposia and then give her the opportunity to rehearse the presentation with a few other students present. This helped iron out some language and confidence issues.

Ying has presented at three symposia and each time has demonstrated increasing mastery of her material in terms of the literature, method and statistical and other analysis. As I find with all students, including those for whom English is their first language, when they attain mastery of their subject matter their language becomes more fluent and less jargon laden and their confidence increases. Now Ying does not need the rehearsal and can give other students very valuable pre-symposium feedback.

Initially we met weekly or fortnightly however as time went on less frequent but more intense meetings took place. Early meetings were more structured with me offering Ying material or search tips to enhance her literature. As time went on Ying asked more questions and I could take the role of mentor. In the last six months of candidature she led the discussion and came to meetings with draft chapters meticulously marked with Post It notes for every single query. This attention to detail has resulted in a comprehensive thesis.

Ying was very fortunate in that her data gathering went very smoothly. Some students find access to organisations more problematic than they had anticipated or that their survey is flawed. Ying obtained access to two very co-operative organisations, her pilot indicated that

the survey was generally sound but did need some modification and she readily achieved the desired sample size. Networks and good planning were the keys to this success.

Ying did complete her thesis in an excellent timeframe. She was a full-time, on-campus students and one of the most diligent people I have worked with. I would estimate that Ying devoted at least fifty hours per week to her studies with 'breaks' only to gather data or attend conferences. We did not observe trimester breaks but just kept plugging on. Candidates who have work and family commitments and are studying part-time would more realistically look to completion in four years.

I encouraged Ying to present at conferences from the outset. She presented at four conferences during her candidature with several benefits. The double blind, peer review process gave her valuable feedback that she immediately incorporated into refinements of the thesis. She could also list these published proceedings in the introductory pages of her thesis as evidence of her scholarship. Presenting at conferences, particularly with an Asian focus, has exposed her to others' research and has helped her develop valuable networks for the future. Last but definitely not least, we have developed a warm and respectful friendship that I hope will lead to other research opportunities.

### ***Supervisor's profile***

Michelle Wallace has worked in the university sector for nineteen years and has had a range of management experiences. Prior to joining academe she undertook human resource development roles in the public sector. Currently Michelle is Associate Professor in Human Resources in the Graduate College of Management at Southern Cross University. Her research interests focus on the intersection of human resource development and management, attraction and retention of staff, organisational change, and women and work. Michelle teaches post-graduate students in Australia and off-shore and has a particular interest in critical management studies and transnational/international teaching and learning.

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# CHAPTER 12

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## Client Survey—Service Quality of Singapore Stock Brokers

*Lee Yik-Chee & Geoffrey Meredith*

### **Title of the Study**

Relationships between Service Quality, Customer Perceived Value, Customer Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions in the Securities Remisier Services: an Empirical Study in Singapore

### **Abstract**

Research on the relationships between service quality, customer perceived value, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions of customers in securities brokerage services is very limited or almost non-existent. This study provides empirical evidence of antecedents to behavioural intentions of customers in securities brokerage services with a case from Singapore. A mail survey with a total of 169 useable returns was analysed. Findings suggested that the role of service providers in customer decision making has an effect on perceived service quality. The effect of customer knowledge on customer satisfaction was also confirmed. Direct impact of service quality on word-of-mouth referrals and indirect effects of service quality through customer perceived value and customer satisfaction on repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers were found significant. Direct effects of customer perceived value and customer satisfaction on both repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals were supported by the findings. In addition, indirect impacts of customer perceived value through customer satisfaction on repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals were significant.

### **Keywords**

Singapore, service quality, securities brokerage services

### **Introduction to the study and brief literature review**

Service quality is an important issue in service marketing literature. Previous research indicates that service quality is a critical component of customer perceptions of service (Durvasula et al 2006). This element is a critical predictor of perception of value (Bolton & Drew 1991) and is an antecedent to customer satisfaction (Brady, Cronin & Brand 2002). Although service quality is so important in service industries, empirical research examining the service aspects of securities brokerage service is very limited or almost non-existent (Durvasula et al 2006). This research is to provide empirical evidence of factors that influence customer perceptions of service quality,

customer perceived value, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions in securities brokerage services in Singapore. Securities brokerage services in this research refer to the services provided by securities remisiers (self-employed commission-based brokers).

Previous research has suggested that service quality, customer perceived value and customer satisfaction are antecedents to behavioural intentions (Cronin, Brady & Hult 2000; Durvasula et al 2003/2004). Two key types of behavioural intentions or outcomes are recognised, namely, behavioural loyalty and attitudinal loyalty. The former is related to repurchases and the latter is related to positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Durvasula et al 2003/2004). Loyalty of customers leads to profitability of firms (Hallowell 1996). In spite of research conducted on service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions, researchers have not reached consensus on causal relationships between antecedents to behavioural intentions (Cronin, Brady & Hult 2000).

In general, there has been limited research on securities brokerage services. Previous studies on service quality of securities brokerage by Chan, Chan and Yau (1991), Yau and Chan (1995), and Lin and Wei (1999) focused on expectation of investors in the process of selecting a broker. This present study is an extension of their service, to provide further empirical evidence for investors' expectation and their behavioural intentions (behavioural loyalty and attitudinal loyalty). This study clarifies the relationships between these variables with specific reference to the securities brokerage services, and hence fills a gap in research outcomes reported.

Arising from the research problem, this research has four objectives:

1. To identify the effects of customer demographic variables on service quality and customer satisfaction.
2. To establish the effects of customer expertise on service quality and customer satisfaction.
3. To examine the effects of service quality, customer perceived value and satisfaction on behavioural intentions (repurchases of services and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers) of customers who use the service of securities remisiers.
4. To investigate the causal relationships between service quality, customer perceived value, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions.

The above objectives lead to six hypotheses tested in this research:

H1: Customer demographics have direct impacts on both service quality and customer satisfaction.

H2: Customer expertise has direct impacts on both service quality and customer satisfaction.

H3: Service quality has direct impacts on behavioural intentions (repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers).

H4: Service quality has indirect impacts through customer perceived value and customer satisfaction on behavioural intentions (repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers).

H5: Customer perceived value has direct effects and indirect effects through customer satisfaction on behavioural intentions (repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers).

H6: Customer satisfaction has direct effects on behavioural intentions (repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers).

## Method

A self-administrated and close-ended questionnaire was designed and used for this study. The questionnaire had four parts: part one assessed customer expectations and perceptions of service quality, part two examined investors' perceived value, part three evaluated the overall performance of remisiers and investors' future behavioural intentions, and part four provided a personal profile of demographic variables and customer expertise levels.

**Table 12.1:**

*Example of items developed for the questionnaire*

		Extremely Disagree				Extremely Agree			
30.	Overall service quality I receive from my remisier is above my ideal level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
31.	Overall service quality I receive from my remisier is acceptable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
32.	Overall service quality I receive from my remisier is unacceptable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
33.	The overall service provided by my remisier is value for money.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
34.	I feel satisfied with the service of my remisier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
35.	I feel dissatisfied with the service of my remisier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

The sample for this survey was randomly drawn from securities investors in Singapore who used the securities remisier services to complete one or more transactions in the stock market in the year preceding the survey. A questionnaire is a survey instrument used to examine perceptions and behaviours of selected participants (Hussey & Hussey 1997, p161). Using mail survey questionnaire is more feasible than interviews in terms of time, sample size and resources. Thus, a self-administrated questionnaire with a stamped and self-addressed return envelope was mailed through five remisiers to 300 investors representing their clients without any identity of the respondents being disclosed to the researcher. The remisiers who agreed to assist in the mail survey were randomly selected from five securities trading corporate members of the Singapore Stock Exchange. The mail survey questionnaire was posted in August 2007 and participation was on voluntary basis with no incentive given. At the end of the survey, 169 useable returns were received and analysed.

Data collected from respondents were analysed using SPSS to test the proposed hypotheses. Several statistical methods were used to establish the association between two or more variables, to test differences between two or more means of variables and to examine the hypotheses for this study.

Statistical tools used in the data analysis included: Pearson correlation coefficient, partial correlation coefficient, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality, Levene statistic test of homogeneity of variances, Chi-square, t-test, ANOVA, multiple regression, Kruskal-Wallis H test and Mann-Whitney U test.

## Findings

The following section provides results of hypothesis testing. Statistical tests indicated that there was no significant impact of customer demographics on service quality or on customer satisfaction. T-test, one way ANOVA test and Kruskal-Wallis test (H test) were used respectively to test the statistical significance of impacts of customer demographics on service quality as shown in Table 12.2.

**Table 12.2:**  
*The test results of Hypothesis 1*

Demographics	Statistical test	Mann-Whitney U	t	Chi-square	F	df	Sig.
<b>Effect on service quality</b>							
Gender	t-test (2-tailed)		.043			167	.966
Marital status	t-test (2-tailed)		.783			167	.435
Age	ANOVA (1-way)				.800	5	.551
Educational level	ANOVA (1-way)				2.696	2	.070
Income	ANOVA (1-way)				1.084	4	.366
Occupation	Kruskal-Wallis			5.686		7	.577
<b>Effect on customer satisfaction</b>							
Gender	Mann-Whitney	3404.000					.845 (2-tailed)
Marital status	Mann-Whitney	2759.000					.704 (2-tailed)
Age	Kruskal-Wallis			7.038		5	.218
Educational level	Kruskal-Wallis			.953		2	.621
Income	ANOVA (1-way)				1.990	4	.098
Occupation	ANOVA (1-way)				.445	7	.872

T-test, one way ANOVA test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to test the items of Hypothesis 2 as shown in Table 12.3. The four items of customer expertise were tested for their impact on service quality and customer satisfaction. The results of the impact of customer expertise on service quality indicated that only one item—whether customer trading decision making was based on remisier’s recommendation—was found significant with  $\alpha = .001$  (significance level).

**Table 12.3:***The test results of Hypothesis 2*

Customer expertise	Statistical test	t	Chi-square	F	df	Sig.
<b>Effect on service quality</b>						
Trading decision making basis	t-test (2-tailed)	-3.379			167	.001
Number of year of Experience	ANOVA (1-way)			.770	3	.513
Trading frequency	ANOVA (1-way)			.419	4	.795
Investment Knowledge	Kruskal-Wallis		5.131		3	.162
<b>Effect on customer satisfaction</b>						
Trading decision making basis	t-test (2-tailed)	-1.253			167	.212
Number of year of Experience	Kruskal-Wallis		2.744		3	.433
Trading frequency	Kruskal-Wallis		2.620		4	.623
Investment Knowledge	Kruskal-Wallis		9.968		3	.019

Pearson correlation, partial correlation and multiple regression methods were used respectively for testing Hypotheses 3, 4, 5 and 6. Multiple regression method was used to determine the direct impacts of service quality on repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals as stated in Hypothesis 3. Test results suggested that the direct impact of service quality on repurchases was not significant at 95% confidence level with significance level  $\alpha = .251$ . Contrary to this result, the impact of service quality on word-of-mouth referrals was found significant at 95% confidence level.

The indirect effects of service quality through customer perceived value on repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers stated in Hypothesis 4 were found significant in the partial correlation test. When the effect of service quality was controlled, the correlation coefficient between customer perceived value and repurchases was .335 with significance level  $\alpha$  lesser than .001 (2-tailed). The correlation coefficient between customer perceived value and word-of-mouth was .341 with significance level  $\alpha$  lesser than .001 (2-tailed). These two coefficients were significant at 95% confidence level (significance level  $\alpha = .0005$ ). At zero-order level where the effect of service quality was not controlled, both coefficients increased to .588 and .621 respectively and the significance levels of these two coefficients remained at significance level  $\alpha$  lesser than .001 (2-tailed). These findings confirmed the significant indirect effects of service quality through customer perceived value on repurchases and word-of-mouth.

The direct and indirect effects of customer perceived value through customer satisfaction on repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers were tested in Hypothesis 5. The direct effects on both repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers were found statistically significant. The multiple regression model showed that standardised coefficient

Beta between customer perceived value and repurchases was .317 with significance level  $\alpha$  less than .001, while multiple regression model 3 provided the standardised coefficient Beta between customer perceived value and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers was .326 with significance level  $\alpha$  less than .001. These standardised coefficients indicated that at 95% confidence level the direct effects of customer perceived value on both repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers were statistically significant. The direct and indirect effects of customer perceived value on both repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers were found significant.

The last hypothesis (Hypothesis 6) stated that customer satisfaction has direct effects on both repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers. Multiple regression test results indicated that the direct effects of customer satisfaction were significant. The multiple regression model 2 presented the standardised coefficient Beta between customer satisfaction and repurchases was .410 with significance level  $\alpha$  lesser than .001. The multiple regression model also showed the standardised coefficient Beta between customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers was .172 with significance level  $\alpha = .043$ , which was considered statistically significant as the  $\alpha$  value lesser than .05. In other words, at 95% confidence level the direct effects of customer satisfaction on both repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers were statistically significant. A summary of the results of hypothesis testing is shown in Table 12.4. The hypotheses were revised and a new conceptual framework developed, as reported elsewhere.

**Table 12.4:**  
*Summary of hypotheses*

Hypothesis		Result
<b>H1:</b>	Customer demographics have direct impacts on both service quality and customer satisfaction.	Hypothesis 1 was rejected.
<b>H2:</b>	Customer expertise has direct impacts on both service quality and customer satisfaction.	Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.
<b>H3:</b>	Service quality has direct impacts on behavioural intentions (repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers).	Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.
<b>H4:</b>	Service quality has indirect impacts through customer perceived value and customer satisfaction on behavioural intentions (repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers).	Hypothesis 4 was supported.
<b>H5:</b>	Customer perceived value has direct effects and indirect effects through customer satisfaction on behavioural intentions (repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers).	Hypothesis 5 was supported.
<b>H6:</b>	Customer satisfaction has direct effects on behavioural intentions (repurchases and word-of-mouth referrals to new customers).	Hypothesis 6 was supported.

## Implications

The findings of this research facilitate securities investors to have a better understanding of the key factors for assessing the performance of their securities remisers. The results assist them to have more realistic expectations of the service provided by their securities remisers and to assess the service process and outcome of the service provided.

For the securities remisiers, the findings of this study enable them have a better understanding of the key factors that affect the behavioural loyalty (repurchases) and attitudinal loyalty (word-of-mouth referrals to new customers). This is important to them as customer loyalty can increase profitability (Hallowell 1996). These findings imply that securities remisiers need to devote more efforts to improve the areas that are highly important to the securities investors, such as reliability, responsiveness, accurate and timely executions of trading orders and advice on undue risks. Having improvement in these areas, customer behavioural and attitudinal loyalties will be enhanced. The collective effort of the industry is an effective means to assist members of the industry to improve the service standard of the remisiers and the industry as a whole for meeting the securities investors' expectations (Lee, Meredith & Marchant forthcoming).

Since the government of Singapore has constantly emphasised service quality and exceeding the expectations of customers for more than two decades (SPRING 2006), this research provides empirical evidence and a theoretical framework for the government to assess the service standard of the securities brokerage service more objectively. The result of this research addressed a gap in previous studies and also provided another empirical research model for future research on customer behavioural intentions in securities and other brokerage service industries. The research and teaching institutions may conduct more research to determine whether the model developed is unique to the securities remisier service, or generic to other brokerage services (Lee, Meredith & Marchant forthcoming).

## Limitations

This research, in the same way as other academic research, has certain limitations. The model used for this study is based on the previous research findings and data collection is only from one industry—securities industry, hence the findings may not be applicable to other industries. This empirical study was conducted in Singapore with its unique cultural and social elements. Findings of this research could be tested in further studies in other countries or regions, or other time periods, to generalise the findings in securities brokerage services.

Another limitation was the scope of data collected, which was based on 2007 operations and might not be appropriate for the future as the business environment and technology are changing rapidly. In addition, this study was based on a relatively small sample and not the total population of securities investors in Singapore, however, tests of reliability and validity were carried out.

## Researcher's retrospective

### *Genesis of research*

Real life experience stimulated me to choose my research on purchase intentions and word-of-mouth referrals. When I was working as a circulation manager of newspaper publishing companies in Hong Kong and Singapore respectively, my customer service staff used to receive complaints from subscribers regarding the unsatisfactory service provided by the field staff and agents. Facing this problem, I was keen to develop an effective strategy to resolve the issue. As a manager supervising the sales and distribution operations, I felt I should examine the factors that affect the service quality, customer repurchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth communication.

After a review of literature, I noticed many researchers had suggested that service quality, customer perceived value and customer satisfaction were influencing factors to behavioural intentions; however, they had yet to reach a consensus. Since I had been investing in the stock market for

several years and could hardly find such research on stock brokering services, I then decided on my research topic for my Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) research on stock brokering services and selected my normal residing country as the case country.

### ***Process and hurdles that had to be over come***

I spent more than thirty-six months to complete my thesis under the supervision of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey M Meredith. When I enrolled in the DBA program as an offshore part-time student, at the beginning, there was no research supervisor assigned to me and I had to move ahead on my own. Under such circumstances, I did not have a clear direction to move ahead and I could hardly make any progress in my literature review. Months later, Emeritus Professor Geoffrey M Meredith agreed to be my research supervisor and since then I made a significant achievement with very tight deadline set by him.

After the supervisor arrangement had been resolved, I had two issues to handle. First, there were difficulties in arranging face-to-face meetings with my supervisor. I was teaching in Shenzhen City (China) and my supervisor was in Brisbane. Luckily, my supervisor travelled every few months to Singapore and sometime to Hong Kong so we were be able to meet either in Singapore or in Hong Kong. The second problem was harder for me to resolve. There was no resources centre at my work place that could facilitate my writing of the thesis. Due to on-line network constraints, downloading of journal articles was an extremely time consuming task. I had to travel to Hong Kong and Singapore looking for journal papers needed. This problem caused the completion time of my literature review chapter to be longer than expected.

The other hurdle I faced was the method chapter. I had studied statistics and research method more than ten years prior to commencement of my DBA program. I spent much more effort than expected to write my method chapter. With my supervisor's valuable inputs and feedbacks from a pre-test group of my questionnaire, I could then complete the self-administrated questionnaire for a mail survey.

Subsequent to overcoming the abovementioned hurdles, I proceeded to submit my research questionnaire to the university Human Research Ethics Committee for approval. Under the guidance of my supervisor I was granted approval from the Committee in mid-July 2007, two months after my submission. At that stage, I was much more confident to complete my thesis.

Approval granted by the Committee did not represent the end of the journey. There was a hard job waiting ahead. Data collection and data analysis needed substantial energy and time involvement. In order to ensure the field survey could be conducted smoothly and timely completion of data analysis as well as the whole thesis, I decided to resign from my job and to carry on the final phase of my research on a full-time basis. I conducted my mail survey in Singapore in August 2007. Thanks to the voluntary participation of randomly selected stockbrokers and their clients, I got more than fifty-six percent response rate that provided me with sufficient returns for the statistical analysis.

During the data analysis process, I faced new hurdles. I could not access the SPSS program on the university system and this interrupted my research for a while until I was able to resolve the problem with my own resources. Another problem was the application skills for running SPSS program without proper training. I managed to run the program for my data analysis by intensive reading of a few copies of the latest SPSS data analysis reference books specially ordered from bookshops that cost a substantial amount of money. Finally, the thesis was submitted about a year later after comprehensive revision with comments and suggestions from my supervisor.

## ***Relationships***

There were some relationships important for me to complete my thesis successfully. The critical relationship for my DBA research was that with my research supervisor. I was fortunate to have Emeritus Professor Geoffrey M Meredith as my supervisor. We fostered positive and close relationships in the course of my research. I believed a supervisor was a lifeguard to ensure the supervisee swimming across to the right spot on the other bank of a river without drowning. Whenever I lost my direction my supervisor would provide me with a very clear guideline and ensured that I met the schedule as agreed earlier. The good relationship between supervisee and supervisor can be very fruitful, one in which the supervisor will provide a helping hand in a timely manner to the supervisee whenever he/she encounters difficulties or faces a dilemma.

Relationships with fellow DBA researchers were also important. I established good relationships with some of my fellow researchers. Apart from giving moral support to each other, we shared our experiences and resources, and had some academic discussions on the research topics. We all have benefited from the positive relationships among us.

Members of the survey channel were a critical component in my field survey. I did not overlook the relationships with them. They were randomly selected stockbrokers who voluntarily rendered their assistance to post my mail survey questionnaire to their clients. Without their assistance, I might not have enough data collected for my data analysis. In the final stage of my research, these relationships made the completion of my thesis possible.

## ***Reflection***

I have gained a lot from my DBA research. As compared to my MBA thesis submitted more than ten years ago, the doctoral thesis is much more rigorous. During the process, I have enhanced my research skills that include pinpointing the core issue and analysing problems with a wider perspective. In addition, I have also learned from my supervisor how to present a good academic paper.

During the data analysis process, I did have the frustration of massaging data with SPSS at the beginning. After I had read a few relevant reference books, I enjoyed playing with the data with SPSS. This hands-on experience of massaging data will definitely facilitate me to do my future research.

In the process of literature review, I gained a sound understanding of developing a research conceptual framework and the knowledge of customer expectations and behaviours, particularly in the industry of stock brokering services. Based on what I have learned from the DBA research, I am now more confident to do a research project in future. If I will conduct another similar research again, I will expand my study to cover a bigger geographical area to include China, Hong Kong SAR and Singapore markets. Results of this expanded research will be more representative as the study encompasses different cultural backgrounds, and political and economic systems.

Upon completion of my thesis, with the assistance of my supervisor and Dr Teresa Marchant, I produced a journal paper entitled 'Singapore stock brokering service quality: fifteen percent gap'. This paper was accepted without revision by the Journal of Services Marketing for publication in August 2010. This achievement gives me a strong sense of satisfaction.

## ***Researcher's profile***

Dr Yik-Chee Lee has a MBA from Brunel University, and a Bachelor of Business from RMIT. He completed his DBA at Southern Cross University, Graduate College of Management and has extensive experience in media management and cross-culture management. He has taught

in China at Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School. Prior to joining academe, he worked as a China Operations Consultant and Director of Circulation of South China Morning Post, and Circulation Manager and journalist at Singapore Press Holdings for many years. His research interests include marketing, small and medium enterprises, and human resource management.

## **Supervisor's reflection**

### ***Relationships***

Every supervisor of a research thesis hopes for a positive and satisfying relationship with the candidate as the research develops over many months. This was certainly the case for Dr Lee who came into the DBA program with clear research ideas that were quickly converted into a research problem and a series of research questions.

Dr Lee was based in Singapore and China and as a supervisor of several candidates based in Singapore, I was able to meet with him and fellow candidates several times each year and at those meetings Dr Lee and others presented progress reports to the group and took part in discussion on aspects of his research design and structure. I feel that these presentations and subsequent discussion were a significant contribution to his research progress and success. English language and expression were not a problem—all candidates from Singapore were competent in English.

The fact that Dr Lee was a dedicated candidate with a specific time plan for research completion, strengthened our relationship as candidate and supervisor. The research was completed within an acceptable time frame and during that time, communication was excellent using email. In addition, Dr Lee has demonstrated his dedication to publishing from his research and he has been rewarded by having his first article accepted by a quality journal without revision—an outstanding achievement.

### ***Reflection***

Dr Lee's research field, customer satisfaction and service quality, was one that had been examined by a number of researchers but the proposed application by Dr Lee to security services in Singapore was new and represented a challenge. I saw no difficulty in recommending a 'standard' thesis structure with the initial chapter providing background to the research and summarising problems, method and clarifying definitions and the final chapter presenting research outcomes and implications. We then had chapters setting out details of security services in Singapore, a literature review leading to presentation of a research model, a chapter on method and finally data analysis.

Testing relationships developed in the researcher's model meant collecting data in Singapore from clients of selected stockbrokers and this worked efficiently. Dr Lee was well versed in data analysis and the research was brought to a successful conclusion.

Dr Lee's willingness to make personal sacrifices to meet completion deadlines and also his enthusiasm for production of journal articles from his research has meant a great deal of satisfaction for the research supervisor. The close relationship developed during the research can be expected to continue as Dr Lee seeks additional opportunities to publish and develop an academic career.

## Supervisor's profile

Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Meredith is a graduate of the University of Queensland and after teaching at several Australian and overseas universities, set up graduate and research programs at Southern Cross University, including Australia's first research DBA. He is the author of many books and articles on finance, small enterprise development, regional development, and professional practice and training programs for small enterprises have been adopted by the ILO for many emerging countries.

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# CHAPTER 13

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## Two Group Survey— Acceptance of Hybrid Electric Passenger Vehicles in Australia

*Martin Kunst & Stephen Kelly*

### **Title of the study**

A Study on the Consumer Acceptance of Hybrid Electric Passenger Vehicles in Australia

### **Abstract**

Hybrid electrical passenger vehicles are considered to be one of the most promising innovations to decrease fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in individual transport for the near future. There has been no empirical research to identify and quantify factors that influence adoption of hybrid electric passenger vehicles in Australia. The gap in knowledge on this subject is significant, considering the role of the Australian car market and the continuing success of hybrid passenger cars. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to identify the factors that influence the adoption of hybrid electric passenger cars in Australia. The theoretical framework of this research was tested empirically using primary data from a self-administered questionnaire posted to 500 buyers of a hybrid car (Toyota Prius) and 500 buyers of a comparable conventional car (various Toyota models). Due to the limited number of hybrid cars sold in Australia, a convenience sample was used. The sample was randomly extracted from a database listing all buyers of Toyota passenger vehicles in Australia in 2006 and 2007. A total of 310 questionnaires were returned: a response rate of 31 percent. The findings confirmed the strong influence of the classic innovation characteristics in Rogers' (2003) innovation diffusion theory, such as relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, cost, observability and perceived risk. The main implications include confirming the importance of perceived innovation characteristics in the adoption of hybrid cars. These findings are significant for automobile companies when engineering and designing hybrid electric vehicles as well as crafting marketing strategies since the findings allow identification of target customers for hybrid electrical vehicles in Australia.

### **Keywords**

Australia, hybrid cars, auto industry, consumer acceptance, innovation diffusion

## Introduction to the study and brief literature review

For this study, literature on hybrid electrical passenger vehicles and the Australian car market as well as adoption and diffusion theories including the five most common ones, namely innovation diffusion theory (IDT) by Rogers (2003), technology acceptance model by Davis (1986), theory of reasoned action by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen (1991) and Triandis' (1979) framework were reviewed and analysed. Each of these theoretical frameworks has a different emphasis and their study designs and analyses take different approaches. The technology acceptance model, theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behaviour, and Triandis' framework have mainly been applied to computer technology and information and online consumer behaviour (Chen, Gillenson & Sherrell 2002; Jiang et al 2000; Koufaris 2002), whereas IDT has been considered potentially valuable to the field of technical innovations in general and hybrid electric vehicles in particular (Fuller 2000; Mahajan, Muller & Srivastava 1990; Surry & Farquhar 1996).

Rogers' IDT has been used since the 1960s to study a large variety of innovations, ranging from agricultural tools to organisational innovation (Tornatzky & Klein 1982). IDT uses a set of innovation characteristics to predict individual technology acceptance. Rogers (2003) found five characteristics of innovations that significantly influence their adoption.

Relative advantage is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being better than the idea it supersedes. Compatibility describes the degree to which an innovation is perceived as consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters'. Complexity is defined as the degree to which an innovation is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use. Trialability is the degree to which an innovation can be tested or experimented with on a limited basis. Observability describes the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others. In summary, Rogers' (2003) IDT states that innovations offering higher relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability and lower complexity will be adopted faster by individuals than other innovations.

The literature review further identified that there has been no empirical research completed to identify and quantify the factors that influence the rates of adoption of hybrid electric passenger vehicles in Australia. In order to fill this gap in the literature this research sought to identify the factors that affect the adoption.

Factors seen as potential determinants of customers' decisions regarding the purchase of hybrid electric passenger vehicles in Australia were extracted from existing literature. A theoretical framework was formulated and eighteen hypotheses developed in order to answer the research questions. An extension of Rogers' IDT was used to predict the impact of important factors on hybrid car adoption. The eighteen research hypotheses were as follows:

- H1: There is a difference between the gender of respondents and their ratings on factors that influence the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H2: There is a difference between the age of respondents and their ratings on factors that influence the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H3: There is a difference between education level of respondents and their ratings on factors that influence the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H4: There is a difference between household income of the respondents and their ratings on factors that influence the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H5: The relative advantage of hybrid cars influences the adoption of hybrid cars.

- H6: The complexity of hybrid cars influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H7: The compatibility of hybrid cars influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H8: The cost of hybrid cars influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H9: The observability of hybrid cars influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H10: The perceived risk of hybrid cars influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H11: The trialability of hybrid cars influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H12: The image of hybrid cars influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H13: Environmental consciousness influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H14: Innovativeness influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H15: Gender influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H16: Age influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H17: Household income influences the adoption of hybrid cars.
- H18: Level of education influences the adoption of hybrid cars.

## Method

In view of the design of this research, a quantitative approach was taken and a survey strategy was selected. This was appropriate as the study aimed to identify factors that influence adoption of hybrid cars by Australian consumers, and the research questions addressed in this study are ‘what’ questions, identified by Yin (2002) as best addressed through a survey method.

Due to the limited number of hybrid cars that have been sold in Australia, a convenience sample was applied. The sample was randomly extracted from a database listing all buyers of Toyota passenger vehicles in Australia in 2006 and 2007. According to Hoelter (1983) and Zikmund (2003), a sample size of 1000 was selected. For the survey instrument, a mail questionnaire survey was selected since it allowed geographical reach in combination with an acceptable response rate and low cost. Consequently, a self-administered questionnaire was constructed.

This research uses constructs such as relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, cost, observability, perceived risk, trialability, image, environmental consciousness, innovativeness, age, education and household income, that have previously been validated by other studies in the field of innovation diffusion, consumer acceptance and marketing. In order to use these constructs they had to be adjusted to the context of hybrid cars. The questionnaire applied a multiple-item method for each construct except for age, education, and household income. A 7-point Likert scale measured responses to all items, ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’.

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were established and a pilot study was carried out to ensure the suitability of the instrument. The main mail out led to a total of 310 returned questionnaires: a response rate of 31 percent. For data analysis SPSS was used. Descriptive statistics were employed and independent t-tests, one-way ANOVA, single factor and multiple logistic regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses.

## Findings

The findings of this study mainly confirmed the strong influence of the classic innovation characteristics used in Rogers’ (2003) IDT on the adoption of hybrid passenger cars in Australia.

Of Rogers' five characteristics, only relative advantage, compatibility complexity, and observability were found to be significant variables amongst adopters of hybrid passenger cars in Australia whereas trialability and image were not. In addition, cost and perceived risk were other significant factors. Therefore, this study's findings on perceived innovation characteristics are mainly consistent with other studies on innovation adoption (Rogers 2003; de Haan, Peters & Mueller 2006; Cooley 2007; Nyborg, Howarth & Brekke 2006). Relative advantage, compatibility, observability, environmental consciousness and innovativeness are rated by both adopters and non-adopters as the most important factors that influence their decisions about whether to buy hybrid cars.

It was found that most demographic characteristics do not influence adoption. Only higher household income was found to be a predictor of adoption whereas gender, age and level of education were not. These results are not generally consistent with other studies on innovation adoption (Atkin et al 2003a; Atkin 1995; Atkin et al 2003b; Busselle et al 1999; Lin & Jeffres 1998).

Demographic characteristics of respondents were also found to have no significant influence on respondents' ratings on the factors that influence adoption. This finding appears to be at odds with most other studies on innovation adoption in general and adoption of hybrid cars in particular (Rogers 2003; Haan et al 2006; Millard-Ball 2004).

Another finding of this study indicates that personality traits, such as environmental consciousness and innovativeness, do not influence adoption. This study's findings on personality traits are largely at odds with those of other studies, since previous studies carried out in a very similar context (Shaheen, Schwartz & Wiprywski 2004; Altman et al 2003; de Haan et al 2006) suggested environmental consciousness has a positive influence on the acceptance of environmentally friendly motor vehicles. The same applies to innovativeness with a large number of previous studies proving that innovativeness has a positive effect (either direct or indirect) on innovation adoption (Krugman 1985; Leung & Wei 1998; Lin & Jeffres 1998; Rogers 2003).

## Implications

Since this research is the first rigorous study investigating the adoption of hybrid electric passenger vehicles in Australian, it has significant implications in the area of adoption of technical innovations in general and the consumer acceptance of hybrid cars in particular. The main implication of this study include confirming the importance of perceived innovation characteristics in the context of adoption of hybrid cars in Australia.

The findings on the perceived innovation characteristics under investigation in this research are important for automobile companies when engineering and designing hybrid electric vehicles as well as crafting marketing strategies for hybrid cars since they allow target customers for hybrid electrical vehicles in Australia to be identified.

Other important implications for the automobile industry are that demographics generally do not play a significant role in people's intention to adopt hybrid electric vehicles in Australia. Household income was the only demographic characteristic found to be a predictor. Again, these findings are of importance for automobile companies when crafting marketing strategies for hybrid cars since they allow conclusions to be drawn with respect to identifying target customers for hybrid electrical vehicles. For example, advertising could target those with higher income, or on the other hand vehicle manufacturers could explain running costs and long term affordability which may broaden the appeal to lower income groups.

Another implication of this research arises from its findings about people's willingness to pay higher prices for hybrid technology. This study found strong willingness to pay a premium for hybrid technology and therefore supports findings of other researchers such as Altmann et al (2003), who found respondents would be willing to pay an extra charge for environmentally friendly technology if this is initially required.

Furthermore this study indicated that there exists a large deficit of information on hybrid technology. Specifically, there is a strong need for information about the life expectancy of the battery packs used in hybrid cars, as well about their environmental impact. Therefore, further detailed advertising and information campaigns are recommended in order to better inform potential customers.

The last implication of this study is that there is a strong demand for government subsidies like the ones in other countries such as the US and Japan, where governments offer substantial subsidies and concessions such as tax benefits, no road tolls, access to transit lanes (regardless of occupancy) and free parking in the inner cities.

## Limitations

In this study, limitations could arise from the research methods applied. Since this study is cross-sectional in nature, the direction of causality can only be assumed. Due to the limited number of hybrid cars sold in Australia, it was not possible to use a random sample. Thus, a convenience sample was applied using the sales database of Toyota Australia. Since the sample only consists of Toyota's customers this may limit the generalisability of the results. About 70 percent of the people that were contacted to participate in this study did not respond. This may have produced some non-response bias (especially for the group of non-adopters). Due to the way surveys were returned non-response bias could not be analysed via early and late respondents. This may mean that the study's findings cannot be applied to the entire population of buyers of passenger motor vehicles in Australia. There may be other factors that influence the rates of adoption of hybrid cars in Australia that this study did not include. Limitations might also result from measures of the factors, which were primarily perceptual and therefore leads to the well-known problems of Likert scales that are bias and anchoring (Grover 1993). The focus of this research on Australia might be seen as a limitation. However, given the peculiarities of the Australian passenger car market it is questionable whether conducting this research in different countries would strengthen and validate its findings.

## Researcher's retrospective

Since my early childhood, the automotive industry and its products have always been interesting and fascinating to me. My university studies provided me the essential marketing knowledge and sparked my interest in gaining a deeper insight into the practical aspects of marketing. Combining both of my interests, marketing and the auto industry, was the first answer to suggest itself in terms of what my research topic would be. After careful consideration it became clear to me that a potential topic for my dissertation needed to originate from the area of marketing and furthermore needed to have a background in the auto industry.

When I started selecting the topic for my dissertation in early 2005, hybrid cars were still more a marginal phenomenon than a mass phenomenon. At that time there were only two automakers producing hybrid cars. Things have changed and today hybrid cars are no longer considered as *passé* and they are very much driving into the mainstream auto market with full speed. This is evident with a major product offensive with new hybrid cars from various automakers being launched in the market at a rapid rate.

## ***Hurdles that had to be overcome***

As with any research project there were some hurdles to overcome. The first hurdle I can remember was the timeliness of the hybrid car topic. The topic was so hot that the literature was increasing every day with an accelerating speed and it was hard to keep pace. This made it very difficult to review the relevant literature and to produce an overview of it.

Another hurdle was the selection of the sample caused by the limited number of hybrid cars that have been sold in Australia. The Australian management of both of the two automakers of hybrid cars (Toyota and Honda) were approached. Since only one of them (Toyota) agreed to support this study by sending the questionnaire to their customers, a convenience sample was applied. The contact with Toyota came out to be much more helpful than just providing access to the sample. Toyota, in particular, Ben Sullivan, Manager, Research and Consumer/Market Insights, was a source of considerable support and advice for this research by for example providing insights into buyer behaviour of hybrid car purchasers. He helped me gain a practical view that complemented the theoretical material I obtained from the literature.

## ***Relationships***

From the beginning I knew about the importance of selecting a suitable supervisor who fits with both my personality and the area of my research. To successfully complete the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) takes something between two and four years and in some cases even a bit longer. Realising this was going to be a long-term relationship, I knew that I had to find someone who would be in it for the long haul. I was looking for a supervisor who is straightforward and goal-oriented, somebody providing feedback on the quality of my academic progress rather than providing moral support. I made contact with three or four academics and then finally approached Dr Stephen Kelly, my later supervisor.

I had a pretty clear idea from the start about what I wanted to do (or at least I thought so) and therefore told my supervisor that I wanted to conduct the early stage of the literature review predominately alone. Although today I realise that drowning in the literature had cost me some extra time, I never regretted my decision to do so since I learned a lot and it also prepared me for the further tasks of my research.

In the further stages of my research Stephen and I met frequently in order to discuss the process of my research or to solve any problems occurring. At the end of my research Stephen accompanied me to Sydney to present the study's outcomes to Toyota management.

My relationships with fellow doctoral students were also very important even though our areas of research interest were different. Fellow students were a significant source of moral support via discussion or just by being around and proving that you are not the only who spends their life in the lab.

## ***Reflection***

My overall research experience was amazing and I am proud that I achieved my goal of becoming a Doctor of Business Administration. My research gave me a deep insight into the behaviour of buyers of hybrid cars and made me a specialist in this field of research. The last three years have been full of challenges. Of course, I can still remember that there were days during the long period of my study when I seriously considered taking a break from my research or even asking myself if it was the right decision to study a DBA. But now, after completing my studies these are only a shadows in my memory, covered by the positive, joyful impressions gathered during this time.

## ***Researcher's profile***

Martin Kunst completed his DBA in November 2008. Before starting the DBA at SCU in 2005, he completed an MBA at SCU and studied Business Education in Germany. A native of Germany, he held various positions in the finance and venture capital sector. These included working as a management consultant and business analyst for a venture capital company as well as working as a bank manager in Germany. During the DBA program he worked as a researcher and tutor for SCU and also held a unit chair in the MBA program at Chifley Business School.

## **Supervisor's reflection**

### ***Genesis of the research***

When I first met with Martin he had already gone some way toward defining the scope of the project. However it still had a consulting rather than academic orientation, lacking a clear theoretical framework. This is often the first hurdle for new researchers as they struggle with the concept of theoretical validation and the importance of a theoretical underpinning. In this case, as in many, the candidate had to come to terms with how their work and their ideas could be informed by the pre-existing body of knowledge. They also had to come to terms with how the research gap needed to be derived from a coherent review of the literature rather than a notion that was of personal interest.

The candidate was also in the very early phase of determining their research aim and questions, had not determined whether to adopt an interpretive or positivist approach, and was yet to identify an appropriate sample population and ascertain how respondents could or should be accessed. Notably, the fact that these issues had not been pre-determined was a very good thing, as too many new researchers rush toward answers before they even know what the right questions are.

Hence as a supervisor I was able to direct the candidate toward the literature and an understanding of the centrality of theory as a precursor to them determining the research questions, method and sample. The end result of this was that the thesis was given the necessary foundation upon which the research could be built.

### ***Process***

The candidate proved to be very proactive and sought out not only the literature to which I directed them, but other areas that they thought may be relevant or useful. This period of reading and reflection was punctuated with frequent meetings where Martin's thoughts and activities were critiqued and new or extended ideas and directions emerged. At the same time I began to ask for sections of the literature review to be drafted and given to me for review. This was critical as it provided the candidate with feedback on their writing style and the logic that was being applied. Too often candidates choose or are allowed to leave writing to the end, which is always to their detriment.

This process of doing, reflecting, critiquing and re-directing continued from this early stage to the very last draft of the thesis. The benefit was that the candidate began to become an active critic of their own work to a much greater extent. They started to look for the holes in their logic and consider the implications of every action. Importantly, they also began to understand that the research process had to be cohesive and that the literature, research questions, method,

analysis and interpretation where not separate activities that could be conceived and actioned independently. As a result of this process and Martin's growing understanding, the final thesis was coherent and all its elements integrated within the context of the research aim and questions.

### ***Hurdles***

This project did not have any significant hurdles that could be deemed to be outside the norm. Of course many recurrent ones still existed, such as taking the candidate to a coherent understanding of the research process and overcoming difficulties associated with writing a thesis in a second language. In this case the candidate's English was near perfect but the nuances of expression and structure so difficult for anyone working outside their first language still meant that the flow of the writing needed focused attention. Other hurdles included securing access to the population of interest, identifying and learning the applied statistical techniques, and maintaining focus and enthusiasm over years of effort. Nevertheless these were all met as they must be and the end result provides evidence of how effectively they were managed. Notably, my own view is that the two key elements to overcoming hurdles are persistence and resilience. Supervisors and candidates who are unable to emotionally or logically manage hurdles and who are not prepared to put in the necessary effort to overcome them, are apt to find them insurmountable.

### ***Outcomes***

The research provided outcomes that have added to and challenged theory and benefited industry. Both outcomes, theoretical development and practical applicability, are equally important in the context of a DBA. Without one or the other the essence of a DBA is lost.

The DBA must test, challenge and/or add to theory and be built on and from a strong theoretical framework. If it isn't then it will quickly become a consulting project and fail to meet the rigour required of a higher degree. Equally it must provide a valuable actionable outcome that can inform and be applied by industry. In this case the theoretical foundation was strong and added to marketing and innovation theory and the outcomes were of direct benefit to the emerging hybrid vehicle sector as they seek to position their products to attract customers.

### ***Relationships***

Relationships between supervisors and candidates invariably become close due to the amount of time spent working together. However it is important that a professional distance is maintained as the supervisor will at times need be directive and insist on a course of action. Having supervised twelve higher degree candidates to completion, this relationship balance has proven to be a necessity on only a handful of occasions. However when the supervisor needs to act it is an important relationship characteristic. In essence the key is that respect between the candidate and the supervisor is maintained, with both playing their respective roles. That is, the supervisor must provide guidance and advice and direct the candidate through the research process, and the candidate must earnestly pursue the completion of a higher degree for which they are ultimately responsible.

### ***Reflection***

Supervision of higher degree students is one of the most rewarding activities an academic can be involved with. The more committed and talented the student, the more challenging and interesting the project, the more engaging it is for the supervisor.

However the converse is true. Higher degree students focused on ticking boxes and doing the minimum are unlikely to find engagement from their supervisors. Even worse, higher degree students who expect to be told what to do and how to do it, who fail to understand that the process is largely about self direction and discovery, will find that they do not progress. In these cases the thesis is unlikely to be completed and if it is, it will be a poor reflection on candidate and supervisor.

In this specific case Martin was engaged, self-motivated and eager to learn. He wanted to fully understand the research topic and constantly challenged his own conclusions and approach. In short he took ownership and responsibility. This meant that my job as supervisor was relatively easy. In essence the key was that I provide feedback and direction in a timely fashion and act as an advisor rather than dictator.

### ***Supervisor's profile***

Stephen Kelly is an Associate Professor and head of the School of Commerce and Management at Southern Cross University. He is a professional member of the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management and a member of the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy and the Academy of Marketing Science. He has undertaken research and published in a range of areas broadly incorporating small firm strategy, planning and performance, business-to-business strategy, service quality and delivery, venture capital and business internationalisation. In total he has published over 40 refereed articles in general management, marketing and small business journals and conferences during his nine years in academia. Prior to joining academia he worked in the Australian building materials and construction industry in various staff and line positions predominantly in the context of marketing and sales.

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# CHAPTER 14

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## Interviews—Succession of Corporate Leaders in Australia

*Patricia Richards & Martin Hayden*

### **Title of the study**

Appointing and Developing Corporate Leaders in Australia: An Investigation of the Continuing Relevance of a Succession-Planning Paradigm.

### **Abstract**

The investigation addressed the appointment of leaders in Australian corporations. The lack of a sound knowledge base in this area was of concern to the researcher, given the impact corporate leaders can have, for better or for worse, on the fortunes of companies and the employment opportunities for individuals. An interpretivist method was adopted. Individual interviews were conducted with two sets of informants. The first set consisted of over 60 senior managers from a leading Australian financial institution. The second consisted of 12 CEOs of significant public and private corporations in Australia. The consistent finding was that there is a general disregard for formal Human Resources (HR) processes when it comes to making corporate leadership appointments. A phenomenon of ‘tapping on the shoulder’ was identified, whereby individuals were approached to accept more senior appointment, without much regard for the more systematic procedures for management appointment adopted by HR personnel, even though these procedures were often espoused to be important in the corporate settings in which they were in fact being ignored. Interestingly, personal readiness for senior corporate leadership was hardly ever a consideration, and a theme in the interviews concerned the extent to which some who had been appointed to senior leadership positions had not felt ready for their appointment and expressed a concern that they had limited skills in leadership. It may be that the amount of time, money and other resources invested by corporations in leadership assessment, identification and appointment is being wasted. If HR procedures for leadership appointment are routinely ignored when decisions about critical leadership appointments are made, then the point in having these procedures is questionable.

### **Keywords**

Australia, corporate leadership, appointment, assessment, Human Resources, succession planning

## Introduction to the study and brief literature review

There has been limited empirical research that examines the appointment of corporate leaders. Some recent overseas research has questioned the relevance of HR practices when it comes to the appointment and assessment of senior leaders. There have been no studies undertaken in Australia on this topic, however, and, in any case, nearly all of the literature was generally of a journalistic nature and concerned with 'good ideas' for consideration when appointing corporate leaders.

It was considered to be well worthwhile to investigate the matter in detail, and in an Australian context. The investigation sought, therefore, to identify the processes whereby corporate leaders in Australia are appointed. The intention was to map both the explicit and the tacit understanding that underpins the processes of senior corporate appointments. In doing so, the author was able to draw on experience accumulated over more than 20 years in working with major Australian companies to assist them with senior corporate appointment processes.

The literature on corporate leadership appointments is voluminous. Little of it is, however, empirically based, and most of it is highly prescriptive. The literature on succession planning in corporate settings is a case in point. There are many handbooks on how to implement corporate leadership identification and development processes in a succession-planning framework, but there are hardly any empirical investigation concerning the extent to which these processes are effective. In this regard, the results reported by the Corporate Leadership Council (CLC 2003) represented a breakthrough. This report is one of the first ever to question whether or not succession-planning processes are being adopted properly and are proving to be valuable.

In the Australian literature, the situation is no different. Empirical research about the ways in which Australian corporate leaders are appointed is seriously lacking. Although journals such as *Human Resources Capital* and *Human Resources* contain many references to succession planning, the articles concerned tend to be journalistic in style and are not reliable as sources of informed generalisation.

Articles from the US and the UK have more recently published results from research undertaken on succession planning. This recent research has suggested that succession planning may not be as effective in ensuring a supply of well-prepared future leaders as many believe to be the case. This research is still limited, however. My project sought to take the matter further by generating and analysing relevant data in an Australian context.

## Method

The research method employed is interpretive, that is, it sought only to provide an understanding of the social reality of the processes whereby individuals obtain access to corporate leadership positions. It did not attempt to test prior hypotheses, nor did it seek to provide generalisations that might be applied beyond the realm of experience of the managers and CEOs who informed the investigation.

This method suited the purpose and context of the investigation for two reasons. It allowed the experiences of the interviewees to be expressed authentically, using their language, and drawing upon an in-depth understanding of their experiences. At the same time, it enabled the author to retain a capacity to express and interpret her own values and experience in relation to corporate leadership appointments. As May (2002, p264) states: 'human knowledge claims are active in the constructions of meaning and, therefore, are always relative to the unique interaction between the inquirer and the particular context in which the enquiry was conducted'. It was important to the author that the research should provide an opportunity for a thoughtful engagement with the ideas of others concerning the area of scholarly interest.

Individual interviews were conducted with over 60 senior managers from a leading Australian financial institution. These managers were attending a leadership development course at about the time of the interviews. A second set consisted of 12 CEOs of significant public and private corporations in Australia. The interviews took about one and a half hours. There were specific questions outlined and given to the candidates and followed closely, although in an informal style. Questions addressed such issues as development given prior to being appointed to leader, time in role, process actually used for promotion, involvement of mentors or sponsors etc. Responses from each interview were then collated under the various themes.

An interpretivist approach was also effective in accommodating the fact that the meanings people give to their experiences are affected by their natural setting, and are more richly textured if documented in a way that does nothing to diminish the importance of the natural setting. The use of forced choice questionnaires was ruled out, therefore, and interviews conducted in the interviewee's work environment, using open-ended questions, were the preferred way of collecting the data. In an interpretivist research design, it is essential that the interviewees should feel able to report their experiences and express their ideas fully, honestly, and in a way that related to their immediate setting. This approach was consistent with what the research aimed to achieve. That is, a body of rich description of the experiences of CEOs and senior managers concerning corporate leadership appointment. The research required freedom to work with themes emerging from the documentation of human experiences, and, in this regard, an interpretive approach was ideal.

## Findings

Many themes emerged from the data collected. The two dominant themes were hardly surprising. Neither of these, however, fitted with expectations raised by much of the popular literature about the ways in which corporate leadership appointment is the product of the orderly implementation of a human resource management (HRM) strategy.

The first significant theme concerned the ways in which the informants obtain appointments to managerial positions. The second concerned the often-pivotal role played by significant others as unofficial sponsors of career advancement to senior corporate leadership. The results were overwhelmingly supportive of the hypothesis that it is 'who you know' rather than 'what you know' that determines career advancement success at senior leadership levels. Past working relationships played a much more important role than did HR processes in determining who was 'tapped on the shoulder' for advancement to a senior corporate appointment. These relationships were a basis for trust. They were also a basis for establishing who was likely to be most effective in contributing to corporate profitability. The large majority of interviewees felt their capacity to lead was not assessed at all when they were given their leadership roles, and, as a result, a large percentage of them stated that they felt ill-equipped to lead, and that they had been forced into a situation of having to learn 'on the job'.

Another finding of note was that CEOs, when looking to appoint people to senior roles, rarely made any use of HR procedures or information. In effect, they made decisions by themselves, trusting their own judgments entirely, and their organisation then simply had to follow their decisions.

## Implications

The research has important implications for HRM practitioners. It points to a range of challenges. The first is that HRM practitioners need to invest heavily in understanding the informal context that exists in parallel with the more formal context in which their occupational role is defined.

They might, for example, take note of McKay's (2007) advice that leadership appointments may well reflect the 'herd-like' nature of human beings, as much as they reflect corporate commercial imperatives. Both Surowiecki (2004) and McKay (2007) note, for example, that people tend to appoint to more senior management positions people who are like themselves. Of concern here is that, without formal HR procedures, leadership appointments lack transparency, and essential training needs preparatory to assuming senior leadership roles may not be receiving adequate attention. The second is that HRM practitioners need to develop processes of leadership identification and development that keep pace with a corporate landscape that is rapidly changing. If the kinds of processes employed by HRM practitioners cannot keep pace with the turnover of leadership appointment opportunities, then the informal context for deciding on leadership appointment will prevail to an even greater extent than the present.

## Limitations

There are several constraints on the present investigation, all of which need to be acknowledged, but none of which is considered to have been serious. The first is simply that the research focused only on business corporations, including some that were not-for-profit businesses. It did not address the experiences of managers or CEOs working in institutions such as universities, the armed forces or even political parties. There is no apparent reason, however, to rule out the possibility that parallels exist across all types of organisations. The second is that the author was an 'insider' to the cultures being explored. There are potential advantages and disadvantages involved here. One advantage was that, as an interviewer, the author was well able to interpret jargon and understand nuances in the comments of the interviewees. This capacity contributed to the richness of the interpretation of the interview data. One major disadvantage was that the author's values and perspective could easily have affected how the material collected in the interviews was interpreted. As an insider, the author would have been quite well known to some interviewees, who might as a result have felt constrained in making comments. There were, however, no signs in any of the interviews that the interviewees were anything other than forthright. Furthermore, procedures were implemented to minimise the extent to which the interpretation of the data might have been unduly influenced by the author's views.

## Researcher's retrospective

### *Genesis of the research*

Having worked in the HR function for over 20 years I have been involved in many corporate succession-planning processes. It became apparent to me that what was discussed and agreed upon during those discussions did not often come to pass in reality. It seemed peculiar that people who were not identified as having the leadership capability often did get appointed to senior roles that had been considered not available to them previously, while others who had been considered of leadership potential could be ruled out of a senior appointment purely on the basis that their immediate boss and CEO changed their opinion about them.

This became an interesting area for investigation, as the literature seemed to make 'motherhood statements' about best-practice succession planning, rather than have any empirical data that showed what was actually happening inside corporations when it came to leadership appointments.

Being a senior HR practitioner meant that I was spending a great deal of time managing succession-planning processes within corporations. The investigation enabled me to examine the effectiveness of these processes.

## ***Hurdles that had to be overcome***

The major hurdle was the lack of empirical research. There were few research projects to draw upon as models when the investigation was embarked upon. Bit by bit, however, relevant articles from overseas were discovered, and these made it possible to develop an external frame of reference. Another hurdle related to learning a new investigative method. The discipline required for an interpretivist approach was new to me and had to be learnt.

## ***Relationships***

Relationships were critical to my research. These relationships were with my interviewees and with my supervisor, Professor Martin Hayden. The relationship with my supervisor was the most critical. We needed to have a great deal of initial discussion before I was able to see clearly what would be at the core of my investigation. As time proceeded, my supervisor's fascination with the topic rivalled my own, which helped me greatly in sustaining enthusiasm and direction.

## ***Reflection***

I am proud to have completed the Doctor of Education award. I believe that I am a better HR practitioner as a result of the experience. Along the way, I have also acquired a more disciplined approach to enquiry, and this approach helps me greatly in understanding research reported by others.

There were many times that I questioned why I was completing the doctorate, which required the publication of three sole-authored papers in refereed journals. It was difficult finding journals that would publish my papers given that there was limited research previously done on this topic and it did fly in the face of the commonly held belief that succession planning is a critical role that HR should undertake. The experience of 'getting published' was new to me, and, sometimes, the patience required in waiting for editorial decisions was considerable.

## ***Researcher's profile***

Patricia Richards has over 20 years experience as an HR professional. She has worked primarily in the FMCG and media sectors and has held Director level roles in HR for over 12 years. In addition to her professional doctorate she has degrees in Behavioural Science and in Law.

## ***Supervisor's reflection***

### ***Genesis of the research***

The initial prospect was an investigation of leadership in corporate settings in Australia. Questions about the characteristics of good leaders, and about how some people rise to leadership positions, were being discussed. My role at this stage was to listen and to help narrow the topic. The literature on leadership was much too large and much too generalised for the purposes of yet another doctoral dissertation. A particular perspective and a specific problem had to be identified. This process took months and it involved countless drafts and long hours of discussion. Eventually, the 'angle' emerged. Surprisingly, it was exactly what we had been discussing all along, but we had not been able to articulate it or give it an identity. The 'angle' concerned the almost accidental way in which individuals are appointed to positions of influence as corporate leaders. The setting was confined to Australia.

## **Process**

Patricia had extraordinary access to informants for her investigation. Her professional responsibilities involve interactions with corporate leaders across a wide range of sectors, and she also has a depth of experience with HRM processes, particularly in a succession-planning framework. The challenge we had to address was that of developing a disciplined approach to the collection of relevant data.

We spent a great deal of time hunting for relevant research literature. It was surprising to me that so much of what is written about good leadership practice, and about the requirements for becoming a corporate leader, is anecdotal and uninformed in a disciplined way. Articles about leadership that are more scholarly in orientation appeared often to relate more to the psychological dispositions of leaders than to the social processes that give rise to leadership appointments.

Patricia worked independently in collecting data on separate occasions from two groups of informants. She worked quickly and efficiently in collecting the data. Writing it up took a great deal of time, however, because, on each occasion it was necessary to go back to the data to ensure that the most important emergent themes were being identified in a systematic way, as is required in qualitative research.

The process of getting articles published was challenging. One article was accepted at short notice. A second required some restructuring before being accepted. The third, however, ran into the kinds of problems that many academics encounter in having their research published: slowness in getting an article back from referees, long delays because of summer holidays, difficulties in deciphering obscure referee comments, and, frustration because a key referee did not seem to understand interpretivist research and wanted to impose a positivist structure on it.

Eventually, all three papers were published, and together with an introductory and a concluding chapter, the thesis was ready for submission to examiners. This part of the process was straightforward. The feedback received from the examiners was positive and informative. It gave strong indications for possible future lines of research.

## **Hurdles**

Some of these have already been referred to. The main hurdle was that of learning the ways of academic research. That Patricia was on a steep learning curve was evident in two regards. First, academic research, especially in the context of a doctoral thesis, focuses on a tightly defined and narrowly-contained research problem. The research problem must relate to a gap in the existing literature. Finding the gap within which the research problem may be located can be tedious and difficult. This hurdle was a large one for Patricia because for a long time it seemed as if there was no suitable literature upon which to base the statement of her research problem.

Second, interpretivist research is slow and painstaking. There is sometimes a view that it involves little more than conducting a certain number of interviews. In fact, however, it requires a great deal more if the data being reported are to satisfy criteria of *trustworthiness* and *reliability*. Learning this discipline is a time-consuming aspect of using an interpretivist method for the first time. In Patricia's case, it meant that the writing up of the research had to be more detailed in terms of describing research procedures than perhaps she had expected.

## **Outcomes**

It is pleasing to see that research completed addressed a specific gap in the knowledge base. Patricia's thesis, having identified the need for more understanding about processes for the appointment of corporate leaders, went ahead and filled the gap. This outcome is impressive.

Equally impressive was Patricia's patience and goodwill in light of various procedural issues that had to be resolved during her candidature on account of her being the first ever Doctor of Education candidate. Though the plan for the EdD program had been well worked out in advance, some of the issues encountered along the way concerning its administration presented challenges for the School of Education as well as for Patricia.

### ***Relationships***

It makes a difference when a doctoral candidate is positive, goal-oriented and responsive in a pragmatic way to critical comments on work submitted. Doctorates are earned by determination, as well as by ability. All kinds of personal and work-related problems can test the resolve of the doctoral candidate. Patricia's ability to rise above the obstacles and to keep working single-mindedly towards timely completion was most impressive.

I think we worked well together. I was generally slower at getting feedback to her than I would have liked, and there were gaps as a consequence of my absences overseas. Patricia remained tactful and optimistic throughout. My confidence that she was on the right track combined well with her willingness to do whatever it took to meet the EdD award requirements.

### ***Reflection***

Candidates for doctoral awards who come from backgrounds of being busy professionals can find the slower pace of academic work difficult to accommodate. Academic researchers need time to develop understandings, to write with clarity and precision, to explore links and to achieve closure. Academic research is hard work, particularly if it is to rank as good academic research. While I find that doctoral candidates who are well established in their careers find the experience of engaging in academic research to be rewarding in terms of the disciplines acquired, I sense that they often also yearn to be able to produce reports as they normally do in the world of professional practice. In my experience professional doctorates are much better than PhDs in terms of providing a middle ground where the cultures of academia and of professional practice can productively interact without one culture having to give way excessively to the other.

### ***Supervisor's profile***

Martin Hayden is Professor of Higher Education in the School of Education at Southern Cross University. He completed his PhD in higher education at the University of Melbourne. His principal area of teaching is in the Secondary program, where he is responsible for a foundation unit in Education Studies. His research interests are in the areas of higher education, concerning student participation, student finances and university governance. He joined the university in October 1993, when he was appointed Professor and Director of Teaching and Learning. In 2002, he moved to the School of Education and was Head of School until the end of 2005. From 1998 until 2002, he was Chair of the Academic Board and a member of the University Council. Prior to joining the university, he held a senior academic appointment at La Trobe University in Melbourne.

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# Conclusion

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The introduction to this book provides a good summary of the content of each chapter so it is not necessary to repeat that here. However, we will identify the themes and issues raised in the various chapters, highlight areas where others might gain some insight or assistance in developing and adopting professional doctorates and pose questions about the likely future of these programs.

As demonstrated in this book, research by candidates in professional doctorate programs is becoming significant in the research landscape of Australian universities. While enrolment numbers in professional doctorates across the university system are difficult to discern due to the non-reporting requirements of most fee-paying programs, it appears that with the rapid proliferation of professional doctorates outlined in Chapter 1, professional doctorate programs are likely become the dominant form of doctoral study at universities in the near future.

Given the likely future dominance of professional doctorates, those charged with their leadership and development need to pay attention to a multitude of issues, as follows.

What governance structures are best suited to administer professional doctorate programs? Should they have separate governance and administrative structures compared to traditional Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs?

As was alluded to in Chapter 2, Southern Cross University is moving to amalgamate the currently separate governance and administrative structures of the professional doctorates and PhDs to ensure consistent quality outcomes, maintain credibility for awarding doctorates and achieve efficiencies in administration. Such an amalgamation is appropriate where the professional doctorates are acknowledged by the federal government as research degrees, since the objectives of the different doctoral programs are similar and coherent. Where professional doctorates are not considered to be research degrees (and are therefore coursework awards), it would be appropriate to maintain distinct governance and administrative structures. In any case, strong candidate and supervisor support systems are important operational and administrative procedures to be addressed early in the program's development.

Research paradigms are changing and mixed methods research is emerging in doctoral programs. This change, demonstrated in Chapter 3, will have an impact on the way research methods training is conducted and delivered. Traditional approaches may allow candidates to select only training for the paradigm of their proposed research and may conduct research training in separate subjects on qualitative and quantitative techniques. These practices may need to be abandoned in favour of a more holistic approach, where methods are taught in one combined subject with mixed methods dominating. Anecdotal evidence suggests the trend towards mixed methods is driven by industry needs for greater validity in research outcomes.

Professional development for research supervisors is important. It is often conducted in a piecemeal fashion, delivered in one or half day workshops and often by people who are not experienced doctoral supervisors. Feedback informs us that this approach to professional development is not

well received by supervisors. There is also an adage often heard among those who administer doctoral research programs that the quality of the program is the quality of the supervision. If this adage has any foundation, then it is incumbent on programs' leadership to find strategies that deliver quality professional development opportunities for supervisors in which communities of practice develop, allowing worthwhile discussion between supervisors, ensuring that supervisors are well resourced with policy direction and educational support and enabling more experienced supervisors to share their knowledge and mentor less experienced ones. Chapter 4 outlined the development of a Higher Degree Research supervisor online professional development program that has successfully met the expectations of busy supervisors.

Where the professional doctorates are recognised as research degrees, the leadership of the programs must pay attention to creating an appropriate research culture. Where there is no tradition of a research culture or the culture is alien to research, clear steps must be taken to ensure that a research culture or sub-culture is created if there is to be progress towards a successful research oriented organisational unit. It is suggested in Chapter 5 that one of the driving forces for the expansion of professional doctorate programs is the need for evidence-based practice in the professions. An appropriate research culture will assist candidates to gain the skills, understand the nuances and ethics, and adopt the behaviours required of rigorous professional researchers and lead to greater recognition in their subsequent professional lives. Conducting research symposium that generate a climate of research and collegiality are necessary components of a strong research culture.

Part 2 of the book examined the context of research in education, business management and Indigenous studies. Chapter 6 identified the dominant type of sub-disciplinary research in the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program over a 13 year period. While the areas of research are diverse, research is dominated by projects in the related fields of human resources and organisational development and behaviour. Discussion on the purported differences between the DBA and the PhD may be controversial for doctoral purists. The suggestion that it may be time for Australian universities to consider establishing a new, advanced higher research degree is deliberately provocative, to raise discussion on the issue.

The Doctor of Education (EdD) was the first professional doctorate program offered in Australia and, as such, has gone through first and second generation change. Chapter 7 raised cohort entry as a strength of this type of professional doctorate, due to the peer support and cross fertilisation of ideas that can be achieved in cohorts compared to individual entry schemes. Several possible future directions were outlined in the chapter including an emphasis on professional practice, self-managed development and transdisciplinary investigations. All these directions apply equally to other professional doctorates.

Lastly, in this part of the book, Chapter 8 outlined the development of the Doctor of Indigenous Philosophy (DIP), designed to build research capacity and Indigenous research competency in Australia and overseas and to generate positive changes for Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island people through rigorous research projects. There is an urgent need for sound research to inform government policy in this area and to use research to assist communities with service provision. The cohort entry and professional team-based practice issues raised in the EdD context apply equally in the area of Indigenous research. Leaders in this area might utilise these concepts to raise Indigenous participation in doctoral research. Similarly, the passion of business and management students to research issues of personal and professional interest to them suggests more opportunities for organisation partnerships and researchers situated as employees, of the type mooted for the DIP.

Part 3 of the book provided case material from candidates and their supervisors. The chapters will be food for thought for those aspiring to undertake doctoral level research and those seeking to supervise these projects. The themes arising in the chapters are significant determinants of likely success in completing the project and of a successful examination process. The themes include:

- the passionate, often long-held, personal and professional interest of the researcher in their topic
- selecting a supervisor remains a very significant factor in the likely completion of the project
- the need to focus the research project at the literature review stage and limit the research to something achievable
- a structured approach to developing the thesis assists the researcher to know the way forward, keep on track and maintain an overview of the project
- the effectiveness of early methodological and research design training in terms of rigorous preparation of professional doctorate candidates ensures that the project is well designed and meets the required ethical standards
- during the course of the research, it is necessary for candidates to have their progress exposed to peer review, for example by ethics committee examination of research proposals, publication during the research and regular doctoral symposium, allowing peer and professorial input into proposals
- candidates also need to have good relationships with peer researchers if their project is to take advantage of the full collegial environment available
- doctoral research can make a contribution to theory, policy (particularly government policy) and professional practice, whether the research is being undertaken in the context of business and management, education or Indigenous studies.

Finally, important questions about professional doctorate programs remain unanswered and we hope that this book challenges others to pursue these questions. For example, should the professional doctorate's sole aim be to produce quality researchers or is the sole aim to produce well-rounded practitioners? Are the aims compatible? Does the professional doctorate pose a risk to PhD programs. If so, how? Should these programs be clearly differentiated or should they be encouraged to achieve the same outcomes and standards? We leave these questions for debate and discussion.

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