EDUCATION DOCTORATES

EXPLORING PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

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Thesis Submitted for the Award of Doctor of Education

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Education is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DCU ..... Dublin City University
EdD ..... Education Doctorates / Doctor of Education
NQAI..... National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
PD ..... Professional Doctorate
PhD ..... Doctor of Philosophy
QQI ..... Quality and Qualifications Ireland

ABSTRACT

Education Doctorates

Exploring Personal, Professional and Academic Contributions

Rachel Keegan

Despite a lack of attention in national and European policy, professional doctorates in Ireland and the United Kingdom have grown in popularity since their introduction in the early 2000s. Such programmes offer learners an alternative to the traditional PhD, framed in a context of doctorate level study which both informs and is informed by, professional practice. Definitions of such programmes emphasise this professional practice grounding as the defining feature of the professional doctorate and yet there is little evidence of such contributions to practice, the workplace or the profession more broadly.

This study focuses on two aspects of undertaking one such type of programme, the Doctor of Education (EdD). Firstly, it asks the "why", exploring the multifaceted reasons for pursuing an EdD. Secondly, the study explores the contribution of such programmes for the learner, their workplace and their wider professional and academic communities.

The study of impact or contribution is a complex one, and the researcher acknowledges that one cannot suggest a simple cause and effect relationship between programme and practice. Instead, the focus is on the perceptions of the learner to answer five central questions:

1. What motivated the students/graduates to pursue the EdD?
2. How do the students/graduates perceive the contributions of their EdD? Where and when do these occur?
3. What are the more tangible contributions of the EdD?
4. How do the students/graduates recognise and describe the more intangible contributions?
5. Are these contributions resulting from the process, the product, or both?

The study adopts a mixed-method case study approach, looking at one EdD programme in an Irish context. The study commences with an extensive literature review which informed the development of a conceptual framework and a detailed survey instrument – the first phase of this mixed-method study. This is followed up with a second phase, involving in-depth interviews with 14 of the survey respondents, from a range of professional backgrounds. The study revealed wide-ranging contributions including personal and professional development, career implications, workplace and practice contributions and contributions to wider professional and academic communities.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Since the publication of the *Salzburg Principles* (Christensen, 2005), European universities have responded to policy objectives by developing a more structured approach to doctoral education. The same period has seen a diversification in doctoral formats and the establishment of new types of doctoral awards. One such award is the professional doctorate, and many Irish and UK institutions now offer such programmes in areas including education, business and psychology. Despite the growth of professional doctorates, they have received little attention in comparison to traditional doctorates (PhDs) and European policymakers appear to be steadfastly focused on the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) as the main vehicle for producing doctoral graduates.

This absence from European policy has been replicated in the Irish context, with a lack of policy, standards or guidance regarding professional doctorates. This absence is matched by a dearth of research into professional doctorates in Ireland. Indeed, based on a review of the literature, only two such studies were identified (Loxley and Seery, 2012; Moran and Misra, 2018). Looking further afield, there are significant gaps in the literature and research into professional doctorates has mainly focused on the growth and number of such programmes (Chiteng Kot and Hendel, 2012), their structure and content (Robinson, 2018), learner experiences (Goodall et al., 2017) and their standing vis-à-vis the PhD (Neumann, 2005). Several studies have acknowledged this impasse calling for research that looks beyond programme specifics to professional doctorates' potential to enhance professional knowledge and practice (Lee, Green and Brennan, 2000; Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2011; Wellington, 2013; Davis and Frame, 2016; Hawkes and Yerrabati, 2018). This study aims to address the lacuna of research in this area by exploring the contributions of one such award, the education doctorate (EdD), in an Irish context.

The chapter at hand provides an overview of factors influencing the choice of study. From this, an overview of the research questions and the nature of the study's scope and approach is described. The penultimate section describes the significance of the study and the research contributions. Finally, an overview of the various chapters in the study is provided.

1.2 Factors Influencing this Choice of Study

It is useful at this point to address why I chose to focus on this area of research. I have held various administrative roles in one Irish university since 2004. For most of those years, I have been involved in the administration, governance and support of research degree programmes both at a faculty level and later in a central support unit. Related to my work in this area and a personal

desire to achieve an award at the highest level, I considered pursuing a part-time PhD programme in 2014. During the course of considering these options, I was directed by a colleague to consider the EdD programme being offered in my own institution. It struck me at the time that, while I had been involved in doctoral education for over ten years, I had a limited understanding of professional doctorates more generally. My professional involvement with external representative bodies and networks at this time has given me additional insight into the lack of strategic focus on professional doctorates both nationally and at the European level. I became increasingly aware of a lack of understanding outside of those directly involved in the design and delivery of these programmes. I believed that this issue was exacerbated by a lack of recognition of professional doctorates by policymakers, coupled with an absence of literature that speaks directly to such programmes' purposes. These insights were most valuable in highlighting the need for a focused study in this area. As such, my starting point for this thesis was directed by a definition provided by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) (2014), which expects that the professional doctorate will make contributions both in the traditional academic sense (i.e. peer-reviewed product) as well as to professional knowledge and practice:

> ...there is an expectation that each learner completing a professional doctorate programme will (at some stage) generate significant **peer-reviewed product** from their research (such as publications, patents etc.) or alternatively that their work will have a comparable peer-recognised **impact on their profession.** (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2014, p. 19)

It is envisaged that this research will go some way towards illuminating how EdDs are making contributions to academic and professional knowledge and practice.

1.3 Research Questions

Professional doctorates offer learners an alternative to the traditional PhD, framed in the context of doctorate level study, which both informs and is informed by professional practice. Definitions of such programmes emphasise this professional practice grounding as the defining feature of the professional doctorate, and yet, there is little evidence of such contributions on practice or the workplace (Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016). This study, which focuses on the EdD, explores and examines the potential contributions to professional development, knowledge and practice as identified by the learners and graduates of one Irish EdD programme.

However, it is important at this point to acknowledge the complexities in identifying what contributions or impacts a professional doctorate may have on professional development and practice. The study is not intended to measure such contributions, nor does it intend to suggest a

simple cause and effect relationship between programme and practice. Instead, the questions are explored through the lens of the participants who engaged in this study. Furthermore, Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 49) highlight the significance of considering the '…motivations of the individual to undertake it…and the extent to which these purposes are fulfilled and the programme results in impact'. With this in mind, an additional contextual question is included in addressing these learners' motivations in pursuing the EdD.

The study addresses five key questions:

1. What motivated the students/graduates to pursue the EdD?
2. How do the students/graduates perceive the contributions of their EdD? Where and when do these occur?
3. What are the more tangible contributions of the EdD?
4. How do the students/graduates recognise and describe the more intangible contributions?
5. Are these contributions resulting from the process, the product, or both?

1.4 Nature, Scope and Approach of the Study

As has already been stated, the study seeks to highlight the kinds of contributions that can emerge from engaging in an EdD programme. It adopts a mixed-method case study approach, looking at one EdD programme currently being delivered in an Irish university. Using a pragmatic approach, this study allows for an exploration of existing literature and in-depth interviews underpinned by the inclusion of findings from a quantitative survey instrument developed for the research. A pragmatic approach was chosen for several reasons, and the researcher was drawn to what Green and Caracelli (1997, p. 13) describe as the 'particularity and generality' of pragmatic research, the ability to look at a phenomenon up close and at a distance and the benefits of gaining a greater 'understanding of local meaning' combined with a 'distancing analysis of regularities'.

This mixed-methods study focuses on learners and graduates of the EdD programme at Dublin City University (DCU). The programme has seen several changes over the years, including the addition of new specialisms. Most notably, in 2016, following an institutional incorporation process, the DCU EdD was merged with a similar DCU awarded EdD programme delivered in St. Patrick's College, Dublin. This brought several new specialisms to the programme, and it now draws learners from a wide range of backgrounds, including teaching, academia and higher and further education leadership and administration.

The study commences with a review of the literature on the motivations and contributions of professional doctorates. This informed the development of a conceptual framework and the survey instrument used in this research – the first phase of this mixed-method study. A total of 57 responses were received in Phase 1. Phase 2 of the study was informed by the survey findings, leading to the development of the interview schedule. This phase involved in-depth interviews with 14 of the survey respondents. The findings for both phases were analysed and the details are converged and discussed in detail in chapters five and six.

1.5 Significance of this Study and Expected Contributions

This study is significant for several reasons, as described below:

As previously stated, there has been limited research on professional doctorates' contributions, particularly in Ireland, where only two other such studies have been identified (Loxley and Seery, 2012; Moran and Misra, 2018). Indeed, where research does exist, there are conflicting opinions about the potential impact on professional practice and the workplace (Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn, 2019). It is envisaged that this study will go some way to address the gap in knowledge and understanding of these contributions. It is intended that this study will illuminate the EdD and move the research focus from programme design and delivery to the contributions of such programmes to professional development, knowledge and practice.

The study highlights the significant absence of professional doctorates from local, national and European policy. The study details the issues of definition of such awards and highlights the need for national-level policy, agreed definitions and best practice guidance. Furthermore, it is envisaged that this research will prove beneficial to those developing and delivering such programmes in Ireland. The study raises questions, in particular, on the relationship between the learner and the workplace and the focus on professional practice versus professional development.

For this study, a mixed-method design was chosen for several reasons. Previous studies in this area have relied on small-scale qualitative studies, with participants mainly drawn from current cohorts. The inclusion of a quantitative survey enhances this study in allowing for a broad exploration of the key areas identified in the literature review. This mixed-method approach provides more breadth to the study and allows for a better understanding of EdD participants as a collective while at the same time allowing for individual experiences to contextualise, explain and sometimes contradict common experiences. Indeed, the researcher holds the view that in

mixing qualitative and quantitative findings, the research is enriched to '…represent a *plurality* of interests, voices and perspectives better' (Greene and Caracelli, 1997, p. 13).

Finally, a review of the literature on EdDs highlights that previous research has focused, in the main, on studies derived from enrolled professional doctorate students. This study also includes the experiences and perceptions of both current students and graduates. Indeed, Butcher and Sieminski (2006) and Boud et al. (2020) question the timing of exploring impact or contributions and ask when changes become apparent in the workplace. Including graduates in this study challenges the expectation of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2014), among others where there is an implicit expectation that those completing an EdD will be provided with the skillset required to not only enhance knowledge and practice in workplace settings but also to make ongoing contributions to that of research of the highest level via peer-reviewed products, reports and policy implementation documents.

1.6 Thesis Structure

The chapters in this thesis are structured as follows:

Chapter 2: Professional Doctorates in Context

Chapter two commences by setting in context the emergence and growth of professional doctorates in Europe against the backdrop of substantial doctoral education reform. The chapter details some of the issues surrounding professional doctorates, particularly their absence from policy and issues of definition both nationally and internationally. The chapter provides an analysis of the features which define the professional doctorate and discusses the growth of such programmes in Ireland and the UK. The chapter concludes by detailing the current EdD programmes on offer in Ireland.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Chapter three explores the contributions of professional doctorates in light of existing literature. However, as will be shown, it is important to point out that there is a notable shortage of literature in this space, an issue highlighted by those who have published in this area, including Wellington (2013), Davis and Frame (2016) and Hawkes and Yerrabati (2018) amongst others. As such, there is a reliance on the limited research available, most of which follows and builds upon the research of Scott et al. (2004).

The exploration of existing literature in this area initially led to developing a conceptual framework that informed the study's direction and approach. Four overarching themes were identified from this literature review, namely; 1) personal- and professional-self development (intrinsic factors); 2) professional/career development (extrinsic factors); 3) professional workplace contributions and; 4) wider professional and/or academic community contributions. The chapter also reflects on the motivations for pursuing such awards as an important consideration in understanding the goals and ambitions of those pursuing professional doctorates.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Chapter four presents the mixed-method case study approach adopted for this study and the rationale for the chosen methods of data collection and analysis. The pragmatic approach which underpins this study is addressed by the researcher before describing the research design that was used in the study. This study involves two phases in a Quan-QUAL design, with a weighted focus on the qualitative phase of the study. Phase 1 of the study involved the design of a quantitative research instrument (Appendix B) that was completed by 57 participants (students (n=30) and graduates (n=27)). Following on from a descriptive analysis of phase 1 of the study, phase 2 of the study consisted of the development of an interview schedule (Appendix A) that was followed by and a series of semi-structured interviews with 14 participants (students (n=5) and graduates (n=9)). The chapter concludes with a consideration of the ethical implications of this study.

Chapters 5 and 6: Presentation and Analysis of Findings

Chapters five and six converge and explore the findings from both phases of this study. Given the emphasis on this study's qualitative phase of this study, these chapters are structured around the six themes identified from the thematic analysis.

Chapter five focuses on the individual learner and explores the first three themes relating to 1) contributions to personal and professional development, 2) career development, progression and change and 3) programme specific learner motivations. Chapter six considers the wider-reaching contributions of the EdD under the themes of 4) workplace engagement and support, 5) contributions to practice and the workplace and 6) contributions to wider professional and academic communities.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

The final chapter concludes with a summary of the findings as they relate to the research questions and the conceptual framework. The chapter discusses the findings and highlights potential areas for future research in this area. The chapter also considers the potential contribution of this

research to practice, highlighting areas that require a future policy focus and potential learnings for those involved in the design and delivery of professional doctorate programmes in Ireland and elsewhere.

CHAPTER 2: PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES IN CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This study focuses on one type of professional doctorate, the EdD, in an Irish setting. It is useful, therefore, to position professional doctorates within the context of the Irish and European socio-political environment from which they have emerged. As such, this chapter commences by setting professional doctorates within this context and, in turn, addresses the absence of professional doctorates from both national and international policy. The chapter also details issues surrounding the definition of such awards. This is followed by considering some of the defining features of professional doctorates before detailing these programmes' growth in Ireland and the UK. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of current EdD programmes in Ireland.

2.2 Professional Doctorates in a European Context

2.2.1 Overview of Doctoral Reform in Europe and Ireland

In the past fifteen years, most European countries have increased focus at a national policy level on developing Europe as an innovative, sustainable, knowledge economy (European University Association, 2005; European Commission, 2010; European Commission, 2020) with the current strategy continuing this focus into the future (European Commission, 2019; European Commission, 2020). This has led to an increased focus by European policymakers on the development of a European Research Area (ERA) and the role of the researcher and higher education in achieving this objective (Scott et al., 2004; European University Association, 2005; European Commission, 2010; European Commission, 2019; European Commission, 2020). Research is no longer seen as a marginal activity of the university but rather '...a social and economic imperative' (Loxley and Seery, 2012, p. 4). This focus is evidenced at a national level in Ireland's *Innovation 2020* strategy, which emphasises doctoral education as '...vital to the development of our human and knowledge capital' and '...critical to Ireland's research system' (Interdepartmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation, 2015, p. 26).

Higher education has also gone through substantial reform, guided by the Bologna Process, which saw the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Since 2003, doctoral education has come to the attention of a variety of transnational organisations such as the European Commission, where it was agreed that awards at the doctoral level should be included in the Bologna Process as a "third cycle" of higher education reform.

This led to a Bologna seminar in 2005, which saw the establishment of the *Salzburg Principles* (Christensen, 2005). These principles formed the foundations for subsequent reforms in doctoral education at a European level. The ten principles set out, for the first time, a Europe-wide consensus as to the purpose and direction of doctoral education and called into question the "fitness for purpose" of the traditional Master-Apprentice model for a European knowledge society (European University Association, 2005). This paved the way for the development of a much more structured approach to doctoral education in Europe and by extension in Ireland, via the 'structured PhD', which not only recognises the creation of new knowledge as a core objective but acknowledges the importance of '...broader professional training and development' (Higher Education Authority, 2017, p. 5).

While the *Salzburg Principles* recognise the importance of a '...rich diversity of doctoral programmes in Europe...' (Christensen, 2005, p. 4) as well as identifying the need for '...new structures of doctoral programme...' (ibid., p. 3), the European response has been a restructuring of the traditional PhD rather than a reimagining of doctoral education more broadly (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2006). Alternative modes of doctoral education have, at the European level, remained largely unexplored, and this might be attributed in part to an initial statement in the *Salzburg Principles* which proposes that '[t]here should be only one doctorate and one diploma...that is common for all faculties/institutions of the university' (ibid., p. 3).

2.2.2 Addressing the Policy Mismatch

Where policy at the national and European level focuses on doctoral education, the emphasis is very much on the PhD and a very particular kind of PhD graduate who is seen as a vital cog in the development of a stable, knowledge-based economy. According to Loxley and Seery (2012, p. 3), this current policy discourse depicts a doctoral graduate '...whose *raison d'être* is the generation of knowledge (which either is or can be) transformed into an explicit commodified form'. Ireland's *Innovation 2020* Strategy (Interdepartmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation, 2015, p. 26) demonstrates this view. While the Strategy acknowledges the '...growing diversity of academic and professional routes to doctoral attainment', it outlines explicitly the government's plan to increase PhD enrolments specifically, and in areas '...aligned to enterprise and other needs' (ibid., p. 17). In addition, the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (Department of Education and Skills, 2011) focuses solely on the PhD as the route to obtaining a doctoral level award.

There are two key issues with current doctoral education policy, particularly relevant to the EdD, as explained by Loxley and Seery (2012). Firstly, dominant discourse describes a doctoral graduate who is a '...carrier of commercial and entrepreneurial values and practices...' (ibid., p. 3), which does not fit well with many disciplines, particularly those where a public service ethos permeates associated professions. Also, the focus is almost exclusively on doctoral candidates who are "young professionals" and "early stage researchers" (Christensen, 2005; European University Association, 2005; European University Association, 2013), which fails to recognise mid-career professionals typically attracted to programmes such as the EdD, as well as those pursuing part-time PhD programmes.

A second, and perhaps more prevalent issue, relates to the absence of professional doctorates from policy discussion. This can render these alternative programmes irrelevant or, '...at the very worst, delegitimised modes of study and knowledge generation...' (Loxley and Seery, 2012, p. 4). Costley (2013, p. 21) also warns that '[k]ey issues for developing quality assurance for professional doctorates are that a widening concept of knowledge is understood as emanating from, developed in and providing change for professional contexts'. A similar concern is voiced in an earlier review of professional doctorates undertaken by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland in 2006. This review highlights the need to develop a code of good practice to '...assure the quality and standing of Professional Doctorates...so that any potential ambiguity concerning their purpose, level of attainment and overall structure can be avoided' (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2006, p. 2). To date, no such code has been established at either a National or a European level. More recently in the UK, a report commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council suggested that the 'UK professionals sector bodies and institutions could benefit from developing a more strategic basis for PD provision...' (Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016, p. vi) and '...should work to rationalise the complexity and heterogeneity of programme titles, awards and nomenclature, as this is contributing to the weak profile of the PD' (ibid., p. vii).

The absence from policy has resulted in an apparent lack of guidance and subsequent uncertainties surrounding professional doctorates. However, this is not a new issue, and as far back as 2005, the EUA warned that '...many universities would prefer a more unified approach towards the types of doctoral degrees awarded in order to prevent further separation of research and education traditions' (European University Association, 2005, p. 13). This apparent indifference towards addressing alternative forms of doctoral education is evidenced in much of European policy to date, and professional doctorates remain largely unknown or understood outside of Ireland and the UK.

2.2.3 The Issue of Definition

Given the lack of input at the policy level or any strategic focus, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is no universal understanding or definition of the professional doctorate. Ambiguity is amplified by current policy, which overtly favours the PhD as the sole means for delivering doctoral education including Ireland's *Innovation 2020* strategy and Ireland's *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030.* Difficulties in defining professional doctorates may also be attributed to substantial programme differences between disciplines, institutions and countries offering professional doctorates (Robinson, 2018). Lunt (2018, p. 6) warns that there is a '...lack of a common understanding of the purpose and value of professional doctorates due to the range of titles and diversity in structure of programme'. Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 1) also caution that the wide range of structures and titles has posed '...difficulties in reporting, recording and maintaining standards'.

Furthermore, which programmes are classified as professional doctorates is also contested, for example, the Doctor of Engineering. Notably, in the *Provision of Professional Doctorates in English HE Institutions* report commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Engineering Doctorates were excluded from the study. The authors of this report suggested that the Doctor of Engineering did not 'conform' to the characteristics expected of a professional doctorate as they relate to programme structure, research focus and purpose (Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016).

There are also difficulties in that '…there is confusion between the professional doctorate… and the first professional degree – a degree which has the primary purpose of preparing a student to enter into, and work within, their chosen profession (e.g. Doctor of Medicine – MD, Doctor of Dentistry – DMD)' (Jones, 2018, p. 817). This issue is most evident in North America, where these awards are often described as professional doctorates. For these awards, graduates may use the title of doctor. However, they '…should not be confused with PhD degrees or other research doctorates' (US Department of Education, International Affairs Office, 2020).

Bourner, Bowden and Liang (2001, p. 71) highlight that definition is furthermore hindered because '...neither the Professional Doctorate nor the PhD is a homogeneous group'. Similar concerns have been raised in the US, with Shulman et al. (2006, p. 25) arguing that '[t]he problems of the education doctorate are chronic and crippling'. This critique of the EdD suggests that the blurred boundaries between professional doctorates and PhDs not only damages the reputation of EdD programmes but creates '...the danger that we achieve rigorous preparation neither for practice nor for research' (ibid., p. 25).

2.2.4 Working towards Clarity

Despite the many difficulties in defining and describing professional doctorates, there is some consensus, at least in the Irish and UK context, that primarily relates to a definition of status and the uniqueness of professional doctorates.

2.2.4.1 Definition as Status

Despite the absence of a standard definition, there appears to be a broad consensus on the equivalent status of the professional doctorate vis-à-vis the PhD. In Ireland, this is mostly thanks to the positioning of professional doctorates alongside the PhD as a level 10 award on the *National Framework of Qualifications* (NFQ), which sets out the learning outcomes at this level as relating to '...discovery and development of new knowledge and skills and delivering findings at the frontiers of knowledge and application (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2003, p. 21).

While equivalence is formally recognised both in Ireland and the UK, Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 728) warn that this may not be replicated in practice, with some students reporting having to '...convince others that the degree had parity in terms of excellence, quality and standards'. This worrying finding is also remarked upon in a later study by Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011) and the 2016 *Provision of Professional Doctorates in English HE Institutions* report, which found that '[p]erceptions of inequivalence persist in the academic environment...' (Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016 p. 67).

2.2.4.2 Definition as Uniqueness

While professional doctorates are formally recognised as being on a par with the PhD, there is less clarity on how the two award types differ. Defining the professional doctorate's uniqueness has become increasingly difficult with the introduction of the structured PhD, which has seen a blurring of the boundaries between the two awards types (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2006). There are, however, some defining features of Irish and UK professional doctorates, which set them apart from the PhD as it currently exists. These features are examined in turn below.

Programme Structure

Professional doctorates are normally more structured than more traditional PhD programmes. However, as highlighted by Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. iv), '...this distinction is reducing with the development of more structured doctoral programmes, especially collaborative and cohort-based doctoral training programmes'. Most commonly, professional

doctorates are delivered over four years, on a part-time basis. Programmes typically run as a cohort, have a substantial taught element followed by a period of independent study and are examined in the same light as a PhD thesis by *Viva Voce.* Due to the formalised, accredited, taught elements, the thesis length is typically shorter while still being required to meet the standards expected at the doctoral level. For example, the criteria for the EdD, which is the focus of this study, suggests the thesis length should fall somewhere between a Masters by Research (45,000 words) and a PhD (90,000 words).

Target Market

Professional doctorates are generally linked to a specific profession named in the award and are typically intended to attract mid-career professionals. The growth in graduate education more broadly is '...one striking marker of the increased search for advanced knowledge and skills' (Lee, Green and Brennan, 2000, p. 118). This demand is being met, in part, by professional doctorate programmes which allow for research that is focused on the professional work of the individual, thus recognising that '...work-based learning should be extended to the highest level of award...' (Scott et al., 2004, p. 22). It is not expected that graduates of these programmes will pursue careers as professional researchers but instead become "researching professionals" (Burnard, Dragovic and Ottewell, 2018) who '…have as their focal outcome a contribution to professional practice' (Jones, 2018).

Curriculum

Lee, Green and Brennan (2000, p. 128) describe the professional doctorate as a hybrid curriculum, which sits at the intersection of the workplace, the profession and the university. Here the researcher '...formalises a relationship of work as learning, and the workplace as both site for the production of new knowledge and as an object for reflexive analysis'. The professional doctorate formalises work-based learning and provides professionals with '…the kind of high-level learning that supports people as self-managing practitioners and self-directed learners' (Lester and Costley, 2010).

Butcher and Sieminski (2006) describe these programmes as sitting in a 'twilight zone' between the university and the workplace. Professionals who bring substantial expertise to the programme are looking to develop their practice and '...require a format that emphasises the interrelationship between practice and research, and between professional and academic knowledge...' (Lunt, 2018, p. 4). As such, taught elements are often student-led and rely on interaction and discussion between professionals, facilitated by an academic lead aimed at putting '…professional practice and critical reflection at the centre of the experience…' (Lindsay, Kerawalla and Floyd, 2018, p, 2322). Furthermore, the curriculum points to a programme '…that is candidate-driven, emerges

from context-based concerns, effects professional development for the candidate, and uses as (action-orientation) research perspective to create practical development and change' (Costley and Lester, 2012, p. 259).

Purpose – Knowledge Produced and the Relationship with Professional Practice

Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. iii) suggest that professional doctorates are distinctive based on three characteristics, that is, their purpose, their research focus and their structure. Concerning purpose, the authors suggest that professional doctorates '...aim to develop the capacity to make a significant original contribution to professional practice through research'. This idea of contribution is a common theme in many of the definitions, which often emphasise the requirement to make not only a contribution to new knowledge but also a contribution to professional practice. The Economic and Social Research Council, for example, describe a professional doctorate as being '...expected to make a contribution to both theory and practice and to develop professional practice through making a contribution to (professional) knowledge' (Economic and Social Research Council, 2005, p. 99). However, difficulties in identifying professional impact abound (Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn, 2019), and current examination processes focus predominately on assessing academic impact (through the contribution to new knowledge). Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 12) suggest the professional doctorate is concerned with the '...production of knowledge from practice, for application back into practice' which should lead to '...professional or organisational change'. Scott et al. (2004) describe this as a defining feature of professional doctorates. However, there is limited research that evidence such contribution or impact (Neumann, 2005; Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2006; Lee, Green and Brennan, 2009; Hramiak, 2017; Hawkes and Yerrabati, 2018; Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn, 2019).

Some suggest that professional doctorates are a response by universities in recognising alternatives sites and modes of knowledge production (Scott et al., 2004; Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2011). Scott et al. (2004, p. 11), for example, suggest that universities are in a period of change in which they face a '...reallocation of power bases within society....' which poses questions about what is knowledge and who has the authority or power to decide. Professional doctorates suggest that the knowledge produced is usually driven by real-world and real-time imperatives (Costley, 2013). Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. iii) describe the EdD as research which '...directly relates to, and is rooted in, the professional practice...' and Lee, Green and Brennan (2000, p. 118) describes professional doctorates as producing '... contextualised knowledge, fast, in other than formal, disciplinary ways...'. However, Costley (2013) warns that it is these new forms of knowledge production that may in part hamper a wider acceptance of professional doctorates.

2.3 Growth of Professional Doctorates in Ireland and the UK

Professional doctorates are well established in the United States, and the first awarded programme was an EdD at Harvard University in 1921 (Bourner, Bowden and Laing, 2001). They did not appear in the UK until the 1990s with the introduction of an EdD programme at the University of Bristol (Bourner, Bowden and Laing, 2001). Over a decade later, the first EdD programme was established in St. Patrick's College, Dublin (now part of DCU). In recent years, other Irish universities have also shown an interest in the development of professional doctorate programmes, including a Doctor of Human Performance and Innovation at the University of Limerick, a Doctor of Social Science at University College Cork and most recently, a Doctor in Elite Performance (Sport) at DCU. Beyond this, professional doctorates remain mostly unknown in Europe, perhaps partly due to their absence from European policy. Despite this lack of attention at a European level, professional doctorates in Ireland and the UK have grown in popularity since their introduction (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2006).

Growth can be attributed to several factors. Chiteng Kot and Hendel (2012), for example, attribute the growth internationally to increased government involvement in higher education policy, although this seems an unlikely scenario in the Irish context given the absence of professional doctorates from any such policies. Earlier, Gregory (1995) and Lee, Green and Brennan (2000) suggest that the professional doctorate arose as a response to dissatisfaction with the traditional PhD, at a time when there was '...serious concern and reconsideration about the nature and meaning of doctoral research...' (Gregory, 1995, p. 178). These concerns appear to have been addressed mainly through the restructuring of the PhD at the European level, resulting in some questioning whether professional doctorates are still required (Evans et al., 2005).

Scott et al. (2004, p. 11) describe the rise of professional doctorates as a response by universities to become more relevant to society, asserting that their introduction in the UK context 'signals a move by both university and the professions to reconfigure what is constituted appropriate research and practice knowledge'. Lester and Costley (2010, p. 561) support this view highlighting that professional doctorates have grown alongside a general growth '…in the engagement of higher education with workforce development, with among other things the emergence of a distinct if varied area of provision commonly referred to a work-based learning'. However, Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 34) found that only a quarter of surveyed institutions in the UK that offer professional doctorates '...overtly included a reference to professional doctorate provision within its research strategy...'. The avowal that universities are moving towards recognising alternative forms of knowledge and knowledge production is

also stated by Lee, Green and Brennan (2000, p. 17), who claim that the university has '...faced extensive critique for its consistent privileging of disciplinary and formal modes of knowledge production over more situated knowledge...'.

Lunt (2018) suggests that growth may be attributed to a number of factors, including professional needs, the political environment and the determination of academic leaders. Similarly, Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 36) found that '…the most common practice seemed to be for a single member of staff to have the inclination and autonomy to initiate the development of a new PD…'. Indeed, the Irish EdD seems to have been championed by small numbers of academics within the offering institutions in response to a demand from education professionals seeking a '...higher form of professional development' (Scott et al., 2004, p. 31).

The growing emphasis on '...utilisation of research...' in teaching (Taysum, 2006, p. 328) may also direct teaching professionals to EdD programmes that emphasise the combination of research and practice. Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 729) suggest that the appeal of the professional doctorate for many is the '...opportunity to work towards improving professional knowledge and practice through study and research, which is both rooted in the professional context and is explicitly committed to making things better...'. This view may sit well with the education profession's public service ethos and perhaps is another factor in the EdDs growth in recent years. It is noteworthy that professional doctorate programmes in Ireland are typically associated with professions where continuous professional development (CPD) is emphasised or a requirement for fitness to practice in these professions (for example, nursing and more recently, education). It is also noteworthy that professional doctorate programme development appears to be primarily driven by providers of such programmes rather than by demand from the associated professional groups, as stated by O'Mullane (2005). This may suggest that it is the individual professional rather than the profession, which may drive such programmes' demand.

To concur with Zusman (2017), the growth in professional doctorates is a complex one, requiring further research and raising questions of credential inflation and higher education legitimacy that is not only limited to professional doctorates but also higher education qualifications more generally. Indeed, there appears to be a variety of complex and interrelated reasons for the introduction of professional doctorates and their continued widespread popularity in Ireland and the UK. In Ireland, seven of the eight universities currently offer at least one professional doctorate programme, and in the UK, they are even more commonplace. A 2016 report commissioned by the UK Higher Education Funding Council (Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016) identified 320 UK programmes spread across a variety of disciplinary areas, as shown in Table 2.1. However, despite the popularity of such programmes in the past decade,

enthusiasm for the professional doctorate in Ireland '...at the practitioner level has not been replicated by policymakers at either the national or international level' (Loxley and Seery, 2012, p. 3).

JACS Subject Group	No. of institutions	No. of programmes	Key PD themes / programmes
Education	54	72	EdD
Business and Administrative Studies	38	48	DBA
Biological Sciences	37	65	Psychology, DClinPsy
Subjects Allied to Medicine	37	81	Health & social care
Medicine & Dentistry	10	13	MD, DDent
History & Philosophical Studies	9	11	Theology
Creative Arts and Design	6	7	
Social & Political Sciences	6	7	
Law	5	5	Criminology
Agriculture and Related Sciences	2	2	
Architecture, Planning etc.	2	2	
Computer Science	2	2	
Generic/transdisciplinary	2	2	
Languages	1	1	
Physical Sciences	1	1	
Veterinary Medicine	1	1	

Table 2.1: Number of English institutions offering professional doctorates in 2016 (Source: adapted from Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016).

2.4 Existing Doctor of Education Programmes in Ireland

The awarding of doctoral degrees in Ireland is primarily confined to the eight universities, with 2018/2019 doctoral enrolments accounting for over 89% of the Irish total (total enrolments 8,643) (Higher Education Authority, 2019). To date, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) has not collected a breakdown by award type from institutions, so there are no national figures for professional doctorate enrolments.

Professional doctorates are currently running across seven of the eight Irish universities in a variety of disciplinary areas. Three institutions are currently offering an EdD programme, with a fourth offering a Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology. EdD programmes in Ireland are promoted for those experienced professionals who want to expand their knowledge and expertise and develop research skills relating to their work in the broad field of education. Of the three EdD programmes on offer, there are consistencies in the design and delivery of these programmes (Table 2.2).

Institution	Dublin City University (DCU)	Maynooth University (MU)	Trinity College Dublin (TCD)
Delivery	Part-time, cohort pedagogy with taught components delivered by block release	Part-time, cohort pedagogy with taught components delivered by block release	Part-time, cohort pedagogy with taught components delivered by block release
Duration	4-year programme	4-year programme	4-year programme
Entry Requirements	Second class (H2.2) or higher Master's degree (or equivalent) in education or a specific discipline area appropriate for one of the specialisms	H2.1 or higher Master's degree in education or a cognate discipline	An appropriate Masters level qualification or equivalent and a minimum of three years' experience
Target	Experienced professionals from education and related fields.	Designed for those who wish to undertake doctoral studies specifically related to their work in the field of education.	Designed primarily to meet the needs of professionals within the Irish education system.
Structure – Taught Phase	Years 1 and 2: Completion of 7 modules with assessment.	Year 1 and 2: Completion of 5 modules with assessment.	Year 1 to 3: mix of 6 taught elements and research
Focus of Taught Phase	Students follow modules in one of eight "Areas of Professional Focus" as well as modules in research methodology.	The specialism and dissertation topic will strongly correlate with their work as practitioners in the field of education with additional research method modules.	Students complete two strand-specific modules and four based around research methodology.
Structure – Research Phase	Years 3 and 4 dedicated to research.	Years 3 and 4 dedicated to research (with an option to take additional taught elements as required).	Year 4: dedicated to research and write-up.

Table 2:2: Comparison of Irish EdD programmes (Source: adapted from online prospectuses).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to provide an overview of professional doctorates and particularly the EdD in an Irish context. The chapter summarised some of the critical issues surrounding professional doctorates, namely, their absence from policy, a lack of strategic planning and an absence of good practice guidance for the design and delivery of such programmes. It is clear from the literature in the subsequent chapter that issues of definition and lack of policy have had an impact on the attention of existing research which focuses, in the main, on *describing* and *counting* such programmes. This study is intended to move this focus beyond description to the impacts, outputs or contributions of EdDs.

Whilst it is evident that professional doctorates have remained absent from both National and European policy discourse, they have, nonetheless, grown in popularity in both Ireland and the UK in recent years. This chapter concluded with a brief comparison of the three EdD programmes currently on offer in Ireland, one of which is the site for this mixed-method case study.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW: MOTIVATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

3.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to consider existing research relating to the contributions, outcomes or impacts of professional doctorates and, in particular, the EdD. This is an area which, as highlighted by Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 61), remains largely underexplored to date with little evidence or '...understanding about the ways in which professional doctorates are valued or recognised in the workplace...and how these impacts can (or should) be measured'.

According to Scott et al. (2004) and Wellington and Sikes (2006), the impact or contribution of any doctorate is dependent on the motivations of the individual to pursue such an award. Therefore, current research on the motivations for pursuing such programmes is reflected on briefly in this chapter before exploring the existing research on the contributions.

The contributions of professional doctorates are considered in light of existing literature in this area. As has already been stated, four overarching themes emerged from this literature review, namely; 1) personal- and professional-self development (intrinsic factors); 2) professional/career development (extrinsic factors); 3) professional workplace contributions; and 4) wider professional and/or academic community contributions. These identified themes led to the development of the conceptual framework, which directed the focus of this research.

As previously stated in chapter one of this study, it is important to point that there is a notable shortage of literature in this space, an issue highlighted by those who have published in this area (Lee, Green and Brennan, 2009; Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2011; Wellington, 2013; Davis and Frame, 2016; Hawkes and Yerrabati, 2018). It is also noteworthy that the literature becomes increasingly sparse as the focus moves from the individual learner to the wider-reaching workplace and professional contributions. This gap in the research was most recently highlighted in 2018 in a systematic review of the literature undertaken by Hawkes and Yerrabati (2018). They concluded that research to date has focused, in the main, on the content of professional doctorate programmes and the student experiences of undertaking such programmes. Indeed, it was found in the review that the authors '…did not identify any academic literature on the wider effect of professional doctorates, beyond the impact on either the individual and/or the institution' (Hawkes and Yerrabati, 2018, p. 15).

3.2 Motivations for Pursuing a Professional Doctorate

While the focus of this study is primarily on the contribution of professional doctorates, it is worth considering the motivations of candidates pursuing such awards as part of the wider context for several reasons:

1) As illustrated in previous research (Thorne et al., 2002; Scott et al., 2004; Wellington and Sikes, 2006) what an individual 'gets out' of their doctorate is very much dependent on their reasons for pursuing such an award.
2) Addressing motivations brings individual biographies to light, and these biographies will invariably have a bearing on the perceptions and experiences of professional doctorate candidates and graduates (Wellington and Sikes, 2006).
3) The factors relating to motivations and contributions are sometimes interrelated, as evidence in the literature addressed in the following sections.

Motivations for pursuing a professional doctorate are well documented in the existing literature, and many of the studies build upon the earlier work of Scott et al. (2004) including, Wellington and Sikes (2006), Loxley and Seery (2012), Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012), Hawkes (2016) Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016), Moran and Misra (2018) and Jones (2018). Scott et al. (2004) cite three categories of motivation, namely, extrinsic professional initiation, extrinsic professional continuation and intrinsic personal/professional affirmation. Wellington and Sikes (2006), who build upon the earlier work of Scott et al. (2004), warn that '[i]nevitably, such categorisations often fail to depict the complex and messy nature of human motivation: nevertheless, they can serve useful heuristic purposes.' These motivations are evidenced in the existing literature base and are categorised here as: extrinsic motivations; intrinsic motivations; and programme related motivations.

3.2.1 Extrinsic Motivations

Extrinsic motivations can be defined as 'an external incentive to engage in a specific activity, especially motivation arising from the expectation of punishment or reward' (American Psychological Association, 2020). Scott et al. (2004, p. 114) describe extrinsic motivations as being '...governed by the goals, values and interests of others as they affect the individual, and participation in an activity driven primarily by the prospect of external, tangible rewards'. The following extrinsic factors relating to the decision to pursue a professional doctorate are identified from existing literature:

3.2.1.1 Making a Contribution to Practice

A desire to contribute to practice is evident in much of the literature, which considered motivations for pursuing a professional doctorate. Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 51) found that '...enhancing their practice...' was one of three most commonly cited reasons for pursuing a professional doctorate (the other two being improving career prospects and academic interest). Scott et al. (2004, p. 119) articulate this motivation as wanting to make '...a contribution to the learners' immediate organisational context or more broadly to the professional field'. They suggest that it is linked to the idea of giving something back to the profession. Loxley and Seery (2012, p. 11) found that professional doctorate candidates have a '...desire to write and desire to speak on educational matters with confidence and authority' and identify '...altruism and a concern for the public good of research' to be a motivating factor (ibid., p. 11). Similarly, Hawkes (2016, p. 43) found that students demonstrated '…on-going commitment to professional development and continuing education, clearly signalling a love for education and teaching as well as a desire to improve practice'.

3.2.1.2 Credibility

Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012, p. 208) consider credibility as a motivator for education professionals in pursuing a doctorate and found that, for some, '…increased credibility, the "recognition of being a doctor," and the status associated with the title were significant motivators' in pursuing a professional doctorate. Leonard, Becker and Coate (2005) found that credibility was particularly important for those pursuing, or hoping to pursue, academic careers in the future while Moran and Misra (2018, p. 83) found that professional doctorates offered professional staff in higher education an opportunity for enhanced '…professional legitimacy within their existing roles'.

3.2.1.3 Career Development

As highlighted by Jones (2018, p. 818), '[t]he professional doctorate is designed to meet the needs of practicing professionals to facilitate their career growth' and career-related motivations are evident in much of the existing research. The critical study by Scott et al. (2004) identified two types of career-related factors: extrinsic professional initiation and extrinsic professional continuation. However, a later study by Wellington and Sikes (2006) found that the former was not applicable in the context of the EdD candidates who participated in their study. This may be due to the seniority of learners typically associated with EdD programmes.

Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) found that improving career prospects or opening doors to a possible career change was a commonly cited motivation, something which was also suggested in Scott et al. (2004), Wellington and Sikes (2006) and Jones (2018). However,

Butcher and Sieminski (2006) point out that these programmes typically attract well-established professionals, so students may be directed to '...focus on a current aspect of work in which they already possess significant professional knowledge'. As such, these programmes may be a way of earning professional credibility rather than an extrinsic reward. Similarly, Thorne et al. (2002, p. 4) suggest that for those in already established careers, 'professional alteration' rather than 'professional continuation' may be the driving factor, and candidates may be more concerned with '...changing or affecting an aspect of their practice' as opposed to further advancing in their professional career.

3.2.2 Intrinsic Motivations

Intrinsic motivation can be defined as 'an incentive to engage in a specific activity that derives from pleasure in the activity itself… rather than because of any external benefits that might be obtained…' (American Psychological Association, 2020). Intrinsic motivations, according to Scott et al. (2004, p. 121), are most closely linked to those with well-established careers and can

> ...broadly be described as cognitive (a keenness to maintain attention to something interesting, to develop meaning or understanding or to solve and problem); while others are more affective and will be concerned with increasing feelings of well-being, or enhancing self-esteem.

In the existing literature, the themes of personal fulfilment and having something to prove are commonly cited as intrinsic motivations. Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 728) found that both personal satisfaction and intellectual stimulation featured and 'reaching the summit was particularly gratifying and a major boost to the confidence and self-esteem of those who had not, previously, had positive academic experiences'. This view is also suggested by Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011, p. 5), who found that, for some, previous experiences of being non-traditional learners had motivated the learners to pursue a professional doctorate.

Other intrinsic factors are aligned to cognitive abilities, either through wanting to develop or validate knowledge and understanding in a particular field. Scott et al. (2004, p. 123) suggest that the professional doctorate can be about '...validating knowledge and expertise that was perhaps considered to be previously unacknowledged' and suggest that the learner may be more concerned with the process of discovery and change rather than the final product. Loxley and Seery (2012) identify a number of intrinsic motivators, including a desire to learn new research skills and a desire to obtain new knowledge. Hawkes (2016, p. 39) had similar findings and concluded that '…intrinsic factors included learning and research, especially linked to lifelong learning and interest in research'.

3.2.3 Programme Related Motivations

3.2.3.1 Programme Structure

The structured approach of the professional doctorate is a major draw, according to Scott et al. (2004) and Wellington and Sikes (2006). Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 729) found that '[i]nformants welcomed the timetable, the spacing of work, the deadlines, the range of taught sessions, [and] the cumulative aspect of assessed assignments...'. Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 52) also suggest that the structure of the professional doctorate is an appealing feature for many and '[i]n most cases the candidate had also considered other forms of doctoral programme (i.e. a PhD) but selected the [professional doctorate] model for the practical reason that it has been specifically designed for professionals to study part-time while in employment'. This study also suggested that some were of the view that the programme could support them in succeeding by '[r]e-introducing them to learning during the taught phase...' (ibid., p. 52), something which is also emphasised by Scott et al. (2004).

3.2.3.2 The Cohort Pedagogy

Being part of a cohort is identified by Lunt (2018) as a key motivation for choosing a professional doctorate. The cohort pedagogy is a key component of these programmes, where candidates can '...stimulate and enhance understanding through collaborative activity, discussion and peer learning' (ibid., p. 7). This was also found in other studies including Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) and Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 729), who found participants welcomed '...the support of a number of tutors and of fellow students...' and emphasised the importance of '...collegiality, support, friendship and social interaction...' (ibid., p. 732). Smith et al. (2011, p. 149) suggest that the cohort provides opportunities to work and learn with others from similar and diverse backgrounds bringing new insights and developing a community of practice for the learners. They furthermore suggest that learners '…perceive (and enjoy) an element of peer pressure, and a sense of competition, within their cohort group'.

3.2.3.3 Practical Nature of the Coursework

Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) suggest that the practical nature of the course and the ability to undertake a research project related to work practices is a motivation for professional doctorate applicants. This is also emphasised by Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 729), who note that professional doctorates '...usually enable students to kill at least two birds with one stone, in that assignments and research can be orientated towards work-related issues and concerns'. Huisman and Naidoo (2006, p. 7) furthermore suggest that this might be a selling

point over the traditional PhD which '...may have less appeal because of the lack of connection between this route and the professionals' practice and its aura of a "long and winding solitary road"'. Indeed, Hawkes (2016, p. 9) found that several EdD candidates had previously attempted a PhD which '…led them to look for something more practice focused, less isolating and more guided in structure'.

3.3 Contributions of the Professional Doctorate: A Conceptual Framework

Existing research on professional doctorates focuses, in the main, on the growth of such programmes, their structure, the learners experience and how they compare to the PhD. Lee, Green and Brennan (2009, p. 278) suggest that there has been a '...continuing and abiding interest in *counting*...' and there has been limited focus on the potential contributions of professional doctorates to professional development and practice, the workplace and wider professional communities. Others have been equally critical of the lack of research in this area (Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2011; Wellington, 2013; Davis and Frame, 2016; Hawkes and Yerrabati, 2018; Burnard, Dragovic and Ottewell, 2018), with O'Mullane (2005, p. 15) suggesting that

> [i]f the outcomes of a professional doctorate programme are significant for professional knowledge and practice, then there seems to be an obligation of the student, the provider and the profession to disseminate information about the outcomes to the profession.

Despite a dearth of research in this area, the review of the literature suggests some consistent themes and ideas relating to the contributions, outcomes or impacts of professional doctorate programmes. These themes are explored in further detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter. The literature review also led to the development of a conceptual framework that informed the direction and focus of this research (Figure 3.1). As described by Leshem and Trafford (2007, p. 96) '...the conceptual framework can be viewed as providing a theoretical overview of intended research and order within the process'. The conceptual framework is useful to both the researcher and the reader in explaining '...either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts, or variables – and the presumed relationships among them (Miles, Huberman and Huberman, 1994, p. 18).

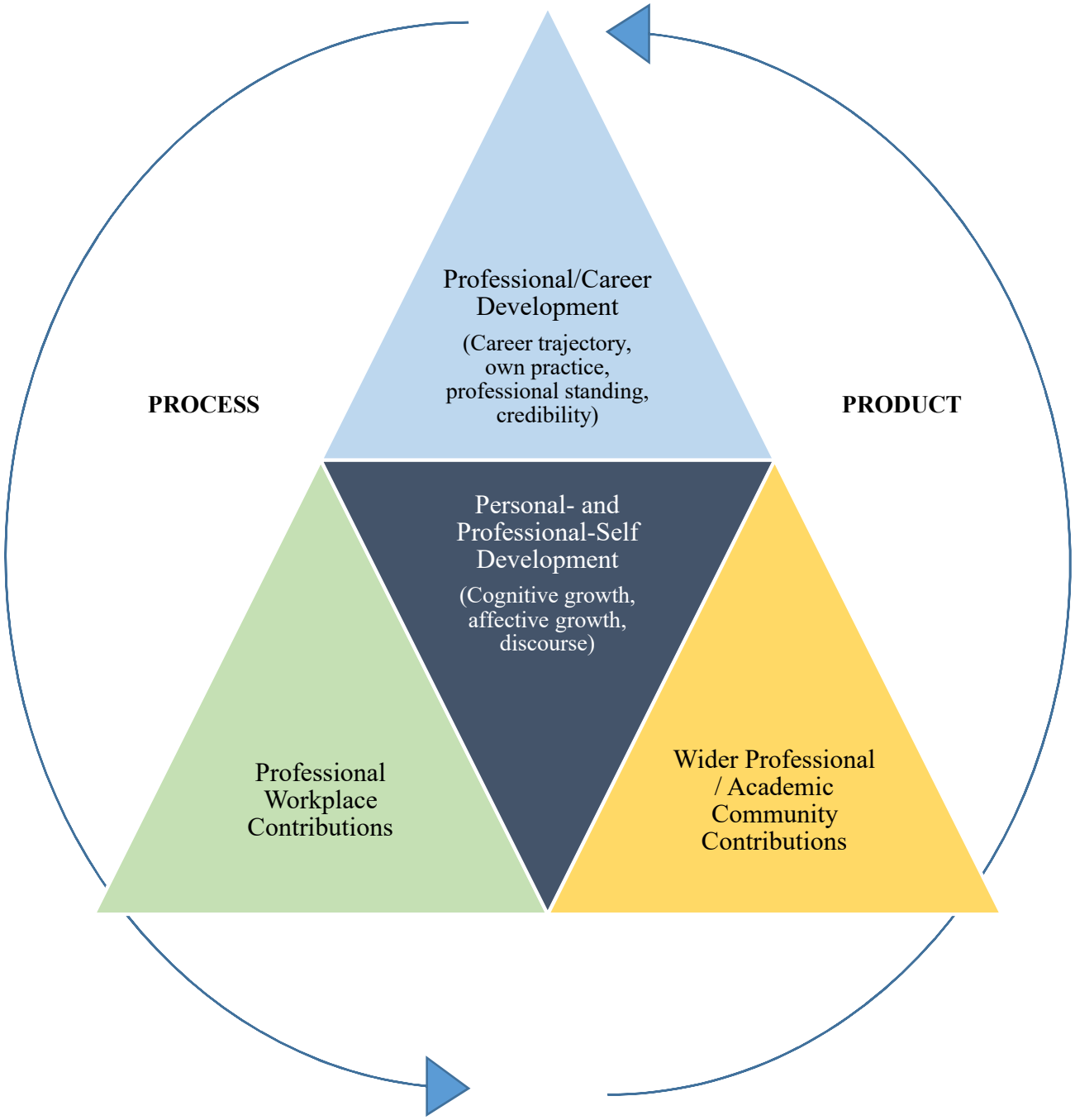


Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework: The Contributions of Professional Doctorates.

This conceptual framework suggests that contributions can occur from either or both, the process of undertaking a professional doctorate and the product or output (i.e. the research or the thesis itself). It is assumed here that the learner's own development sits at the centre of any such contributions, similar to Butcher and Sieminski's model of the impact of the EdD (Figure 3.2).

The framework assumes that the various 'locations' of such contributions are often interrelated and intertwined (i.e. a contribution at an individual level (self-development) may impact the career or wider professional network of the individual).

Notably, while this was a review of existing literature on professional doctorates, the majority of identified research focuses on EdD programmes, as does this study. This was highlighted in a recent review of the literature undertaken by Hawkes and Yerrabati (2018), who found that over 60% of existing literature on professional doctorates focuses on the EdD.

Four overarching themes were identified from the literature review as listed previously. These four identified themes are discussed in further detail in the subsequent sections. It is worth noting that these themes are often intertwined and overlapping, and in some cases, relate to similar themes identified in the literature addressing motivations. It is also notable that the majority of the research in this area is based on participants who are currently engaging in professional doctorate studies, thus omitting the longer-term perspectives of graduates. This limitation is highlighted by Hramiak (2017, p. 31), who observes that '...there has not been enough in-depth examination of the impact of the EdD on stakeholders or on the wider context to which participants move after its completion'. Butcher and Sieminski (2006, p. 64) also suggest that some impacts 'will evolve over a much longer term' as well as being influenced by the particular circumstances of the EdD graduate.

3.3.1 Defining the Professional Doctorate for the Research

As highlighted in the previous sections of this study, it is acknowledged that there are misunderstandings about professional doctorates, their purpose and the boundaries between professional doctorates and PhDs. However, Huisman and Naidoo (2006, p. 6) suggest that much of this confusion is unwarranted and distracting. The authors suggest that as researchers, we must be '...willing to accept *a priori* that there are no watertight separations between the different types of doctorates, given that traditions differ from country to country and from discipline to discipline'. Therefore, two definitions are selected for this study, which fit well with the disciplinary and national context of the Irish EdD. The first definition is from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) (2014). It pertains in particular to the focus on the output or contribution of such programmes both in the traditional academic sense (i.e. peer-reviewed product) as well as the contribution to professional knowledge and practice:

> ...there is an expectation that each learner completing a professional doctorate programme will (at some stage) generate significant **peer-reviewed product** from their

> research (such as publications, patents etc.) or alternatively that their work will have a comparable peer-recognised **impact on their profession.** (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2014)

A second definition, with a slightly different focus, is taken from the UK Council for Graduate Education and is useful in emphasising the focus on the professional development of the individual, which in turn enhances their contribution within their professional contexts:

> A programme of advanced study and research which, whilst satisfying university criteria for the award of a doctorate, is designed to meet the specific needs of **a professional group external** to the university, and which develops the **capability of individuals** to **work within a professional context**. (UK Council for Graduate Education, 2002, p. 62)

These definitions combined, along with current research in the area, highlights the possible contributions of professional doctorates in four broad areas: 1) the development of the professional, 2) the contribution to their work context, 3) the contribution to the wider professional group or community to which they belong and 4) the contribution to the academic community to which they join. The understanding of contribution in the above definitions is much broader than that traditional academic understanding of the contribution to knowledge. However, as O'Mullane (2005, p. 16) highlights, this contribution is still very much in the provider's power to determine, and it is the academic community and not the professional community who influence the '...interpretation and definition of "significant contributions" to professional knowledge and practice...'.

3.3.2 Defining Contribution for the Research

Before considering the areas in which professional doctorates may make a contribution, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the term 'contribution'. As explained by O'Mullane (2005, p. 10) '...the concepts of "significant impact" and "to professional knowledge and practice" are outcomes that have no agreed, consensual, and universal definitions'. Identifying contributions is further complicated as they can result from the output of the professional doctorate (i.e. the research itself) and, more obscurely, from the process itself (i.e. through developing as a researching professional or through engagement with the programme).

Much of the research in this area refers not to contributions but rather uses the term 'impact' of professional doctorates. This term, however, can imply a cause and effect relationship as highlighted by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2014): '[t]raditionally, we refer to the "impact" of research on society as if there were a simple, linear relationship between the two'. However, existing literature looking at the 'impact' of

professional doctorates appears to have adopted a much broader understanding of the term, which allows for unintended, indirect and often elusive changes. What we do know from existing research is that the 'impacts' of these awards are in no way straightforward but rather can be seen as resulting from both the process and the product and can be overlapping, indirect and intangible.

Boud et al. (2020, p. 8), in their research, also highlight the issues of identifying impact, the narrow connotations of the term and the issue of timing regarding the programme and its contribution in the workplace:

> The group grappled with any definition of impact which viewed their doctoral study as a closed system or one that submitted itself to a simple cause and effect relationship. In part this was because there appeared to be little immediate impact on the organisations or on general industry-level policy from the research.

Similarly, Fox and Slade (2014, p. 557) caution that, while doctoral studies can change the person and their relationship with work and their organisation, to suggest '...simple causal relationships between these changes and specific impacts...' is not only difficult to do but can feed into a '...discourse of impact as a tool for accountability...'.

Impact has a very particular connotation in research, which usually focus on the product of research without due regard to the process. As such, the term 'contribution' is proposed for this study as a more relevant, all-encompassing term. The term 'contribution' is defined in the *Oxford Dictionary* (2018) as '[t]he part played by a person or thing in bringing about a result or helping something to advance'. Two aspects of the term are useful in this definition, 1) the focus on the person (i.e. the doctoral student/graduate) and the thing (i.e. the research itself) in bringing about a result or a change and 2) the idea of the 'part played', allowing that other elements may also have a role in bringing about such change.

As suggested by O'Mullane (2005, p. 10) contributions need to be understood in terms of the intended targets '...that is, whether the focus is either on contributing to an individual's professional capacity or on related existing and future needs of a single *profession* or needs of a *multi*- or *inter*-professional groups'. O'Mullane (2005, p. 16) also importantly observes that contributions can be active (i.e. through influencing policy or changing practices) or inactive in which significant contributions to knowledge '...is not readily available or accessible to the profession because of its location or because the "discovery" has not been adequately disseminated...'.

3.4 Personal- and Professional-Self Development

Within this first theme, several intrinsic factors are identified in the literature as described below. These overlap, in part, with intrinsic motivations for pursuing a professional doctorate, as detailed previously. Intrinsic factors are those which are linked most closely to the development of the individual and can be seen as changes that will occur regardless of the professional standing or motivational drive of the individual. Three sub-themes were identified from existing research, namely; 1) cognitive growth (e.g. knowledge, skills, disposition), 2) affective growth (e.g. emotions, values, attitudes), and 3) discourse.

Butcher and Sieminski (2006), one of the few studies which included EdD graduates, proposes a four-part model suggesting "professional self-esteem" informs all other impacts (Figure 3.2). Similarly, Fulton et al. (2012, p. 143) suggest that personal development is at the core of professional doctorates and it is these changes that can lead to enhanced workplace contributions and professional practice more broadly:

> …a more implicit and yet core objective of the Professional Doctorate programme is personal transformation of the candidates into professionals who can view their workplace through a fresh lens; who are intellectually agile; who can think creatively, unconstrained by the norms and routines of what is often many years' experience within their given profession, and who can therefore make an ongoing contribution to their working environment and perhaps even the career itself develops and changes.

Figure 1. Professional impact of EdD: a four-part model

Figure 3.2: Professional impact of EdD: A four-part model (Source: Butcher and Sieminski, 2006).

3.4.1 Cognitive Growth

Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 733) suggest in their research that EdD programmes have a less direct impact on performance but rather lead to '...two domains of personal growth: the cognitive and the affective'. Cognitive growth was evidenced in their study as students becoming '...more questioning, more reflective, more analytical and more critical' (ibid., p. 733). Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn (2019) describe this development as greater understanding and self-awareness. Cognitive growth is equally emphasised in other studies, including Doncaster and Lester (2002), Davis and Frame (2016) and Hramiak (2017). Fox and Slade (2014, p. 552) also evidence cognitive growth and suggest a link between this development and enhanced professional practice. This study details how graduates '...talked about changes in their conceptual framework...' and describes how some found this '...loss of surety and certainty as both invigorating and challenging...'.

This new critical thinking and questioning can, as described in Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011, p. 13), enable graduates to '...make a more reasoned and balanced case in presenting a reasoned argument' and allows them to '...consider a range of approaches, rather than one option...'. Creaton and Anderson (2021) describes how the learner's development can lead to '...impacts on critical thinking and questioning in relation to applied organizational and professional contexts'. Increased cognitive development may also be evidenced through increased influencing and negotiating skills and, as suggested in Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011, p. 13), can have a knock-on effect in terms of the '...level of professionalism and competitiveness of the individuals'. This particular study also details how graduates become much more reflective in their practice while Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 54) propose that such developments lead to professionals adopting a more '...analytical and evidence-based approach in their work'. However, Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2013) caution that this new level of criticality is not always well received in the workplace and newly developed skills are not always exploited by employers.

3.4.2 Affective Growth

The second area of growth identified in Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 730) is affective growth, which is related to '...respect, confidence and self-esteem'. Confidence is an overarching theme in much of the existing literature, with many studies citing increased confidence in professional doctorate candidates and graduates (Costley and Stephenson, 2007; Burgess and Wellington, 2010; Davis and Frame, 2016; Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016; Hramiak, 2017; Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn, 2019; Creaton and Anderson, 2021). Davis and Frame (2016) describe how this is a learning journey for candidates and the effects of this enhanced self-assurance can give learners the '...confidence in academic and other settings to join in and put forward a point of view...' (Burgess and Wellington, 2010, p. 170). Similarly, Boud et al. (2020, p. 11) conclude that enhanced self-confidence can provide '…the impetus to take on new challenges and pioneer new initiatives…' Fox and Slade (2014, p. 544) explain that this newfound confidence does not go unnoticed in the workplace and suggest this change is commonly observed by colleagues '...in terms of emergence...'. Most recently, Creaton and Anderson (2021, p. 6) indicate that confidence and self-efficacy '…came from the knowledge and skills acquired through the programme…' as well as '…from knowing that they were in possession of the highest academic qualification that could be obtained in their field…'.

3.4.3 Discourse

The development of a stronger academic voice and more confident use of language comes through in several studies in this area. Hramiak (2017), for example, found the development of a strong academic voice was something particularly evident among later-stage candidates, and Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 54) found this enhanced ability to construct argument '...contributed to greatly increased confidence and credibility...'. Burgess and Wellington (2010, p. 168) found candidates described their improved discourse in broad terms including '...the way they responded to others, or listened, as well as a greater understanding of the ways in which language can be a barrier...'. In this study, respondents also cited increased confidence in '...their use of language to persuade, change, argue a change, challenge assumptions and listen criticality to others...'. Fox and Slade (2014, p. 554) report that students have '…an enhanced confidence to engage and therefore influence through dialogue…' This change, however, is not always a straightforward learning process, and Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011, p. 7) warn of the '...delicate balance between being critical yet maintaining good relationships in the workplace'.

3.5 Contributions to Professional/Career Development (Extrinsic Factors)

As detailed previously, three key extrinsic motivations for pursuing a professional doctorate are identified from the literature as career progression, contributing to practice and credibility. Existing literature shows an overlap between these motivations and the ultimate contributions or outcomes of professional doctorate programmes. Indeed, existing research points to three similar themes of career development, contribution to individual professional practice and professional standing. These three themes are considered in the subsequent sections.

3.5.1 Career Development

It is worth noting the differences highlighted by Scott et al. (2004), who, in exploring motivations, distinguished between those motivated by 'professional initiation', i.e. early career individuals seeking to develop or accelerate their professional career and those who are driven by 'professional continuation', i.e. those already established in their profession who are seeking to further develop in their career, or access alternative career pathways. It is important to bear these differing motivations in mind when considering the career-related contributions one might expect

from an EdD programme that typically attracts mid-career professionals. Earlier studies, including Burgess and Wellington (2010, p. 165) found that EdD programmes can impact the career trajectory of learners as well as contributing to the '…way in which individuals operated as professionals within their work'. Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 730) also suggest that professional doctorates can influence the career progression of EdD graduates, concluding that:

> [n]ot only was the actual award seen to have legitimacy in the eyes of appointment panels, but the messages about knowledge and understanding, and indeed professional awareness and skills gained, were believed to be of a real benefit.

Career development is also evidenced through additional responsibilities within existing roles, and this may be a more common feature in programmes attracting mid-stage professionals. Malfroy (2004, p. 76), for example, shows evidence of '...increased responsibility over others in the workplace, and increased leadership roles'.

Changing career pathways is also evidenced in the existing literature. Most recently, Boud et al. (2020) suggest a link between personal developments and professional change through the pursuit of new career pathways, while Jones (2018) describes how the professional doctorate offers graduates 'career indemnity' with access to career opportunities both within and outside of academia.

3.5.2 Own Professional Practice

Much of the existing literature in this area of study refers to enhanced or improved professional practice as a result of engaging in professional doctorate programmes. Scott et al. (2004, p. 113) describe the two defining characteristics of a professional doctorate as '...its mission to contribute to practice and its orientation towards established professionals'. Equally, Malfroy (2004) identifies professional practice as '...often the single most important drawcard for students choosing to do this type of degree'.

While much of the literature alludes to the contributions of professional doctorates to professional practice, there are a limited number of studies that provide evidence of such changes. Butcher and Sieminski (2005, p. 63) is one notable study, detailing how the majority of respondents had '...found their doctorate studies helpful in making links between theory and practice, and claimed that undertaking the degree had resulted in improvements in their own professional practice'. Change or improvements to professional practice is also described in Kumar and Dawson (2013, p. 171) as improved evidenced informed decision making, '...new evaluation methods in their

organization and in general, increased confidence to discuss research in their practice'. Malfroy (2004, p. 73) also details enhanced professional practice, as described by candidates, including '...developing leading edge practice', 'turning theory into practice', 'changing thinking' and 'making theory accessible where it counts'. Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn (2019, p. 414) describe personal development of the learner can lead to '…improved individual agency...' and '...an increased awareness of the self and the student's work environment…'

The findings of Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 733) portrays a less overt relationship to professional practice in stating that '...the skills developed in a professional doctorate are not perceived as being directly relevant to professional practice or to improving practice, but as helping students to reflect on and illuminate their practice...'. In particular, this study called into question the identification of impact to 'professional performance', suggesting that the impact may be less directly on performance but more indirect in changing '…professional attitude, disposition and confidence…' (Wellington and Sikes, 2006, p. 724). Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 54) found that candidates sometimes described this as a kind of 'critical professionalism' in which '...increased criticality and reflection led candidates to see the potential benefits of and appreciate alternative perspectives in order to understanding issues more deeply'.

3.5.3 Professional Standing

Several studies speak to the professional doctorate as a way to enhance credibility and professional standing and gain recognition for existing expertise. Burgess and Wellington (2010, p. 166) suggest that professional doctorate programmes not only contribute to work promotion but also created '...opportunities to undertake research and have their research valued by colleagues'. Gaining recognition for expertise in the workplace can improve the professional standing and professional profile of graduates (Butcher and Sieminski, 2006; Davis and Frame, 2016) and can be evidenced as '...opinion being sought on workplace change decisions and implementation...' (Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016, p. 57). Conrey et al. (2020) also report that graduates feel their professional credibility is enhanced as a result of completing a programme of study at this level.

While recognition for professional expertise is demonstrated in some studies, Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011, p. 15) warn that newfound confidence is not always appreciated in the workplace. The relationship between the workplace and the professional doctorate student or graduate is considered in further detail in the following sections.

3.6 Workplace Contributions

In considering professional doctorates, Davis and Frame (2016, p. 4) suggest that '[o]rganisations and local communities benefit from challenges to existing ways of thinking, reframing organisational debates, engaging communities, and changing local practice and policy'. However, Fox and Slade (2014, p. 547) caution that where '...indicators of individual impacts, such as increased confidence, are often articulated as an outcome of undertaking a professional doctorate, measuring how this translates into enhanced organisational effectiveness is problematic'. Boud et al. (2018, p. 557) also point to this problem, highlighting that the impact of such learning on the organisation is not always '...explicit or easily definable'. Further complications include the time lag between programme engagement and any potential contributions (CampusEngage, 2018), the goals or desired outcomes of the individual learner, and the local work context which can enable or prevent learnings from being applied to the work context. Some of the issues are considered in further detail here.

3.6.1 Taking into Account the Professional Work Context

Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2013, p. 82) propose that the extent to which a professional doctorate graduate can have an impact on his/her workplace is dependent upon what they describe as 'symbiosis', that is, the extent to which '...the relationship or interaction is of benefit to both parties'. This implies that the environment in which the graduate works must be receptive to their new learning and knowledge, raising questions as to how organisations can '...create the right ecological conditions for growth and development' (ibid., p. 98) and how universities can prepare candidates to '...enhance symbiosis between the product and the process of their doctorate and the organisation...' (ibid., p. 99).

Other studies have also addressed the question of how organisations can nurture a culture of learning and innovation, including Fox and Slade (2014) and Boud et al. (2018). Some caution that a culture that is not receptive to new ideas or increased criticality can result in a lack of acceptance or even resistance to the ideas brought back by the learner (Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2013; Fox and Slade, 2014).

Boud et al. (2018, p. 916) go further in suggesting that, in order to have impact or effect change, the doctoral research '...must fit with or magnify an existing or urgent organisational purpose; it must fit with or build upon signature learning practices...[and] the graduate in question must be organisationally placed to influence and communicate across boundaries'. Despite this, Mellors-

Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) report that many employers do not take a proactive role in the research being undertaken by the candidate and, in many cases, are not involved in the decision by the employee to pursue such an award. This finding is supported by Fox and Slade (2014, p. 558) who suggest that, even where employers provide financial and other supports to candidates, there is often '...no 'grand plan' within the organisation...' and '...candidates choose their own research focus with ...no direction or judgement on the outcome...'.

3.6.2 Measuring Workplace Contributions

As discussed in earlier sections of this study, identifying direct or indirect contributions of professional doctorates in the workplace is not a straightforward task. Fox and Slade (2014) illustrate that it is equally difficult for graduates themselves to identify where contributions have happened. These difficulties may speak to the limited research in this area, despite professional contribution being a defining feature of such awards. This lack of research attention was most recently noted by Hawkes and Yerrabati (2018, p. 15) who found they could '…not identify any academic literature on the wide effect of professional doctorates, beyond the impact on ether the individual and/or the institution'.

O'Mullane (2005, p. 13) attempts to address these difficulties by suggesting a starting point for determining if professional doctorates are meeting the requirement of professional impact. Table 3.1 shows, '...broad forms of response by "professions" to professional doctorate studies and professional doctorate outcomes'. This figure is hierarchical and shows at the upper level the preference for '...the *active* integration of the outcomes of doctoral studies into the repertoire of knowledge and practice of the profession'.

"Measures" of Significant Contributions to Professional Knowledge and Practice	
Measure	**Level of Recognition by a Profession**
"Findings" Incorporated into Professional Practice	6
"Findings" Incorporated into Professional Knowledge Repertoire	5
Dissemination of Outcomes to Members	4
Outcomes Acknowledged by Profession	3
Profession Informed about Outcomes from a Particular Project	2
Profession Aware of Doctorate and Aims	1

Table 3.1: Measures of significant contributions to professional knowledge and practice (Source: Adapted from O'Mullane, 2005).

More broadly, a recent publication by CampusEngage (2018, p. 6) summarises a range of possible 'impact categories' of research, including 'professional and public service impact' (Figure 3.3). This list highlights that such impacts may be 'top-down through policy changes' or 'bottom-up through behavioural practice'. While this list gives some clear, explicit identifiers of where such impact can happen, it is evident from existing studies that straightforward cause and effect relationships are not easily identifiable.

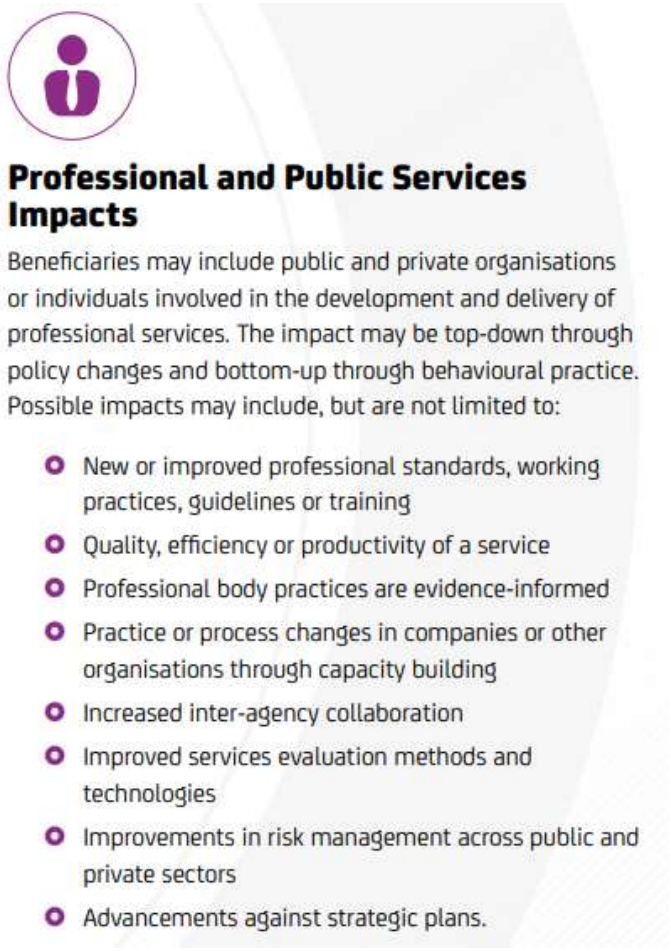


Figure 3.3: Measures of professional and public services impacts: (Source: CampusEngage, 2018).

Another question that needs consideration is *when* such impact or contribution is captured. As suggested earlier, there can be a time lag between the candidate's engagement in the research, the professional development as a result of pursuing the programme, and any resulting contributions to the workplace being realised. This was highlighted by Butcher and Sieminski (2006), who found that participants did not feel they had made an impact at the wider departmental or institutional level. The authors pose the question as to whether this lack of impact could be attributed to the short time the participants had been on the programme and beg the question as to when the organisation could expect to see impact or increased workplace contributions.

Similarly, Boud et al. (2020, p. 12) suggest in their study that '…[r]eporting at the time of graduation would have identified far less impact than that which has been revealed over the following year'.

3.6.3 Existing Evidence of Contributions to the Professional Work Context

As pointed to by Costley (2013, p. 16), professional doctorate candidates have access to insider knowledge which not only informs their research but allows for the implementation of '...their research project with the declared aim of affecting change and creating new sources of influence with their organisation, professional area or community'. However, there is little explicit evidence of such change having occurred from existing literature. Boud et al. (2020) suggest that this may be due, in part, to the difficulties in defining what one means by impact and possible narrow connotations, which suggest straightforward cause and effect. Furthermore, where research does cite instances of contribution to the workplace, it is often described in broad, nonspecific terms (Hawkes and Yerrabati, 2018). Despite difficulties in defining or classifying contributions to the workplace, there is some limited evidence provided in the existing literature as detailed here.

Influencing Others

Fox and Slade (2014, p. 55) found that when professional doctorate candidates and graduates talked about influencing others, they discussed this in indirect ways such as '…pointing out ironies and inconsistencies, disrupting, infiltrating, encouraging, inquisitiveness and legitimating questioning...'. Others in the study detailed how their professional doctorate qualification changed how they are perceived in the workplace, thus opening up and facilitating more discussion.

Davis and Frame (2016, p. 35) detail how greater access to senior management within the organisation '...who actively support their work and their action research approaches enables them to have more influence on, and cooperation from, colleagues'. Kumar (2014) found evidence of greater collaboration with colleagues and senior management, which resulted in increased engagement and involvement in decisions as well as grant applications.

Sharing Ideas and Knowledge

Davis and Frame (2016, p. 35) describe professional doctorate study as a personal journey that can lead to '...improved ability to support the development of others in their work setting...'. Hramiak (2017) provides evidence of such influence through the sharing of ideas and experiences

with colleagues, while Davis and Frame (2016, p. 36) found that professional doctorate graduates supported others in their organisation through their improved '...ability to better seek creative participation of their staff...'. Kumar (2014) focuses on impact at different points of the doctoral journey, finding evidence even in the early stages of the programme of sharing knowledge and research with colleagues outside of the programme. Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn (2019, p. 414) describe this engagement as 'collective reflexivity' and found that candidates shared and discussed their '…professional concerns with work colleagues…'. They furthermore suggest this 'collective reflexivity' is an essential component if changes to existing professional practices are to be implemented in any meaningful way.

Revising or Enhancing Practice

Other examples of contribution are detailed in Butcher and Sieminski (2006, p. 64), who found the professional doctorate candidates and graduates had contributed in their workplace '...through revised teaching plans and policies...'. Boud et al. (2018) found evidence of impact in the form of recommendations being deployed and consequently delivering benefits for the organisation. Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 56) report a range of professional doctorate contributions, including the development of '...approaches and solutions which they put into practice...' as well as evidence of '...improved teaching or enhanced processes or procedures'. Kumar (2014) also provides evidence of new educational technologies being applied by participants, as well as instances where participants had presented their work at the school and district level. This study also found evidence in some instances of new courses and programmes being introduced by participants.

Networking and Capacity Building

Fox and Slade (2014, p. 555), in looking for tangible evidence of impact, found that several employers referred to '...increased and more effective networking and network building'. Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 56) support this finding and link this capacity building to '…increased confidence and authority that came with PD study'. Boud et al. (2020, p. 12) also report evidence of new or enhanced networks and suggest that professional doctorate candidates find ways '…of establishing their own supplemental support networks'.

3.6.4 Challenges to Existing Findings

It is important to note that several studies question the potential contributions of professional doctorates in the workplace. Fox and Slade (2014) argue that, while professional doctorates have significant value in the personal and professional development of individuals, any direct impact

on the workplace is much harder to identify or articulate in any concrete way. Similarly, Thorne et al. (2002) found EdDs, in particular, had limited direct impact on employment but instead contributed towards the learner's professional development. These programmes, according to the study, are more impactful in providing a space outside of the work context for the education professional to develop their own practice. Malfroy (2004) also suggests a lack of impact by professional doctorates on workplace change. The author suggests that '[t]he workplace has been viewed as central to a conceptualisation of professional doctorates because it offers a site of contextualised research' yet the workplace is often researched '...without a deep investment in the process'. This finding is consistent with Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) and Malloch (2010). Such findings suggest that, to realise a true 'symbiosis' between such programmes and the workplace, the importance of workplace support of the professional doctorate cannot be overemphasised (Davis and Frame, 2016). These arguments highlight the need for further exploration of workplace and professional contributions, as highlighted by Hawkes and Yerrabati (2018).

3.7 Wider Professional / Academic Community Contributions

Similar to the difficulties in identifying workplace contributions, the literature provides limited evidence of professional doctorates' direct or indirect contributions to the wider professional and academic communities. Boud et al. (2020, p. 13) highlight the difficulties in separating professional contribution arising specifically as a result of engaging on a professional doctorate:

> They were senior professionals who had accrued significant amounts of professional experience prior to their doctoral studies. They then elected to undertake doctoral study whilst they continued in senior or strategic positions in their professional settings. Whether their doctoral work drove action through the abilities and approaches they had developed on the doctoral programme, or professional actions that were happening anyway or whether it was a synthesis of both is impossible to determine.

A small number of researchers have explored these wider contributions, including Burgess and Wellington (2010) would found that participants had a growing '...realisation of the power of research for bringing about social change'. Fox and Slade (2014) suggest that employers found graduates to be more effective in developing and engaging in wider networks, and Davis and Frame (2016) indicate that the wider sharing of research beyond the organisation can lead to increased leadership roles and policy change at the level of the professional body. Similarly, Boud et al. (2018) found evidence of approaches adopted beyond the local organisational context. Hramiak (2017) similarly reports that participants believe they impact the wider academic and professional communities and Butcher and Sieminski (2006) found that almost all participants

had had some opportunity to do so. Most recently, Boud (2020) found wide-ranging workplace impacts including the incorporation of new learnings and research methods into practice and enhanced professionalism and capacity-building, which can lead the learner to take up new roles, challenges and tasks in the workplace and beyond.

Malfroy (2004) argues that while much focus on impact is directed towards the professional, the university retains the dominant status in the professional doctorate. Given this relationship, Malfroy (2004) assert that there is a need to consider what impact the professional doctorate programme and the candidate can have on the institution itself. Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 34) posed this question to offering institutions in asking the '...extent of importance of a series of potential contributions that PD researchers could make to the institution'. Figure 3.4 details the responses based on importance:

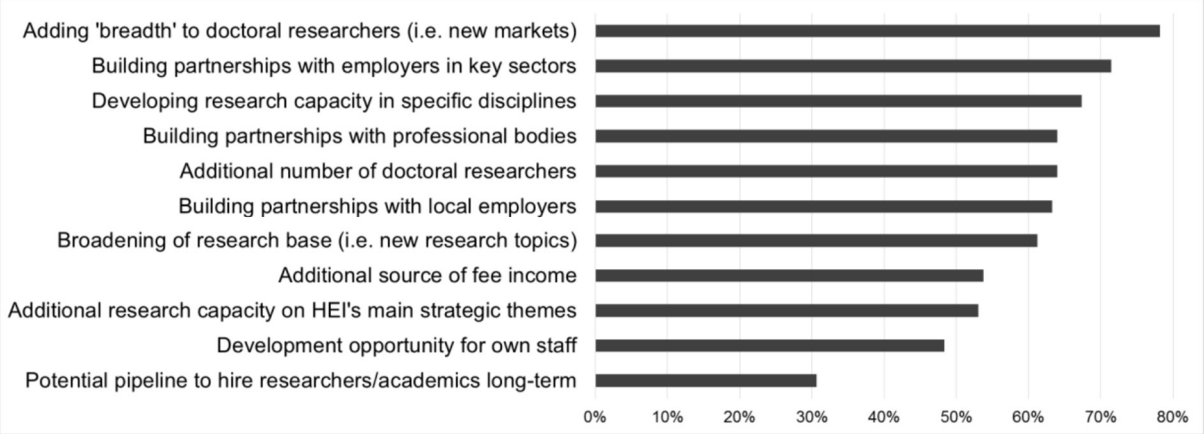


Figure 3.4: Relative importance of potential contributions of PD researchers to institutions (Source: Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016).

The study summarises four key benefits to institutions offering professional doctorate programmes, which are; 1) '...new and different perspectives and insights on academic/professional research and research questions...'; 2) 'an injection of expertise...particularly in professionalism but also ...engagement, influence and impact...'; 3) increasing the research impact of the institution; and 4) greater collaboration and partnerships with employers and industry (ibid. p. 36). Davis and Frame (2016, p. 41) suggest professional doctorates can also contribute towards the '...development of theory, method and the reframing of theoretical and practice-based debates beyond the personal and local arenas' and highlight that '[j]ust as practice can be deductively informed by engagement with theory, theory can be informed from practice'.

While not all contributions are tangible, academic impact is identifiable mainly through the publication of academic journals, book chapters and presentations at academic conferences. Butcher and Sieminski (2006) consider the impact on the academic and professional community suggesting these contributions are evidenced in tangible forms through publications and conference participation as well as through getting involved in research projects and continued engagement with their programme through the supervision of research students. Similarly, Kumar (2014) reports that students on professional doctorates actively engage in their broader professional and academic communities through presenting their work at conferences and through joining professional organisations.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter considered existing research as it relates to the focus of this study. The literature review drew attention to several dimensions which shaped the focus and direction of this study. Notably, existing literature demonstrates a close relationship between the motivations of professional doctorate learners and the identified contributions or outcomes from engaging in such programmes. This informed the inclusion of a motivating question in the study.

The literature review also demonstrates a lacuna in research in this area, with research focused around a small number of key researchers. Markedly, the research grows increasingly sparse, and findings become less definitive when the focus moves from the individual learner to wider-reaching outcomes or contributions. The literature review led to the development of the conceptual framework used for this study. The framework draws on existing research, most notably the earlier study by Butcher and Sieminski (2006). This framework informs the focus of the research and led to the development of the survey instrument and interview schedule, as detailed in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

As highlighted by Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. iv), professional doctorate candidates have an added burden over their PhD counterparts in that their '…research is also expected to have an impact on professional practice, not solely to make a contribution to knowledge'. While this professional contribution is acknowledged in many descriptions and definitions of professional doctorates there is little research on the matter, as highlighted in chapter three. This study aims to address this by exploring the kinds of contributions we can expect from professional doctorates. This study focuses exclusively on one particular award, the Doctor of Education, in an Irish context.

This research adopts a mixed-method case-study design as most appropriate for answering the research questions. The chapter presents the methodological approach adopted and the rationale for the chosen methods of data collection and analysis. Before detailing how and where this research was conducted, there are some important issues to be addressed; namely, the framework which forms the basis of the study and the philosophical underpinnings directing the researcher. As such this chapter commences with a broad description of research paradigms before detailing pragmatism as the philosophical position assumed by the researcher.

Following this, the chapter provides an overview of mixed-method research, the preferred methodology of pragmatist researchers. The chapter subsequently details and defines the case study approach taken for this research and details the case which is the focus of this study. This study involves two phases, adopting what is defined in mixed-methods as a Quan-QUAL approach. This approach is explored in detail including a detailed description of the data collection strategies and analysis used in both phases of this study.

The chapter concludes by considering the ethical implications of the study and the limitations which exist within this research.

4.2 Research Paradigms

Research paradigms are described by Waring (2017, p. 17) as '...representing a person's conception of the world, its nature and their position within it, as well as a multitude of personal relationships with that world and its constituent parts'. This worldview includes, according to Waring (2017, p. 17), the baggage of one's past, the set of beliefs that will influence the kinds of research one values, and can determine a researcher's '...competence and credibility as a member

of any research community...'. Therefore, it is important to establish from the outset, the worldview of the researcher for both the reader and the researcher herself. Yazan (2015, p. 136) emphasises the importance of this task in stating that the paradigm, or worldview, sets out the researchers '...views about the nature and production of knowledge...[which] permeates every step of the entire investigation process, from selection of the phenomenon of interest...to the way the ultimate report is composed'.

Mertens (2010) suggests there are, broadly speaking, four main paradigms, namely positivist, constructivist, pragmatist and transformative. Hammersley (2012, p. 3) stresses that '[i]t is not possible to give a definitive and exhaustive list of social and educational research paradigms, not least because the labels for different approaches are not used in standard ways and do not form part of a single, well-defined typology...'. As a result, paradigms are often demonstrated through (over-simplistic) descriptions of two polar-opposite views of positivism and interpretivism.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) describe the followers of these divergent views as quantitative and qualitative purists. Positivism or quantitative purism calls for the researcher to be objective, requiring researchers to '...eliminate their biases, remain emotionally detached and uninvolved with the objects of study...' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). This type of research is deductive, theory-testing and explanatory and calls for an observational and/or experimental research design which is aimed at proving hypotheses leading to generalisations (ibid., 2004). Qualitative purism, on the other hand, holds that '...multiple-constructed realities abound, that time- and context-free generalizations are neither desirable nor possible...' and that focus should be on '...induction, discovery, exploration...' (ibid., 2004, p. 14). This type of research is anti-positive and ideographic with an emphasis on understanding behaviours, meanings and experiences (Waring, 2017). This can only be achieved through gaining an authentic insight into phenomena in their natural setting (Coe, 2017).

The following Table 4.1, adopted from Waring (2017), details these two extreme paradigmatic positions according to the four main philosophical pillars of ontology, epistemology, methodology and method.

POSITIVIST	INPTERPRETIVIST
ONTOLOGY What is the form and nature of the social world?	
Realist. '...reductionist and deterministic. Knowledge of 'the way things are' is conventionally summarised in the form of time- and context-free generalisations...' (2017, p. 18).	Constructivist. 'There are multiple realities with the mind playing a central role by determining categories and shaping or constructing realities. We cannot see the world outside of our place within it' (2017, p. 18).
EPISTEMOLOGY How can what is assumed to exist be known?	
Positivism. 'The investigator and investigated 'object' assumed to be independent entities; enquiry takes place as if in a one-way mirror' (2017, p. 18).	Interpretivism. 'The investigator and the object…are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds' (2017, p. 18).
METHODOLOGY What procedure or logic should be followed?	
Nomothetic and experimental. 'Questions and/or hypotheses are stated in proportional form and subjected to empirical test to verify them; possible confounding conditions are carefully controlled…' (2017, p. 18)	Ideographic, dialectical and hermeneutical. 'The variable and personal nature of social constructions suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator(s) and respondent(s)' (2017, p. 18).
METHOD What techniques of data collection should be used?	
Explanation, prediction and control. 'Over time attempt to increasingly explain so that ultimately one can predict phenomena…' (2017, p. 18).	Understanding, interpretation and reconstruction. 'Over time, everyone formulates more informed and sophisticated constructions and becomes more aware of the content and meaning of competing constructions' (2017, p. 18).

Table 4.1: Positivist and Interpretivist comparisons (Source: adapted from Waring, 2017, pp. 16 & 18).

4.2.1 Ontology

It is important to note that '...as soon as we approach research in a systematic way, we are forced to ask basic ontological questions concerning our object of study' (Hans Bakker, 2010, p. 629). The question of ontology asks the researcher to consider 'what is the form and nature of reality, and therefore, what is there that can be known about it?' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 108).

Ontology is related to how one sees the world and Waring (2017, p. 16) suggests that it is these assumptions that '...will form the starting point of all research...' A simplistic view of these assumptions shows paradigms sitting along a continuum with realist at the hard left which holds the '...notion of a singular reality, the one out only truth that is out there waiting to be discovered...' (Feilzer, 2010, p. 6). To the hard right is the constructivist view that '...there is no such thing as a single objective reality and that "subjective inquiry is the only kind possible to do"...' (ibid., p. 6). Feilzer (2010, p. 6) warns, however, that this is a '...simplistic description of the two extremes, which does not include advances in other paradigms such as feminist studies, postmodernism and critical...'.

4.2.2 Epistemology

The epistemological position of the researcher is tightly bound to the ontological beliefs they hold. Epistemology asks the question 'how might I begin to know the world' (Yazan, 2015, p. 136). Positivism holds that it is possible to '...achieve direct knowledge of the world through direct observation and measurement...' (Waring, 2017, p. 16) while interpretivism '...does not see direct knowledge as possible; it is the accounts and observations of the world that provide indirect indications of phenomena, and thus knowledge is developed through a process of interpretation...' (Waring, 2017, p. 16).

The constructivist paradigm holds that what is real is subjective and therefore all knowledge is also subjective. This is an anti-positivist view, rejecting the notion that knowledge is '…hard, tangible and independent of the knower' (Hans Bakker, 2010, p. 628). This means that research is heavily reliant upon the accounts and interpretations of those under investigation, and places a heavy emphasis on the closeness of the researcher to the researched. The transactional nature of this type of research means that knowledge is hermeneutical, co-created through dialect and blurs the boundaries between ontology and epistemology (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 111).

4.2.3 Methodology

Morgan (2017, p. 40) describes how, at the level of methodology, what concerns the researcher is the philosophical assumptions about '...why you would want to do research one way rather than another – or produce one form of knowledge rather than another – rather than questions about the nature of research methods themselves'. Methodology, therefore, is about the process by which we conduct research, and Waring (2017, p. 15) describes it as a '...logic to be followed in association with their views of the world and notions of knowledge within it'. To the left the

methodology is '...nomothetic and experimental in nature' (ibid., p. 16) and to the right, it is 'ideographic, dialectical and hermeneutical...' (ibid., p. 16). These dictate the types of data collection methods employed in any study and shape the types of findings a researcher can unearth.

4.3 Pragmatism

A pragmatic position is adopted by the researcher for this study, holding that neither a positivist nor interpretive position alone offers a suitable approach to address the questions under consideration. Cameron (2011, p. 99) suggests that '[o]ne of the first tasks a researcher needs to undertake is to position themselves paradigmatically' and this '...presents the mixed method researcher with some challenges'. This difficulty is because pragmatism, the philosophical partner of mixed-methods research, sits in neither the positivist nor interpretivist camp, but rather at the intersection between both. Pragmatism recognises the value (and limitations) of both qualitative and quantitative research methods and is described by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 17) as the *third wave* which offers researchers a '...logical and practical alternative'. Feilzer (2010, p. 6) defines it as '...a response to the long-lasting, circular and remarkably unproductive debates discussing the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative versus qualitative research as a result of the paradigm "wars"'.

As articulated by Cameron (2011, p. 101), '[p]ragmatism in its simplest sense is a practical approach to a problem and has a strong association with mixed methods research'. Morgan (2017, p. 28) articulates that where alternative philosophies '...emphasize the nature of reality, pragmatists emphasize the nature of experience'. Pragmatism rejects the purist stance which maintains that '...paradigms embody fundamentally different and incompatible assumptions about human nature, the world, the nature of knowledge claims, and what it is possible to know...hence it is neither possible or sensible to mix different inquiry paradigms...' (Greene and Caracelli, 1997, p. 8). Rather, the pragmatic approach '...sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality, accepts, philosophically, that there are singular and multiple realities...' and goes beyond describing reality, to conducting research that is useful. There are, as articulated by Morgan (2017, p. 26) four concepts, relating to action, which are central to the ideas of pragmatism:

1. '...there is no way that any human action can ever be separated from past experiences and beliefs...'
2. 'Actions cannot be separated from the situations and contexts in which they occur'.

3. ‘Actions are linked to consequences...’ and these ‘...consequences change as situations change’.
4. ‘Actions depend on worldviews that are socially shared sets of beliefs’.

However, within the pragmatic approach, there are some different positions as highlighted by Coe (1997) and Greene and Caracelli (1997). The pragmatic researcher holds that paradigms are not critically important in making inquiry decisions, but rather, what matters most is the context. This approach rejects the whole notion of paradigms, viewing them as ‘...problematic and unhelpful’ (Coe 1997, p. 8). An alternative, dialectic view, as discussed in Greene and Caracelli (1997) holds that paradigms *do* matter and that we should refer to them through our research:

> The middle position here consists of a balanced, reciprocal relationship between philosophy and methodology, between paradigms and practice. This position rejects extremism...honours both the integrity of the paradigm construct and the legitimacy of contextual demands, and seeks a respectful dialogical interaction between the two... (Greene and Caracelli, 1997, p. 12)

While this study adopts a pragmatic position, it acknowledges also the benefits of a dialectical approach, particularly in focusing on the tensions, which divide and define opposing paradigms. In acknowledging these tensions, the research can draw on the strengths of contrasting paradigms as highlighted here in Table 4.2:

- Particularity and generality
- Closeness and distance
- Meaning and causality
- The unusual and the representative
- Social constructions and physical traces
- Setting and structure perspectives
- Understanding of local meaning and distancing analysis of regularities

Table 4.2: Tensions of opposing paradigms (Source: adapted from Greene and Caracelli, 1997).

4.3.1 The Pragmatist World-View of the Researcher

The following Table 4.3 gives a brief overview of the pragmatist world-view assumed by the research under the four headings which Waring (2017, p. 15) describes as a ‘...series of related assumptions’.

QUESTIONS	RESEARCHERS POSITION
Ontology 'What is the nature of the social world' (Waring, 2017, p. 15).	**Pragmatism** This approach sits in the middle spaces between '...philosophical dogmatism and scepticism...' and '...rejects traditional dualisms' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). The pragmatist researcher '[r]ecognizes the existence and importance of the natural or physical world as well as the emergent social and psychological world that includes language, culture, human institutions, and subjective thought' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). The pragmatist researcher accepts that '...even though there is a reality that exists apart from human experience, it can only be encountered through human experience' (Morgan, 2017, p. 39). The researcher also accepts the argument put by Green and Caracelli (2003, p. 95) that in fact '...paradigms are indeed social constructions, historically and culturally embedded discourse practices, and therefore neither inviolate nor unchanging'. This view suggests that, while this mixed-method inquiry will draw on both qualitative and quantitative data, all research involving human participants is, in fact, constructivist. Sandelowski (2000, p. 251) articulates this point in stating that '[s]ome would argue that all data collection techniques in human subjects research, including instruments, are "qualitative" in that they involve verbal data, which are only later transformed into numbers'. Pragmatist research also sits well the professional doctorate for which this research is being conducted. Pragmatism '[e]ndorses practical theory (theory that informs effective practice)...' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18) and as such the inquiry '...begs the question of "what is it for" and "who is it for" and "how do the researchers" values influence the research...' (Feilzer, 2010, p. 8).
Epistemology 'How might I begin to know the world' (Yazan, 2015, p. 136).	As a pragmatist, the researcher is '...unencumbered by an allegiance to any one specified framework...futurist studies need to be conceptually broader than any one discipline' (Greene and Caracelli, 2003, p. 103). This approach allows for an eclectic approach in which '...different, even confliction, theories and perspectives can be useful; observation, experience, and experiments are all useful...' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). The pragmatist believes that '...all knowledge of the world is based on experience...' and that '...all knowledge is social knowledge...' (Morgan 2017, p. 39).
Methodology What is the best approach adopted to best understand the phenomenon under investigation?	The approach adopted here is a mixed-method case study. The pragmatist approach '...supports the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods...[and] rejects the incompatibility thesis (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003, p. 21). The researcher accepts that different viewpoints have merit and that knowledge can benefit from the contrasting perspectives as detailed in Table 4.2.

	As an approach, the research questions are considered before the method or the paradigm in what Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003, p. 21) refer to as the 'dictatorship of the research question'. As such the approach is practical in that it asks "what is it I wish to know and how do I best seek out that knowledge?". This approach does not support the view that results from the positivist and interpretivist paradigms are incompatible, but rather, is '...based on the assumption of mutual relevance' in which '...the results from these two approaches are likely to find useful points of complementarity between the knowledge that they produce' (Morgan, 2017, p. 40).
Method What methods are employed to answer the specific questions posed by the research?	This study adopts what is termed a quan-QUAL approach in mixed-methods which is bounded within a case study. The researcher holds that mixing both qualitative and quantitative methods allows for the research to '…represent a *plurality* of interests, voices and perspectives better' (Greene and Caracelli, 1997, p. 13). The quan-QUAL approach is discussed further below.

Table 4.3: The Pragmatist world-view of the researcher.

4.4 Mixed-Methods Research

As mentioned in Table 4.3, this study follows a mixed-methods case study design. Mixed-methods research is growing in its popularity and is now a recognised methodological choice in a variety of disciplinary areas (Cameron, 2011, p. 96). Mixed-methods can be defined as '…the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, approaches, concepts or language into a single study' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17).

As observed by Sandelowski (2000, p. 246) '…the complexity of human phenomena mandates more complex research designs to capture them'. Mixed-methods research is an approach that allows the researcher to respond to this complexity in their methodological design. This is an approach which is '…inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, and it suggests that researchers take an eclectic approach…'

The rewards for mixed-methods researchers are plentiful. Free from paradigmatic constraints, the researcher can choose an eclectic mix of methods which can '…enhance validity and offer greater certainty…' (Greene, Benjamin and Goodyear, 2001, p. 39). On the other hand, as remarked by Cameron (2011, p. 106), mixed-methods research is not without its challenges, particularly for the novice researcher. Mixed-methods studies can often '…offer a substantially

more complex and contextual portrayal of this phenomenon' (Greene, Benjamin and Goodyear, 2001, p. 39) which must be carefully articulated by the researcher. As such, adopting a mixed-method approach requires the researcher to be '…versatile and innovative with a repertoire of research skills that exceed those needed for single mode research' (Cameron, 2011, p. 106).

4.4.1 Benefits of Mixed-Methods

The objective of mixed-methods research is not to replace either the qualitative or quantitative approach but rather, to draw on the strengths and lessen, where possible, the limitations of a single approach (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This methodology offers educational researchers a '…practical and outcome-orientated method of inquiry that… offers a method of selecting methodological mixes that can help researchers better answer many of their research questions' (ibid., 2004, p. 17). Through these methodological mixes, the researcher can intentionally select different methods which will yield different kinds of information. This allows the researcher to gather a depth as well as a breadth of knowledge and represent both the usual and representative (Greene and Caracelli, 1997).

For example, the main benefit of a qualitative approach includes the ability to obtain detailed, first-hand accounts of the phenomena under investigation. This facilitates the capturing of the in-context experience of participants and for their voices to come to the fore in the researcher's analysis (Creswell, 2015). In contrast, however, this approach can be regarded as 'highly subjective' and 'has limited generalizability' (Creswell, 2015, p. 5).

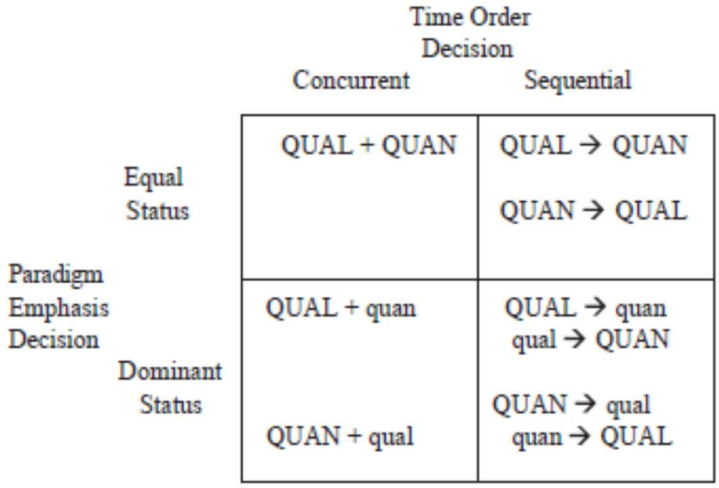
Quantitative methods, on the other hand, allows the researcher to make conclusions based on much larger participant samples and can, to some extent, control the researchers own biases. Quantitative research may also be more impactful in influencing policy and practice, by appealing to policymakers' preference for numbers (Creswell, 2015). Conversely, quantitative methods alone may produce results that are 'impersonal, dry' and many provide 'limited understanding of the context of participants' (Creswell, 2015, p. 5). Equally, by relying on quantitative data alone, the researcher may miss out on unexpected phenomena as they focus on theory or hypothesis (Mertens, 2003).

Other factors which informed the choice of a mixed-methods approach for this study include; 1) the possibility of triangulating results which can enable the researcher to seek '…convergence and corroboration of results…' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 21); 2) the benefits of '…using the findings from one method to help inform the other method…' (ibid., p. 21) (i.e. a

developmental approach as articulated by Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989); and 3) the possibility of enhancing and illustrating the findings from the qualitative phase by use of a complementary quantitative phase (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989). However, as warned by Greene, Benjamin and Goodyear (2001) not all studies will yield findings that converge, as this is a particular challenge for the novice researcher in clearly articulating the research findings from a mixed-method study.

4.4.2 Mixed-Method Approaches

There are a variety of mixed-method approaches or topologies which determine the time ordering of the mixing as well as the weighting given the qualitative and quantitative components. The below matrix (Figure 4.1), adopted from Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 22), depicts these topologies based on time order and status decisions.



Note. "qual" stands for qualitative, "quan" stands for quantitative, "+" stands for concurrent, "→" stands for sequential, capital letters denote high priority or weight, and lower case letters denote lower priority or weight.[11]

FIGURE 2. *Mixed-method design matrix with mixed-method research designs shown in the four cells.*

Figure 4.1: Mixed-method design matrix (Source: Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

This study follows a quan ⟶ QUAL topology, known as a sequential explanatory design, in which '…the intent is to first use quantitative methods and then use qualitative methods to help *explain* the quantitative results in more depth' (Creswell, 2015, p. 6). This approach and the rationale for choosing it is further detailed in the research design section below (Section 4.6).

4.5 Case Study Design

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, this study involves a mixed-method case study design. It is suggested here that a case study approach fits well with both the pragmatic stance of the researcher as it is complementary to a mixed-method design. In fact, case study research does not ascribe to any particular philosophical or methodological position, and it has been described as a method (Thomas, 2011), a research approach (Day Ashley, 2017) and a research process (Yin, 1994).

Merriam (1998, p. 27) describes a case study as a '…a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries'. The case can be further defined in that it is particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. These defining features have been applied to the case in question here, as shown in Table 4.4:

Particularistic '…focus is on a particular situation, event, programme, or phenomenon' (Merriam, 1998, p. 29) for which there are boundaries.	The focus here is on the contributions of a particular type of programme (EdD) in a particular context (Irish context). This is a single case study focusing on one Doctor of Education programme running in one Irish university.
Descriptive	The ultimate aim is to give rich, thick description as a means of getting as close as possible to the lived experiences of the students and graduates of the programme. The study is largely hermeneutical in nature so detail goes beyond description to looking for the meanings and understanding of how learning has impacted the individual and their professional lives and work contexts.
Heuristic '…illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon…' (Merriam, 1998, p. 30)	This is achieved through sufficient detail of the context of the case and with a clear definition of what is within and outside of the case. Appropriate use of language is used with detailed accounts in the participants' own words. The reader should gain a holistic view of the case in question (the EdD programme) and a new or enhanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (contributions of the EdD).

Table 4.4: Defining features of a case study (Source: adapted from Merriam, 1998).

4.5.1 Defining the Case

This mixed-method case study focuses on the EdD programme at DCU in Ireland. The programme launched in DCU in 2006 and was initially delivered as a joint programme with an EdD and DBA (Doctor of Business Administration) strand. The two 'strands' were subsequently separated in 2010, and the EdD programme has continued to run with an intake every other year. In 2012 the programme incorporated a new religious education strand with a linked college of the University. In 2016, following an incorporation process, which saw DCU joining three other institutions, the programme merged with another EdD programme that had been running since 2004 in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra. Currently, the programme runs specialist strands or 'areas of professional focus' in eight distinct areas, including arts education, digital learning, assessment, leadership, special education, values education, religious education and teacher education.

The programme is marketed to experienced professionals who wish to contribute to the enhancement of professional practice. It distinguishes itself from the PhD in advocating a professional practice-based focus which enables students on the programme to undertake research on problems that are directly relevant to their own professional and work contexts. The programme is intended to educate emerging education leaders by '…facilitating the development of research expertise, critical and analytical skills in a variety of areas, and capacities for leadership' (Dublin City University, 2020).

Entry requirements for the programme are the same as for PhD applicants, and applicants are required to submit a 2000-word proposal outlining their proposed research topic and their own professional experience in the area. Candidates are advised to seek full support from their employers and/or co-workers to undertake the research to ensure they have an appropriate contextual setting for their proposed research.

4.6 Research Design Adopted for This Study: Mixed-Methods Case Study

As described in previous sections, this study follows a mixed-method case study design. The case in question has been detailed fully in the previous section. This section provides further detail on the mixed-methods design used for this study before moving on to explaining in detail the two phases of the study – Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Before commencing a mixed-methods study, the researcher must consider certain issues that will determine the study's overall design. The three issues to consider are the weighting given to the qualitative and quantitative phases, the sequencing of the data collection, and how the data will be mixed (Creswell, 2015). As already described, this study adopts a sequential explanatory design, as shown below in Figure 4.2, in which an initial quantitative study is used to describe where students and graduates perceive the contributions resulting from their engagement on the EdD Programme. This is followed by a qualitative phase that explores these initial findings in more detail and explains the situational factors that lead to such contributions.

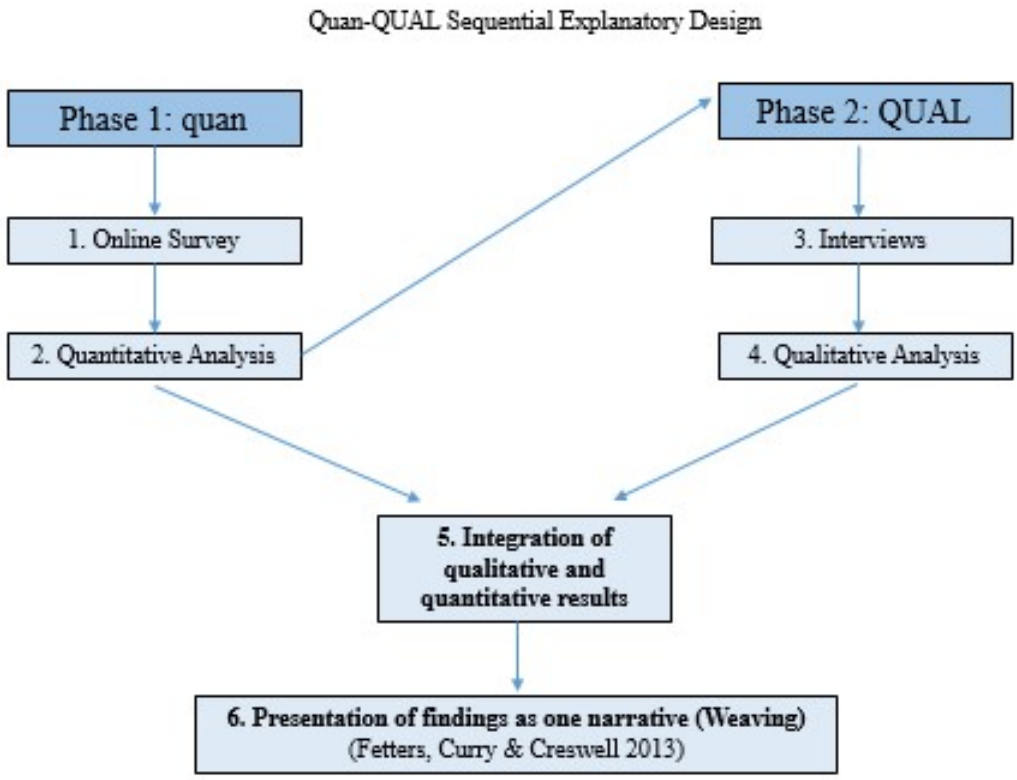


Figure 4.2: Sequential explanatory design.

4.6.1 Priority

The sequential explanatory design is considered the most straightforward approach, with priority, or most weight, typically given to the first quantitative phase. However, the decision on priority can be a difficult one and is dependent on a number of factors including '…practical constraints of data collection, the need to understand one form of data before proceeding to the next or the audience preference…' (Creswell et al., 2003, p. 219). In this study, priority is given to the second qualitative phase in a quan-QUAL design. This decision was reached based on the small

number of potential respondents for the quantitative phase that reduces the power of analysis a well as the complex nature of the phenomenon under investigation, which is largely subjective.

4.6.2 Time Order

This approach commenced with a quantitative phase (Phase 1) where the '…intent is to explore a large sample first to test variables and then to explore in more depth a few cases during the qualitative phase' (Phase 2) (Creswell et al., 2003, p. 217). The benefit of this approach is that, where qualitative results give a clear picture of the facts at hand '…we often do not know how the findings occurred' (Creswell, 2015, p. 38). The findings from Phase 1 were used to determine the focus of the follow-up interviews as well as aiding in the identification of participants.

4.6.3 Mixing

Biesta (2017) discusses the seven levels where mixing or integration can occur in a mixed-methods study namely, data, methods, designs, epistemologies, ontologies, research purpose and practical orientations. Levels one to three (data, methods and designs) are the most straight forward to articulate and require the researcher to question if and how they will combine textual and numerical data, different methods and different research designs. This is what Green and Caracelli (1997) term as the *technical level* and is evidenced in this study through a sequential explanatory design in which Phase 1 findings are used to develop Phase 2 (in this case, the development of the interview schedule) and, in turn, Phase 2 findings are used to explain the findings in Phase 1 (in this case, the survey responses).

Mixing also occurs in this study in the interpretation and reporting of findings (Fetters, Curry and Creswell, 2013). This means that the findings from Phase 1 and 2 are mixed and are represented as one narrative in the findings chapters. This approach is known as weaving which '…involves writing both qualitative and quantitative findings together on a theme-by-them or concept-by-concept basis' (Fetters, Curry and Creswell, 2013, p. 2142).

4.6.4 Rationale for the Adopted Approach

As articulated by Biesta (2017, p. 162), '[o]ne could say…that for mixed research – as for all good research – one should start with identifying the problem'. In this case, the study aims to address the underexplored phenomenon of how EdDs can contribute to personal development, professional practice and broader professional and academic communities. This is a far-reaching

topic that calls for both a broader and deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question. It is suggested that a mixed-method case study fits well with the topic for several reasons:

To date, existing research had been largely qualitative (see, for example, Loxley and Seery, 2012; Wellington, 2013; and Boud et al., 2020), focusing on small scale studies. The inclusion of a quantitative element allows for the exploration of a breadth of information not accessible from conducting qualitative research alone. The mixed-method approach adopted allows the researcher to undertake a more comprehensive exploration of the complex notion of *contributions* through an initial survey, while the qualitative interviews help in '…explaining and interpreting the findings…' (Creswell et al., 2003, p. 227).

It is clear from existing literature that the identification of contributions is not a straight forward task; areas identified in existing literature are often intangible, difficult to articulate and may occur at any time. Contribution is a complex concept that requires a creative approach. Mixed-methods research acknowledges that 'the fundamental uncertainty of scientific knowledge – especially about complex, multi-determined, dynamic, social phenomena – can be better addressed through the multiple perspectives of diverse methods that through the lens of just one' (Greene et al., 2001, p. 27).

Fox and Slade (2014, p. 556) warn that '[i]n attempting to clarify the kind of impacts an organisation can expect from professional doctorates, one must note that what is desired will vary across professional fields…'. This study recognises that norms, practices and language can vary across not only disciplines but also between programmes. As such, this research focuses exclusively on one 'type' of professional doctorate, namely the EdD. The possibility of a multi-site case study was considered early on in the research but given time and access constraints and taking into account differences between the programmes running in Ireland, a decision was made to focus on a single-site case study.

Finally, the anticipated impact of this study helped determine the research approach adopted. The broad perspective achievable through a mixed-method design may help focus future research in this area by highlighting specific notable areas identified in the findings. Indeed, the development of a quantitative survey instrument may also be applied to other EdD programmes or other kinds of professional doctorate programmes. In addition, as a professional doctorate candidate, the researcher is keen that this study will have an impact regarding future policy with speaks to the development and delivery of professional doctorates. In recognising that policymakers are often driven by quantifiable data, the inclusion of a survey instrument was, in part, an attempt to address this (Creswell, 2015).

4.7 Phase 1, Quantitative Phase

4.7.1 Design

This study commenced with an in-depth and critical review of existing literature as detailed in chapters two and three of this study. The literature review involved a detailed exploration of existing peer-reviewed journal articles, policy documents, higher and further education publications and reports and academic books on the matter. Existing literature was identified primarily through online searches using a variety of educational databases including JSTOR and Academic Search Complete. Google Scholar was also used to capture other relevant sources of information and was used to track new publications in the area as the research progressed. An initial focus on Irish literature revealed little literature in this area and the search was broadened to consider international publications published through the English language.

Phase 1 of this study involved the development and analysis of a detailed, primarily quantitative survey instrument, which incorporated a small number of open-ended quantitative questions. No existing instrument was identified which could be applied to this study and therefore, throughout the literature review, identified themes and areas of focus were documented and were used to inform the development of the survey instrument. The survey instrument relied largely on five-point Likert scale questions structured around the areas of contribution as detailed in the conceptual framework (Figure 3.1).

While the concept of contribution is often subjective, the survey allowed the researcher to explore the topic in a more objective way (Owen, 2017). This aided the researcher in conceptualising the phenomenon more clearly in preparation for Phase 2. Additionally, the inclusion of a small number of open-ended questions proved useful in illustrating where participants might interpret questions differently, might want to give reasons for a specific response (Feilzer, 2010) or may want to provide an answer which a pre-coded question does not allow (Foddy, 1994).

The survey was distributed to participants using Google Forms (Appendix B) and before this, was piloted with a small number of participants following ethical approval being granted. Piloting of the survey can be particularly important where the participant is self-administering the survey and cannot clarify meaning with the researcher, so the questions need to be unambiguous (Owen, 2017). The survey was tested on a small sample of current EdD students to identify any misunderstandings of the questions and instructions and any issues with non-responses. No significant issues were identified and the survey was administered to students and

graduates during the summer months to cater to teaching and academic staff who may have more time to participate at that time of year.

4.7.2 Participant Selection

The participants for Phase 1 were purposefully selected based on their current registration on, or graduation from, the EdD programme in question. A total of 169 individuals met the criteria for inclusion. This included 88 graduates and 81 currently registered students.

4.7.3 Data Collection

Students were contacted via a programme administrator as agreed with the programme chairperson. Graduates proved more difficult to reach and a variety of means were pursued, including emails sent out by current and previous programme chairpersons, supervisors contacting graduates, and via contacts built up in the researcher's own social media account. Graduates that were contacted by email were also asked to consider forwarding the survey link to any of their peers whom they had maintained contact with since graduation. Target participants received a link to the survey, which included a plain language statement. The informed consent form was embedded in the survey design.

4.7.4 Response Rate

A total of 57 responses were received in Phase 1, representing a 34% response rate. 30 respondents indicated that they are currently enrolled on the EdD programme, with 27 indicating that they are graduates (Table 4.5). 56 of the respondents stated they are in employment. There was also a range of professions and roles specified in the survey, such as academic and lecturing roles, director and managerial roles in educational settings, teachers and school leaders.

	Frequency	Valid Percent
I am currently enrolled in year 1 or year 2 (taught phase)	10	17.5
I am currently enrolled in year 3 + (research phase)	20	35.1
I am a graduate (1 - 2 years since graduation)	13	22.8
I am a graduate (3 - 5 years since graduation)	9	15.8
I am a graduate (5 + years since graduation)	5	8.8
Total	57	100.0

Table 4.5: Survey respondent breakdown by registration/graduation status.

4.7.5 Phase 1 Analysis

The findings of Phase 1 of the study were analysed using IBM SPSS statistical software. Given the limited power of analysis due to the small sample size and also, the fact that a case study approach has been used, the findings are not intended to make broad, theoretical claims but rather explain contributions as participants of this study perceive them. As such, the quantitative analysis relied on descriptive statistics. The data is presented in chapters five and six. A small number of open-ended questions were also included in the survey. These were analysed in the same manner as the interview data using the NVivo software package.

4.8 Phase 2, Qualitative Phase

4.8.1 Design

Phase 2 of the study was based on semi-structured interviews with participants who had provided their details in the Phase 1 survey. Interviews are a '…key method in the human and social sciences, and also in many other corners of scientific landscape such as education…' (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 1). In a research interview knowledge is co-created by the interviewee and interviewee during the interview process. The process is '…inter-relational and inter-subjective' (Kumar, 2007, p. 54).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 14) suggest that in adopting a pragmatic approach '…reflections on how to conduct and analyse interviews are based on what the researcher is interested in knowing about…' With this in mind, a semi-structured approach was chosen as the most suitable type of interview for this study as it allowed the researcher to '…make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogue by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee'. As suggested by Merriam (1998, p. 74), the researcher must '…assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways' and as such, the approach must be responsive to different experiences and perspectives. The semi-structured method '…allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldviews of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic'.

The interview schedule (Appendix A) was designed following analysis of the data collected during Phase 1 of the study. The survey was useful in directing the focus of Phase 2, in highlighting '…fruitful variables and associations…' (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 252). Phase 2 questions were structured around the same four areas of contribution identified in the conceptual

framework. In developing the interview schedule the researcher was aware of the need to allow for unforeseen or contradictory stories. As such, the interview allowed for unexpected ideas and experiences to come through and questions were adopted, changed or removed accordingly during each interview. The focus here was to understand the context behind the survey data, bringing a deeper understanding by focusing on participants' individual experiences, allowing for the voices of students and graduates to come through in the research findings.

A pilot of the interview schedule was undertaken with two current EdD students, and this proved crucial in aiding the further development of the interview questions. Piloting was also useful for the researcher as a novice in improving interview technique and anticipating technical and other requirements to ensure the smooth conducting of the interviews.

4.8.2 Participant Selection

A total of 31 participants indicated they would be willing to participate in Phase 2 of the study. It was considered that those in the taught phase of the programme (i.e. year 1 or 2) should not be included as they could not discuss the contributions of their research at this point in the programme. As such, a decision was made to focus on those who had graduated and those in the later stage of the programme (i.e. year 4 onwards). This left 28 potential participants for Phase 2.

In selecting the participants' several factors were considered including seeking to include a mix of professions, gender balance, a number of respondents who indicated divergent views and those who had given interesting responses in the open text questions. Practical considerations also informed who was contacted and the focus was initially on those who had completed the programme and may be able to give more detailed responses and those based in the greater Dublin region which would facilitate face-to-face meetings.

Brinkmann (2013, p. 14) emphasises that '…fewer interviews that are thoroughly analysed are preferable to many interviews that are only superficially explored' and this was considered in deciding the number of participants to include in Phase 2. A total of 14 interviews were conducted, with participants selected from the list of Phase 1 respondents who had indicated a willingness to be interviewed. A total of 9 graduates and 5 registered students were included in Phase 2, representing a range of professions (Table 4.6).

Interviewee	Status	Gender	Current Role	Code
1	Student, year 4	M	Academic/lecturing role	S1_M_A
2	Graduate, 5+ years	M	Academic/lecturing role	G1_M_A
3	Graduate 5+ years	M	Director (Higher Education)	G2_M_AL
4	Student, year 4	F	Academic/lecturing role	S2_F_A
5	Graduate, 3-5 years	F	Academic/lecturing role	G3_F_A
6	Graduate, 5+ years	F	Academic/lecturing role	G4_F_A
7	Graduate, 1-2 years	F	Academic leadership role	G5_F_AL
8	Student, year 4	F	Director (Further/Adult Education)	S3_F_AL
9	Student, year 4	M	Industry/Professional role	S4_M_IP
10	Graduate, 3-5 years	F	Academic leadership role	G6_F_AL
11	Graduate, 1-2 years	M	Academic/lecturing role	G7_M_A
12	Graduate, 1-2 years	F	Policy researcher and evaluator	G8_F_P
13	Student, year 4	M	School Principal	S5_M_SL
14	Graduate, 3-5 years	M	School Principal	G9_M_SL

Table 4.6: Interview participants, registration status and current job roles.

4.8.3 Data Collection

The data collection process occurred over three months in 2019. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed straight afterwards. The interviews lasted for approximately 45 minutes. The interview schedule helped direct the conversation, but interviewees were allowed to direct the discussion to areas they felt were most important to them. At the beginning of each interview, participants were re-introduced to the purpose and parameters of the study and asked to sign an informed consent form. Interviews typically commenced with a standard question of 'what motivated you to pursue the EdD programme?' as a way of easing participants into the topic.

4.8.4 Phase 2 Analysis

A systematic approach was adopted for the analysis of the interview data. The researcher followed the phases as described in Braun and Clark (2006) (Table 4.7).

PHASES OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS	
Phase	**Description of the process**
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extracts examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 4.7: Phases of thematic analysis (Source: adapted from Braun and Clark, 2006).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 180) highlight that, in transcribing interviews the researcher '…will have the social and emotional aspects of the interview situation present or reawakened during transcription, and will already have stated that analysis of the meaning of what was said'. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and this process proved useful for the researcher in both becoming familiar with the data and in starting to make sense of some of the emerging themes and ideas coming from the interviews. Transcribing also proved useful in improving the researcher's interview technique as interviews progressed.

The interview data was analysed using NVivo, a document and coding management system. Using the software allowed the researcher to approach the analysis systematically while producing an audit trail which aided the process. The approach adopted was largely inductive, allowing for categories and relationships between categories to emerge during the analysis. However, the researcher also considered the conceptual framework during the analysis and themes were coded against the framework where they aligned. This approach allowed the researcher to focus on themes that related to the focus of the inquiry while allowing for new and unexpected themes to emerge.

Initial codes were generated before moving to the identification of themes. This thematic analysis resulted in the identification of six themes, with several sub-themes within each as detailed below (Table 4.8):

Theme	Sub-theme	Key ideas/constructs
Theme 1: Contributions to Personal and Professional Development	Sub-theme1: Personal development and fulfilment	Described as a personal challenge, personal growth, validation, pride, self-reflection, a goal, determination
	Sub-theme 2: Professional-self development	General references to professional-development, criticality, language
	Sub-theme 3: Professional credibility and confidence	Confidence as it relates to wider network engagements, speaking up, challenging, constructing arguments, starting conversations. Credibility, recognition and authority, also discussed as it relates to wider network engagements
Theme 2: Career Development, Progression and Change	Sub-theme 1: Career considerations	Mixed-theme, some motivated by the prospect of career change/advancement but equal numbers indicate no concrete career plans
	Sub-theme 2: Employment and promotion opportunities	The necessity of academia, employment and job security in academia, opening doors, creating new opportunities
Theme 3: Programme Specific Learner Motivations		The structured approach of the programme and the cohort as key determinants. Existing links with the university and programme leadership also an important determinant
Theme 4: Workplace Engagement & Support		Elicited most neutral responses. Limited employer involvement in the decision-making process. Evidence of growing interest as the student progresses. Informal support from managers/peers through showing interest in process and research
Theme 5: Contributions to Practice and the Workplace	Sub-theme 1: Motivations relating to enhancement of Practice	No evidence of being initially motivated by wanting to contribute to practice. At odds with previous research.
	Sub-theme 2: Perceived capacity and barriers to affecting change in the workplace	Some mentions of the importance of alignment of research to workplace need and employer interest. Uncertainty expressed in a small number of interviews about mechanisms or capacity to affect change.
	Sub-theme 3: Contributions to professional practice in the workplace and beyond	Described in terms of awareness building and informing knowledge, improving workplace practice, informing how and what they teach and general enhanced engagement in the workplace which is linked back to professional development.
Theme 6: Contributing to Wider Professional and Academic Communities	Sub-theme 1: Contributing to wider professional and academic communities	Discussed closely with confidence and credibility. New and enhanced engagements with professional communities and bodies, greater authority to speak on professional matters, credibility by virtue of the award, producing academic outputs, ongoing engagement with the university through teaching, supervising and projects
	Sub-theme 2: The cohort as a community of practice	Unexpected theme relating to the value of cohort both during the process and afterwards, ongoing collaboration, professional support, community of practice, friendships

Table 4.8: Themes identified from the thematic analysis.

4.9 Mixing/Integration of the Data

The mixed-method design employed for this study posed challenges as well as opportunities for the researcher. The approach is both time-consuming and the convergence of two data types is a complex process for the novice researcher, requiring familiarisation with different analysis methods and tools.

As detailed previously, the analysis of the survey data allowed the researcher to identify participants willing to engage in the interview stage, as well as helping to direct the areas for investigation. The main instance of mixing occurred at the point of analysis and the findings from the interviews were converged with the Phase 1 findings to contextualise, explain and better understand the survey data. These findings are discussed in detail in the subsequent analysis chapters.

4.10 Validity and Reliability

There is little consensus amongst researchers as to whether validity, reliability or generalisability can be considered in respect of case study research. Yin (1994, p. 21) for example, attests to several types of validity and reliability checks being applied to case study design while also making the argument that '…case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations…' Equally, Merriam (2007) argues that trust in research which has implications for professional practice is especially important, therefore it is essential that the research can produce valid, reliable and ethical knowledge. Opposing this argument is Thomas (2011) who argues that we cannot guarantee validity and reliability of a case study design but instead should focus on ensuring *quality* which can be shown to the reader through justification for the selection of the case, detailed contextual information, and through strong arguments which account for 'rival explanations' for the observations.

Validity '…refers in ordinary language to the truth, the correctness, and the strength of a statement…. A valid argument is sound, well-grounded, justifiable, strong, and convincing' (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 246). 'Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality' (Merriam, 2007, p. 201) and is closely linked to ontological perspectives.

Triangulation, as argued by many (Yin, 1994; Tomas, 2011; Merriam, 2007) is an essential component to case study design and the opportunity to collect data for a wide range of sources is a major strength of this research approach (Yin, 1994). The internal validity, or credibility, of

this research is supported through the triangulation of findings from three sources; 1) the survey instrument; 2) interviews; and 3) the literature review. Findings, in the main, were corroborated across these three sources of data.

Reliability '…pertains to the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings; it is often treated in relation to the issue of whether a finding is reproducible at other times and by other researchers' (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 245). In positivist research reliability refers to the extent to which the results can be replicated. The term '…in the traditional sense seems to be something of a misfit when applied to qualitative research (Merriam, 2007, p. 206). Merriam (2007) suggests that the consideration, therefore, is not on whether results can be replicated but rather '…the results make sense…they are consistent and dependable'. Triangulation of data collection methods as suggested above will go a way towards ensuring the consistency of the findings. Dependability can be an indication of how sensible the findings are and can be strengthened by providing the reader with sufficient contextual information as well as by declaration the researchers own position (and possible biases) to the study.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations permeate the entire research process from '...appropriateness of topic, design, methods, guarantees of confidentiality, analysis and dissemination of findings' and this must be '...negotiated with relative openness, sensitivity, honesty, accuracy and scientific impartiality' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 57).

This study was conducted with full ethical approval of the University Research Ethics Committee. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity through the removal of any personal identifiers from the data. Particular consideration was given to the fact that only one institution and one programme was included in this study. As such, the researcher was cognisant of the impact the study could have, not only for the participants but also for those involved in the delivery and coordination of the programme. The informed consent forms detailed the purpose of this study and highlighted the potential identification of the programme in question given the researchers own involvement in the programme. Informed consent was given by each participant in both Phase 1 and again in Phase 2 of the study.

The exploring of the contributions of EdDs involves exploring in-depth the personal and professional lives of the participants. This calls for an approach that is both sensitive and thoughtful in acknowledging the close relationship between the world of work, professional and

personal identity and one's own personal circumstances, hopes, aspirations and regrets. This was a key consideration in Phase 2 and the researcher was sensitive to the participants' stories throughout the process. Through the semi-structured interviews, participants were invited to explore those areas which were most important to them. Care was taken to ensure these stories are captured accurately in the analysis through the inclusion of accounts given in the participants' own words.

4.11.1 The Insider Researcher

This study was undertaken as a piece of insider research in which the researcher is both an employee of the university in question and a student of the programme which is the focus of this study. Mercer (2007) highlights that insider research is common in EdD studies given that the majority of students continue to work full-time while undertaking their studies. As such the workplace is often the site of the study bringing both benefits and challenges.

Hycner (1985, p. 296) warns that the '...subjective influence of the researcher...' is possibly one of the biggest criticisms of qualitative research. While this may be in part negated through the use of mixed-methods research, the researcher acknowledges that even quantitative research has an element of subjectivity from the selection of the topic to the wording of survey questions. As such, a declaration of the researcher's position in relation to the research is useful in allowing the ready to make an informed judgement as to how this position may impact the study.

This research focuses on one particular Doctor of Education programme currently being delivered in Ireland. I have strong links to this programme, both as a current student and as an employee of the university in question. This puts me, as an insider researcher, in a unique position that brings with it both benefits and issues in undertaking the research. Mercer (2007, p. 3) warns that educational research textbooks '...tend to gloss over the intricacies of insider research conducted in one's own place of work...'. As a university employee, I have been directly involved in the quality assurance and governance of research programmes. This gives me a unique insight into such programmes, access to contextual information and a deep understanding of how research programmes have changed and developed in recent years. However, this can also bring with it challenges as identified in Table 4.9.

As a student on the programme under inquiry, I have unique insight which enabled me to articulate a line of questioning from an insider perspective. However, in developing the methods, as well as interpretation of the findings, the insider researcher must be aware of personal biases

and personal experiences which may lead to assumptions or missing important findings that are not in keeping with one's own experiences. I have had a hugely positive experience on the EdD programme and I have found the process both rewarding and impactful. I am aware that this is my own experience and throughout the research process I have been conscious of being open to other experiences and meaning coming from respondent accounts.

Ethical Considerations	How These Are Addressed
Researcher's own perceptions, knowledge and experience of the programme as a student and as an employer of the university.	These issues have been identified and addressed in part through the disclosure of the researcher's position as an insider researcher. The researcher continuously checked for possible biases and assumptions in method design, data collection and analysis. Findings were triangulated to corroborate results and check for consistency across the findings.
Student's may feel an obligation to partake given the researcher's position as a student on the programme.	Informed consent forms were completed by all participants. The form clarified the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any stage. The survey was not distributed directly by the researcher.
Difficulties in ensuring that the students/graduates as a cohort will not be identifiable given the small number of such programmes in Ireland, and the location of research being undertaken.	This was explained to participants in the plain language statement. All individual identifiers have been removed from the data prior to publication.
Possible 'negative' findings.	The possibility of identifying 'negatives' in the data was discussed with the supervisors and Chairperson of the programme. It was agreed that research findings will be presented in their entirety.

Table 4.9: Ethical Considerations.

4.12 Limitations

It is important to highlight the limitations of this study, in particular, those presented by a small-scale case study. This research looks at one specific case, a single programme in an Irish university. The researcher acknowledges this limitation and in no way claims that the findings are representative of all cohorts, all EdD programmes or all professional doctorates. Furthermore, the study makes no comparison between EdD and PhD cohorts and as such does not suggest that the contributions of these two awards may differ in any way. In fact, the researcher cautions against any study which would draw a comparison between awards and agrees with the views of Gregory (1995, p. 184) who cautions:

> '[t]he elitist notion that any one form of doctoral achievement is superior to another fails to appreciate the transformative purpose any such study at this highest of levels, and of the generic professional aspects of academic leadership and research, such as the focus

on critical thinking, originality, high levels of communication of new ideas and the ability to stimulate others towards innovation'.

The study was also constrained by difficulties in accessing graduate information and by the small population from which participants could be drawn from. Not all graduates were contactable and the small number of respondents makes it difficult to draw inferences across the respondent groups (i.e. students and graduates).

4.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher detailed the methodological approach adopted for this study. This research is underpinned by a pragmatist world-view which offers a researching professional a '…logical and practical alternative' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17) and allows for an approach that best addresses the heart of the research problem in asking "what are the issues and how best my I go about exploring these?". This world-view is addressed in this chapter before turning to the methodological approach applied to this study.

This piece of research uses a quan-QUAL mixed-methods case study design and this was detailed fully in this chapter. As with all case study research, it is important that the scope and boundaries of the case are understood and this is also addressed in this chapter. This is followed by a detailed description of both phases of the study. Phase 1 involved the development of a survey instrument which was completed by 57 student and graduate respondents. Phase 2 involved semi-structured interviews with 14 respondents. The findings from both phases are detailed in the subsequent chapters five and six. This chapter concluded by considering the limitations and benefits of such research along with other ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS:

Considering the Individual Learner: Personal, Professional and Career Development

5.1 Introduction

The following two chapters include both the presentation and critical analysis of the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this study. Chapter three explored the existing literature related to the contributions of professional doctorates, which led to the development of a conceptual framework (Figure 3.1). Informed by this conceptual framework the quantitative data presented in these two chapters was collected through an online survey of current and previous EdD candidates (Appendix B). This initial phase took place throughout mid-2019, and the results were analysed to obtain a broad perspective of respondents views relating to; 1) motivations for undertaking the EdD; 2) contributions to personal and professional development; 3) contributions to the workplace; 4) employers' engagement in the process and; 5) contributions to wider academic and professional communities. The quantitative data was also used to inform the development of an interview schedule (Appendix A), helping to identify the key areas of focus worth investigation in Phase 2 of the study.

The qualitative data from Phase 2 of this study is also presented in these two chapters along with the findings from open text responses to the survey. Fourteen interviews were conducted in late 2019 and the data was analysed using thematic analysis as described in the methodology chapter. Six themes emerged from the thematic analysis (Table 5.1) and these largely correspond to the conceptual framework as detailed in chapter three (Figure 3.1):

Theme 1: Contributions to Personal and Professional Development	Sub-theme1: Personal development and fulfilment
	Sub-theme 2: Professional-self development
	Sub-theme 3: Professional credibility and confidence
Theme 2: Career Development, Progression and Change	Sub-theme 1: Career considerations
	Sub-theme 2: Employment and promotion opportunities
Theme 3: Programme Specific Motivations of the Learner	
Theme 4: Workplace Engagement & Support	
Theme 5: Contributions to Practice and the Workplace	Sub-theme 1: Motivations relating to enhancement of Practice
	Sub-theme 2: Perceived capacity and barriers to affecting change in the workplace
	Sub-theme 3: Contributions to professional practice in the workplace and beyond
Theme 6: Contributing to Wider Professional and Academic Communities	Sub-theme 1: Engaging in and contributing to wider professional and academic communities
	Sub-theme 2: The cohort as a community of practice

Table 5.1: Summary of themes identified in Phase 2.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings of this study are converged in these two chapters as is appropriate in mixed-methods studies (Fetters, Curry and Creswell, 2013). This study places a heavy emphasis on the qualitative findings in keeping with the quan-QUAL mixed-method design, as detailed in chapter 4. Therefore, chapters five and six are structured around the six themes identified in the qualitative phase, as detailed in Table 5.1 above.

This chapter considers the individual learner and details the first three themes as indicated in Table 5.1. The subsequent chapter six looks at the wider contributions of the EdD as they relate to the workplace and workplace practice, workplace engagement and wider professional and academic communities (Themes 4 to 6). As highlighted in the literature review, identifying and describing contributions is not a simple task and the separation of findings into distinct themes by no means suggests a clear separation between person, practice and profession. Indeed, these themes are often intertwined, elusive and indirect and as such there are overlapping concepts, thoughts and descriptions between the themes.

5.2 Theme 1: Contributions to Personal and Professional Development

During the interviews, the most prominent theme to emerge related to the contribution of the EdD to personal and professional development. In the interviews the descriptions of development fell broadly into three areas: 1) the interviewees own personal development; 2) their professional development concerning changes in personal competencies and behaviours; and 3) enhancements in their self-confidence and their perceived professional credibility. The following sections will explore each of these sub-themes in turn.

The strong contribution of the programme to personal and professional development was also evident in survey responses with the majority of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to all statements relating to the change orientation statements (Table 5.2). These findings are discussed in further detail under the three sub-themes.

Item		*Strongly agree*	*Agree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
8.1 I have become a more reflective practitioner	Count	22	28	5	1	0
	%	39.3%	50.0%	8.9%	1.8%	0.0%
8.2 I have developed greater analytical skills	Count	22	27	5	2	0
	%	39.3%	48.2%	8.9%	3.6%	0.0%
8.3 I am a more critical thinker	Count	26	24	6	1	0
	%	45.6%	42.1%	10.5%	1.8%	0.0%
8.4 I take a more evidence informed approach to decision making	Count	22	24	7	2	1
	%	39.3%	42.9%	12.5%	3.6%	1.8%
8.5 I can make a more reasoned and balanced case when presenting an argument	Count	20	22	13	2	0
	%	35.1%	38.6%	22.8%	3.5%	0.0%
8.6 I have greater influencing and negotiating skills	Count	10	25	18	4	0
	%	17.5%	43.9%	31.6%	7.0%	0.0%
8.7 [I have more confidence and self-esteem	Count	15	31	10	1	0
	%	26.3%	54.4%	17.5%	1.8%	0.0%
8.8 I have developed a stronger academic voice	Count	20	29	6	1	1
	%	35.1%	50.9%	10.5%	1.8%	1.8%
8.9 I have greater confidence in my use of language	Count	12	30	13	1	1
	%	21.1%	52.6%	22.8%	1.8%	1.8%
8.10 I have a greater grasp of listening critically to others	Count	19	23	12	3	0
	%	33.3%	40.4%	21.1%	5.3%	0.0%
8.11 I can better link theory to practice	Count	17	29	9	1	0
	%	30.4%	51.8%	16.1%	1.8%	0.0%
8.12 I am more confident discussing research in my practice	Count	24	26	4	3	0
	%	42.1%	45.6%	7.0%	5.3%	0.0%
8.13 I believe others have greater confidence in me professionally	Count	20	20	15	2	0
	%	35.1%	35.1%	26.3%	3.5%	0.0%

Table 5.2: Change orientation of participants.

A survey item was also asked in relation to the impact of the EdD on personal and professional development. Almost 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the EdD has had a positive impact on their personal and/or professional development (Table 5.3).

Question		*Strongly Agree*	*Agree*	*Neither Agree nor Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Disagree Strongly*
Overall, I believe that my EdD has had a positive impact on my own personal and/or professional development.	*Count*	31	22	2	2	0
	%	54.0%	38.6%	3.5%	3.5%	0%

Table 5.3: Impact of the EdD on personal and/or professional development

Before turning to the sub-themes, it is important to note that personal and professional developments were not discussed by participants as separate constructs from one another during the interviews. Rather, they were generalised, with no real clear boundaries of distinction between personal and professional development. Difficulties in the pinpointing and describing of such contributions are highlighted by Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011, p. 18). They suggest that:

> …findings to date indicate that the process of undertaking a professional doctorate and the final product… have profoundly impacted upon their personal and professional lives. This impact is a complex web of tensions that contribute to understanding professional doctoral identity.

Indeed, articulation of motivations and contributions in both the interviews and open-ended responses were often described in broad terms rather than with specific detail. For example, one survey respondent described what is often referred to as a multitude of complex reasons for pursuing a programme of study at this level, which is in line with Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011):

> It is quite difficult to pick my top three reasons from the list above. I can identify with pretty much all of the above motivations. I suppose doing the EdD was motivated by my desire to take that final step in my education career, to reach the pinnacle of a Level 10 programme. I also wanted to refine my research skills, and then be able to apply them to my professional context. But there was also the feeling that not many people from the NGO sector get the opportunity to do a professional doctorate, and I was keen in some way to represent the sector and to carry out some research that would benefit the sector - and not just my direct employer. (Respondent 22)

This perspective resonates with one graduate who is aware of how he developed during the programme but struggles to find the words to describe it:

> …the words don't describe it, I could say empowering, I could say it gave me great thinking tools. Em, but what it did was it took me as a person at the beginning of it and just processed me a little bit. Or I did process myself I suppose, to be a slightly more developed version of myself at the end of it. (G9_M_SL)

5.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Personal Development and Fulfilment

Personal development and fulfilment is one of the strongest themes to emerge from the interviews, both in terms of motivation for pursuing the programme and as an outcome of having engaged in study at this level. This finding is in line with Scott et al. (2004) who suggest personal fulfilment and a sense of accomplishment is a prominent motivating factor. More recently, Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn (2019, p. 413) found personal development featured heavily in their study with narratives of ''confidence', 'credibility', 'understanding' and 'self-awareness' as key aspects emerging from doctoral studies...'

Similarly, terms such as "self-actualisation", "personal growth", "self-reflection" and wanting to "develop in myself" were the dominant constructs used to describe personal development amongst participants in this study. For example, one graduate stated that: "…it was like I got the other piece of the puzzle…in terms of self-actualisation, self-confidence and assurance, it was like loads of pennies dropped for me" (G8_F_P). This resonates with another graduate who described: "…certainly the personal impact or contribution is the major for me. It had a huge impact on me and where I am at now…" (G4_F_A). Only one divergent view was expressed through an open-text response to the survey: "I haven't seen any professional benefits yet but hope they may accrue in years to come. For me there was never any personal benefit really - it's a course of study I feel I have to do to keep up with the job market rather than want to do" (Respondent 25).

Feelings of pride, validation and a sense of accomplishment were also expressed in several of the interviews, particularly from those who had completed the programme. The idea of pursuing the EdD for personal enjoyment or to achieve a personal goal has been found in other studies (Wellington and Sikes, 2006; Burgess and Wellington, 2010; Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2011). The personal desire to complete a doctorate was described in several of the interviews as a key motivating factor, an idea supported by Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 727), who found that '[p]ersonal satisfaction, the quest for knowledge and intellectual challenge allied with professional curiosity was a strong intrinsic motivator…'. One graduate described it as a: "sense that I need to achieve something or I need to prove something to myself and maybe other people, I don't know…" (G9_M_SL). Another survey respondent described how:

> I'm delighted to have achieved a goal I had set for myself, and this qualification validated the time and resources my parents had put into providing an undergrad and postgrad opportunity for me. It was important for me to achieve the highest level on the NFQ as I'm competitive and always want to achieve my best. (Respondent 13)

The idea of fulfilling one's potential also comes through in several interviews. As stated by one graduate:

> I just got into this momentum, just the sense of having missed out on something and here was this opportunity to develop this kind of internal good like…the thought of being educated. And once I got into it and I just felt this drive to keep going and 'can I do it, can I do it? Well, let's see if I can'… (G4_F_A)

Another graduate described the thought process in deciding to pursue the doctorate with his desire to fulfil his own potential: "…and I felt, wow, I've kinda under, you know, I personally think I've underachieved in that capacity, you know I don't have a doctorate like, it's not that hard" (G2_M_AL).

Choosing to pursue a doctorate for reasons linked to personal development and personal fulfilment was also in line with the survey responses. In the survey, almost 37% selected 'for personal fulfilment' as one of their top three reasons while a third indicated 'because of a desire to learn' as a key reason for pursuing doctoral-level studies (Table 5.4). Other findings relating to this question are discussed further in later sections.

	Response	*N*	*Percent*	*Percentage of Cases*
Career Related Motivations	6.1 To improve my career prospects	23	13.5%	40.4%
	6.2 To pursue a possible career change	12	7.1%	21.1%
	6.3 To improve/enhance my professional credibility	23	13.5%	40.4%
Professional Development Motivations	6.4 To validate my existing knowledge and expertise	9	5.3%	15.8%
	6.5 To allow me to write/speak on educational matters with greater confidence and authority	13	7.6%	22.8%
	6.6 To change/enhance my own professional practice	9	5.3%	15.8%
	6.10 To learn new research skills which I could apply to my work	3	1.8%	5.3%
Motivations related to contributing to professional practice and/or knowledge	6.7 To make a greater contribution to my own organisation	5	2.9%	8.8%
	6.8 To make a greater contribution to the practice of my profession	9	5.3%	15.8%
	6.9 To make a contribution to knowledge (professional and/or academic)	12	7.1%	21.1%
Personal Development and Fulfilment Motivations	6.11 For personal fulfilment	21	12.4%	36.8%
	6.12 Because of a desire to learn	19	11.2%	33.3%
	6.13 To increase my confidence	2	1.2%	3.5%
	6.14 To prove something to myself and/or others	10	5.9%	17.5%

Table 5.4: Reasons why students entered the Doctor of Education Programme

5.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Professional-Self Development

From the interviews and survey responses, professional development does not appear to have been a primary motivator for the majority of respondents. Despite this surprising finding, contributions to the professional development of participants featured strongly in Phase 1 (Table 5.2) and Phase 2 of the study. This finding is consistent with several earlier studies including Doncaster and Lester (2002), Fox and Slade (2014), Davis and Frame (2016) and Hramiak (2017). Wellington and Sikes (2006) refer to this as "cognitive growth" and suggest this is the most dominant contribution of EdD programmes:

> On the whole, however, it seemed that the understandings and skills they developed were to do with alternative perspectives and enhanced abilities for productive reflection and analysis. Thus, the impact on professional life is less to do with changing actual practice than with two domains of personal growth: the cognitive and the affective. The latter is to do with respect, confidence and self-esteem. The former is to do with becoming more questioning, more reflective, more analytical and more critical.

The findings from Phase 1 suggests that these developmental changes become apparent to the learner during the programme, with little variance between the student and graduate responses. The majority of survey respondents reported that, as a result of engagement on the EdD programme, they have become more reflective, analytical and critical, take a more evidenced informed approach to decision making and can better link theory to practice (Table 5.2).

Similar areas of development also came to the fore in the interviews with participants describing their professional development broadly around two areas; 1) increased criticality and analytical skills and; 2) changes in discourse or language. These are considered in further detail below. Surprisingly, there was little emphasis on enhanced reflexivity in the interviews with the exception of two of the graduates. One described reflection relating to her decision to pursue the EdD: "I also was interested in it for just professional development reasons you know, I was at a stage in my career where I'm ready to kind of try and reflect back on what I've done to date" (G6_F_AL). Another described how the process has led her to become more questioning of the purpose and direction of workplace projects and research, something which she describes as a "reflective process" as opposed to a critical one (G8_F_P).

Across the interviews, while there appeared to be a general sense of awareness of personal changes, on the other hand, there was less clarity as to how this change orientation has impacted their work practice. Descriptions were often broad and non-specific and most participants described changes without drawing any specific link to their practice. One student, for example, described his professional development as:

> …you're so well-read and a lot of this is kind of inbuilt skills that you pick up along the way, you are going to have to be analytical, you're going to have to be reflective, you always have to be disciplined in what you're doing, you're kinda reading all the time, you're pulling different pieces of information and joining the dots and continuously learning and adding to that bank of knowledge all the time… (S4_M_IP)

Criticality

Consistent with the survey findings, increased criticality was described in detail in seven of the interviews as it relates to professional development. This is perhaps unsurprising and reassuring given the focus on the critical skills element of doctoral studies. *Ireland's Framework for Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes* (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2018, p. 11) explicitly references the importance of doctoral graduates being able to '…think critically about problems in order to produce innovative solutions and create new knowledge'. Further afield, Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn (2019, p. 422) also emphasise the particular importance of developing critical skills in professional doctoral programmes suggesting that:

> Doctoral learning should trigger reflexivity that helps students to become critical leaders. The concerns of such leaders should not simply be dominated by organisational performativity, but also reflect an awareness of the forces operating within their institutions. Such emancipatory leadership has the potential to raise the organisation's awareness of its functioning…

Burnard et al. (2018, p. 42) suggest that this increased criticality leads the leaner to '…critically revisit their 'practice', assumptions and values, generating an outsider's perspective on their workplace, they develop identities that become multiple, flexible and changing'. Some of the interviewees described this increased critical ability as deeper levels of thinking about what and how projects and tasks are approached in their workplace which is consistent with other studies (Doncaster and Lester, 2002; Wellington and Sikes, 2006; Fox and Slade, 2014; Burnard et al., 2018). A small number of interviewees were able to draw on examples of how this change has impacted their work practices:

> …It certainly changed my approach. I'm much more…I critically analyse projects for [xxx] proposals an awful lot more than I did because I now read everything the way I'm reading the literature review piece as in "what's the purpose, what's the relevance, where do I fit into this, is it of use, is it of benefit?" So certainly that critical analysis skill is brought to everything now. (G5_F_AL)

A student in year four of the programme described how she is: "a bit more tuned into things and then yes, sometimes a bit more critical of things like why are we doing this, what's the point. And more, more willing maybe to make contributions at meetings and question things a little bit

more" (S2_F_A). An example of how this increased critical awareness has been used in her own work practice was described by the student as follows:

> I had been uneasy about something we were asking the students to do… I had a conversation with the lead in [location] yesterday and she said actually we're thinking about getting rid of it. And now a couple of years ago I wouldn't have had the confidence to come in and say actually yeah, I've been wondering about that for a while…(S2_F_A)

Language and Academic Voice

Increased confidence in their use of language and the development of an academic voice is a theme that came through in the majority of the interviewees. Similar findings have also been documented in several previous studies (Burgess and Wellington, 2010; Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016; Hramiak, 2017). Changes in language and discourse were also evidenced in survey responses with 86% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have developed a stronger academic voice (Table 5.2). Similarly, almost 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have greater confidence in their use of language (Table 5.2).

Burgess and Wellington (2010, p. 168) found candidates described their improved discourse as '...the way they responded to others, or listened, as well as a greater understanding of the ways in which language can be a barrier...' and this was also evident in some of the interviews. Indeed, according to one student, that in many ways summarises other participant perspectives as they related to increased criticality: "I've also…become more conscious of...the ability to construct an argument, and follow it through logically…in a calm way [laughing]…" (S1_M_A)

Developing an academic voice was also described by some interviewees, and Hramiak (2017) suggests that this becomes more apparent in the latter stages of the programme. One student highlighted:

> It gives you more language as well. I think the other thing, you kind of, when you're going out to talk to people you kind of have two languages. I mean this is what it is in my world and that's what it is in their world. And in that then you're finding that things are just labelled different (S5_M_SL).

Similarly, another graduate pointed out: "I seem to be talking a different language. And I think that's a practice that you develop out of the language" (G6_F_AL). One current student provided an example where, in his current role, his research which focuses on policy has increased his awareness of how language in policy can shape and change the role of the teacher: "So I've been looking at policy, the language of policy. How policy has conceptualised teachers and what teachers do and who they are" (S5_M_SL). This also appears to have informed an increased

awareness of his own use of language and how language can be portrayed by others. During the interview he described how he has resisted discussing his new learnings in his workplace as follows: “So I'm very conscious in work not to portray myself as... as knowing more than other people around me in a way that may be perceived as showing off or...what's the word... kind of grandstanding…” (S5_M_SL). This conflict is also highlighted in Burgess and Wellington (2010) who suggest that developments in discourse can lead to a greater awareness of how language can be used as a barrier.

5.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Professional Credibility and Confidence

While this final sub-theme could be construed as overlapping with the others in this section, both credibility and confidence featured strongly in the majority of the interviews that they warranted attention on their own. Wellington and Sikes (2006) refer to this as “affective growth” linking it to changes in ‘…respect, confidence and self-esteem’. Indeed, confidence is an overarching theme in many other studies and has been found to have many implications for professional practice (Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2011; Davis and Frame, 2016; Hramiak, 2017; Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn, 2019). It is evident from the survey responses that on the one hand, while the majority of participants highlighted the fact that they have more confidence and self-esteem as a result of undertaking the programme (Table 5.2), this appeared not to be a motivating factor for wanting to pursue their studies. Only two respondents chose ‘to increase my confidence’ as a reason for pursuing the EdD programme (Table 5.4). Indeed, a much larger number of survey respondents cited ‘to improve/enhance my professional credibility’ as a motivating factor. This was the most cited reason along with ‘to improve my career prospects.

Confidence and credibility also featured in other studies, for example, Costley and Stephenson (2007, p. 7) who reported that ‘candidates recorded a perceived greater status with clients and colleagues and recognition from professional groups for the doctorate level of their achievements and significantly increased self-confidence in themselves as individuals and as professionals’. Most recently, Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn (2019, p. 413) support the finding stating that:

> Our findings were corroborated as they highlighted how self-confidence, credibility and recognition from clients and colleagues stem from professional doctorate learning, impacting on the student’s development and leading to the emergence of an emancipated social self.

As such, this enhanced credibility and confidence may have a long-lasting effect on an individual’s ability to be more impactful in their workplace. This was evident in several of the interviews where confidence and credibility were often described closely with engaging in more

deep and meaningful dialogue and activity, both in the workplace and wider networks. Confidence and credibility are considered in further detail below.

Confidence

Confidence was by far the most cited change mentioned by interviewees concerning their personal and professional development, with twelve of the interviewees providing coherent accounts of enhanced self-confidence. This finding is consistent with a recent study by Boud et al. (2020, p. 10), who found that '[p]ersonal change such as increasing confidence, sense of self-worth and professionalism was evident responses and provided the impetus to take on new challenges and pioneer new initiatives…'

Indeed, in this study, this increased confidence was often described closely with new or enhanced engagements with wider networks. Several interviewees made references to increase confidence in engaging in conferences and in producing academic work. One graduate described how he: "…felt much more confidence producing academic work with a doctorate…." (G2_M_AL). Other interviewees discussed how this increased self-confidence has allowed them to start up conversations with other academics and/or professionals and this has facilitated widening their professional networks. One student reported: "Because you're doing research it does give you a greater confidence to open a conversation with people that are maybe not naturally in your circle of…reference" (S4_M_IP). Similarly, another student suggested: "I think it's given me a lot more confidence to engage and question the outside world…the teaching council, the Department, other research, the PDAT…" (S5_M_SL).

Several interviewees also discussed how they felt more confident in terms of speaking up in their workplace. This was articulated by some in terms of challenging assumptions and assertions: "I would look at the argument and the construction of what they're saying and, if it's not based on fact I would be prepared to challenge it whereas I may not have been" (S1_M_A) and "I'm much more self-assured than I would have been and certainly at meetings… [and] …more willing to make contributions at meetings and question things a little bit more" (S2_F_A).

One interviewee, in discussing confidence, also described the unintended consequence of how the title of Doctor can cause conflicting feelings of confidence and burden: "It has given me more confidence. At the same time, I get more nervous cause you know, you get more expectation put on you because you're now at this level…" (G3_F_A).

This emphasis on confidence also resonates with other studies. Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011, p. 11) for example, found that '…the reported experiences and written reflections in the

theses of many students focused on their personal development rather than improvements in their profession as a whole. This often showed itself in greater self-esteem and improved confidence i.e. the affective domain…' Similarly, Butcher and Sieminski (2006, p. 64) place *professional self-esteem* as being central in their model on the professional impact of EdD programmes (Figure 3.2) and suggest that this enhances '…the credibility of the education profession'. They furthermore suggest that it is this self-esteem which informs all other impacts and leads to 'enhanced confidence in applying new knowledge and skills', 'impact on professional colleagues' and 'impact on the wider professional/academic community'.

While several participants provided positive accounts of increased confidence, three participants discussed having doubts about their ability to complete the programme. One graduate explained the anxiety about taking up a doctorate as follows:

> … it still made me a little nervous doing the doctorate because I kind of thought to myself, God, if I do this now and I crash and burn I'll really kind of feel like a thick, but I thought no, no…the urge to do it was bigger than my fear of failure you know? (G9_M_SL)

Another student described how:

> I didn't think I was going to get through it, I didn't think I was going to complete it, I thought it was gonna just be too hard for me, intellectually, academically whatever I just won't be able to come up to the level (S5_M_SL).

The diverse backgrounds of adult learners and the substantial time some may have been out of formal education may play into these concerns. A recent study by Kerrigan and Hayes (2016) suggests self-efficacy, or confidence in one's own abilities, increases as learners complete each module on the EdD programme. This was not explored with participants, however, another study by Neumann (2005) also points to the value of staged coursework which increases the self-confidence of the learner as they progress through the programme. Interestingly, one survey respondent reported the opposite effect of the structured components:

> The taught years completely knocked my personal confidence and I spent my first research year building that back up. The rest of my journey was amazing thanks to the support of my supervisor and this has positively impacted my personal and professional development.

Burnard, Dragovic and Ottewell (2018) suggest one possible reason for this uncertainty in highlighting the journey from '…accomplished experienced practitioners … to the place of not knowing [which] can be both exciting and painful'.

Credibility

Credibility appears to have been both a motivating factor for many pursuing the EdD, with 40.4% selected it as one of their top three reasons for pursuing the programme (Table 5.3), as well as being a clear contribution or outcome from undertaking the programme. It is perhaps unsurprising that this is such a key motivator given the seniority of many of those involved in this study. Butcher and Sieminski (2006) point out that these programmes typically attract well-established professionals so students may be directed to '...focus on a current aspect of work in which they already possess significant professional knowledge'. As such, these programmes may be a way of earning professional credibility rather than extrinsic reward, as highlighted in other studies including Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016).

Credibility, enhanced professional standing and being recognised as an expert was also a dominant theme in twelve of the interviews. For interviewees, credibility appears to have been particularly important in building up communities of practice externally and this was construed as walking the walk, being more respected, being better positioned, having the cultural capital to start up conversations and having one's expertise validated. One graduate, for example, described it in relation to the networks she engages in stating that she now has a: "…better positioning in it because I'm not just talking now, I've actually walked the walk in terms of the research…" (G8_F_P). One student also described being able to start up new conversations stating that the programme has given him: "…the avenue in order to go and speak to a lot of leaders. If I didn't, if I hadn't done the doctorate, em…I'd just be doing like ad hoc conversations" (S4_M_IP).

Several interviewees also discussed credibility in their workplace with mixed views as to whether this had changed as a result of engaging in the EdD. Perceptions of increased credibility were particularly evident from those who work in the higher education sector:

> ...I would have felt that it makes you more respected in the university...you know if you're at meetings or if you're talking to other people who work in departments…you know even though they mightn't have said it to you, I would personally have felt it you know? (G2_M_AL)

> I didn't think that the way people would perceive you would be any different but it is! There's no question. (S1_M_A)

Others were less certain, with one student suggesting: "I mean, I worked very closely with some people and I know them very well, so probably not" (S2_F_A). Other interviewees suggested that credibility comes from having gone through the research process, being able to use language and from having the Doctor title. One graduate described the EdD as giving them the authority to speak on educational matters:

> I find it much…easier to speak on something if you know you, a group of your peers has read something, has agreed with what you say, your interpretation of it and says actually, you know what? You are able to interpret now and do a piece of work at this level. So you're standing with a little bit more authority… (G1_M_A)

This enhanced credibility was also evidenced in the survey with 70% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that, as a result of engaging in the EdD, others have greater confidence in them professionally (Table 5.2).

5.3 Theme 2: Career Development, Progression and Change

This section reports on the two sub-themes that emerged relating to career development, progression and change. The first sub-theme relates to the career motivations or considerations of participants to pursue the EdD, with mixed findings found in both phases of this study. The second sub-theme relates to employment and promotion opportunities and considers the contribution of the EdD on the careers trajectories of the participants.

5.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Career Considerations

It is evident from both the interview and survey responses, that for a number of participants, career considerations were a motivating factor for pursuing the EdD programme. From the survey responses, 'to improve my career prospects' was the most commonly selected reason for pursuing the EdD (selected by 40.4% of respondents) alongside wanting to improve or enhance professional credibility (Table 5.4). Furthermore, 21.1% of respondents indicated they were motivated by wanting 'to pursue a possible career change' (Table 5.4). However, it is noteworthy that more personal reasons were equally as important, with 36.8% indicating they were motivated by 'personal fulfilment' and 33.3% selecting 'because of a desire to learn' as one of their top three reasons. These more personal reasons were considered previously in Theme 1.

The mix of overt career objectives and less tangible personal and developmental reasons is a feature in other studies including Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 51) who found that improving career prospects sat alongside wanting to enhance professional practice and wanting 'to take a deeper academic interest'. Similarly, other studies have found a multitude of complex and interrelated motivations. For example, Scott et al. (2004) describe how candidates who are already established in their careers may choose a professional doctorate as a vehicle to career advancement or re-direction, which they term as 'extrinsic professional continuation'.

Other studies are less certain of explicit career motivations including Butcher and Sieminski (2006) who suggest that established career professions may be more focused on credibility, recognition and enhanced practice rather than career advancement, something echoed in Thorne et al. (2002). Similarly, Neumann (2005, p. 180) report that:

> A striking and unexpected finding of the study was that, with the exception of the creative arts, no students elected to undertake a professional doctorate for career advancement. Indeed, in fields such as management and law a doctorate – even a professional doctorate – could be more of a hindrance than an asset. In most instances having a doctoral qualification was seen to help 'at the margins' rather than to be instrumental in career progression.

The findings from Phase 2 of this study were similarly mixed. While five of the respondents indicated no clear or definite career plans when deciding to commence the EdD, seven respondents indicated that they saw the completion of the doctorate as being necessary to working in an academic environment. For those working in higher education settings, there were several references to an expectation that they would pursue a doctorate. According to one student: "…I found myself sort of full time in academia about six years ago. So being in that environment then the next kind of challenge is to do some sort of doctorate" (S1_M_A). One graduate also described trying to move into an academic role and the barrier of not having a doctorate: "I achieved the Masters, went to interviews, still wasn't successful… so it was like a barrier to entry for me so that's why I did it…" (G7_M_A). Notably, none of the participants who work in higher education referred to any career or employment implications of pursuing the EdD over the more traditional PhD.

One respondent who works in a professional role in a higher education institution alluded to the growing number of professional staff holding doctorates in the sector: "…professionally you know it kind of felt like you're working in the university…should really have a doctorate you know what I mean? In the area that I'm in anyway, from a credibility perspective" (G2_M_AL). He elaborated how: "…even I think from an administrative…those administrative, managerial roles, most of these department managers or whatever have doctorates".

Interestingly, only one interviewee who works outside of the higher education sector indicated career considerations in deciding to pursue the EdD. The student explained:

> I had been a teacher and a deputy principal for over ten years, and I was ready for some kind of change. And I couldn't find that change in my career in terms of moving out of primary school teaching or things like that, there was no natural progression…no progression path for me that I necessarily wanted to take. (S5_M_SL)

Conversely, others were very clear that career considerations were not part of their reason for pursuing the programme:

> See I couldn't have gone anywhere with it because like the way our pay structure is in this job. and let's face it, it is a job, it is work, I kind of do it, you know, to get paid. But eh, because I couldn't, I couldn't go anywhere. (G9_M_SL)

> I generally don't plan too far ahead as a rule. I just find the jobs find me if that's the way it's meant to be. So I didn't think that once I get a doctorate I'm going to definitely get into university teaching or anything like that but I didn't think that... I wasn't thinking of any employment... things being attached to the doctorate I wanted to get the doctorate for me and if it helped me in jobs then grand, if it didn't then it's not meant. (G3_F_A)

5.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Employment and Promotion Opportunities

Regardless of the motivations of participants to pursue an EdD, it is apparent that engaging in the programme has had an impact on the careers of a large number of participants. This finding is consistent with other studies (Burgess and Wellington, 2010; Wellington, 2013; Jones, 2018; Boud et al., 2020). Wellington (2013, p. 1494), for example, describes how '[s]ome found that completing a professional doctorate significantly changed their work environment, either through rapid promotion to senior posts or in opening up opportunities to undertake research and have their research valued by colleagues'. In opposition, Neumann (2005, p. 185) proposes that professional doctorates are rarely cited as being instrumental in career progression suggesting that 'the benefit of a professional doctorate for career advancement is negative in some cases and at best marginal in others'.

From the survey responses, 35.7% of respondents indicated they have been promoted since commencing the EdD programme. Those who responded 'yes' were also asked how instrumental, in their view, was the EdD in getting the promotion (Table 5.5). Only two respondents (10%) indicated that the EdD was not at all instrumental in their promotion.

Question		***Very Instrumental***	***Instrumental***	***Neither or Instrumental***	***Somewhat Instrumental***	***Not at all Instrumental***
How instrumental was the EdD in gaining promotion?	*Count*	8	5	3	2	2
	%	40%	25%	15%	10%	10%

Table 5.5: Impact of the EdD on obtaining promotion

31.6% of respondents also indicated they had changed profession or career direction since they commenced the EdD. Again, those who answered 'yes' were asked how instrumental, in their view, was the EdD in this change (Table 5.6). Only one respondent (5.6%) indicated that the EdD was in no way instrumental in the change of progression or career direction.

Question		*Very Instrumental*	*Instrumental*	*Neither or Instrumental*	*Somewhat Instrumental*	*Not at all Instrumental*
How instrumental was EdD in the changed profession or career direction	*Count*	10	4	3	0	1
	%	55.6%	22.2%	16.7%	0%	5.6%

Table 5.6: Impact of the EdD on changing career

Likewise, during the interviews, five of the participants attributed the EdD as having had an impact in terms of a promotion or a change in career direction. This was often discussed in terms of "opening doors" or creating new opportunities. One interviewee pointed out that the doctorate is only one part of the story. He described the EdD as: "…the vehicle in order to move career" (S4_M_IP) but suggested there are a number of interrelated factors that allow an individual to progress in their profession. As stated by the student: "Has the doctorate supported me in getting the next role? Like a hundred percent…I would say it has but you absolutely need to have a number of traits I would imagine…" (S4_M_IP).

Another graduate suggested that the EdD left her feeling dissatisfied with her position and she missed the level of autonomy afforded to her by undertaking an action research project. This led her to pursue an academic role:

> Interestingly enough it became very difficult to do the job I was in then that actually having finished the programme and having been back to my day job as it were, it actually became really unsatisfactory. (G4_F_A)

The significance of having a doctorate was particularly evident for those working in academic positions with seven interviewees discussing the EdD as important for employment opportunities and employment stability. One graduate suggested: "I think more and more it's an expectation that you have one actually, it's not such a significant thing to have it. I wouldn't have got the post here if I hadn't" (G4_F_A). Similarly, another graduate stated:

> I would have been expected to have a doctor level qualification in order to apply for head of school. So certainly they may not have stopped me applying if I hadn't but probably, but it would have been more difficult to get it. (G6_F_AL)

This finding is consistent with Hawkes (2016, p. 42) who found that '[f]or those working within the higher education sector…approximately two-thirds reported a push to undertake and complete a doctorate'. One interviewee anticipates possible future career options opening up as a result of undertaking the EdD programme:

> Because I was looking for that career out as well and a window or a door to open to help me develop my career, that was the second kind of pronged reason that, if I do this doctorate, it could open doors for me that a Masters wouldn't do, you know... (S5_M_SL)

Four of the fourteen interviewees have moved into full-time academic roles since starting the EdD. For one participant, this move was an explicit goal of undertaking the programme. For the others, the change in career direction was not planned but rather a natural progression from having undertaken a piece of academic work at this level:

> And it was just part of that trajectory so... and part of the trajectory of can I do this, so this is me having done the doctorate and having gone through it and then thinking well maybe I could teach…maybe I could do that. (G4_F_A)

> …from an academic point of view I was always into…some stage I would continue further study em, that would have been important to me. Not so much from a professional point of view, I didn't do a doc. to get something professional out of it, I never thought "oh I'll go into academia or I'll go into advocacy" or whatever, you know, that when I was applying I said I'm probably going to continue teaching…(G1_M_A)

Again, no interviewees drew comparisons between a PhD and an EdD concerning promotions, career development or career change. This perspective was further explored with those interviewees who work in academic positions:

> Most people who know both the EdD recognizes that it's on an equal footing. People who haven't engaged with it, there are some people who think that it's like a glorified Masters. So in those cases you kind of do have to spell out exactly, you know…(S1_M_A)

> They don't make any distinction. Nobody, in fact very few people have actually asked me...you know what am I doing. They just say oh you're doing a doctorate and that's it so there's no level of distinction where I work in terms of whether you're doing a PhD... in terms of the discipline area. (S2_F_A)

5.4 Theme 3: Programme Specific Motivations of the Learner

While motivations are considered elsewhere as they relate to the identified themes, there were some programme specific motivations expressed in interviews that warrant consideration here. These motivations featured strongly across the interviews, and relate specifically to the EdD programme.

Programme-specific motivations were also considered in the Phase 1 survey, with respondents indicating that all five listed reasons were strong factors in deciding to pursue the EdD (Table 5.7). 'I liked the structure of the programme' elicited the most positive responses with 94.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing with that statement. The majority of respondents also indicated they were drawn to the cohort approach and this is discussed further in Theme 6, in the subsequent chapter.

Response		*Strongly Agree*	*Agree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
5.1 I liked the structure of the programme	Count	37	17	2	0	1
	%	64.9%	29.8%	3.5%	0.0%	1.8%
5.2 I liked the idea of being part of a cohort	Count	29	16	7	3	1
	%	51.8%	28.6%	12.5%	5.4%	1.8%
5.3 I liked the subjects being covered in the 'taught' phase	Count	14	28	11	2	2
	%	24.6%	49.1%	19.3%	3.5%	3.5%
5.4 I liked the practical nature of the coursework	Count	19	20	14	1	2
	%	33.9%	35.7%	25.0%	1.8%	3.6%
5.5 I liked the type of knowledge it aims to produce (i.e. applied, contextual, practice-based)	Count	29	17	10	0	1
	%	50.9%	29.8%	17.5%	0.0%	1.8%

Table 5.7: Programme related motivations

The structured approach was discussed in several of the interviews with participants indicating this was a key reason for choosing the programme:

> So I always had doctoral in some way on my radar but the fact that this EdD was a little bit more handheld at the beginning because I had been out of being in a learning environment for a while as a student, I kind of felt that a little bit more appealing, going on a PhD felt like a much bigger jump. So I thought right an EdD seems a little bit safer. (G3_F_A)

> I think it was less... it was less the content of the programme, more the structure that the programme gave for doing the piece of research… (G4_F_A)

Wellington and Sikes (2006, p. 727) also found that structure was an important draw for doctoral candidates who are looking to continue their studies while continuing in their professional roles. They suggest that learners:

> …welcomed the timetable, the spacing of work, the deadlines, the range of taught sessions, the cumulative aspect of assessed assignments, and, especially, the support of a number of tutors and of fellow students, particularly those in the same cohort.

Wellington and Sikes (2006) and Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) also emphasise the importance of structure in the decision-making process and suggest that many candidates also considered pursuing a PhD before settling on their professional doctorate programme. Similarly, the survey here showed that 71.4% of respondents had considered pursuing a PhD before enrolling on the EdD.

In revisiting the motivations of survey participants, as detailed in Table 5.4, it is perhaps easy to understand the appeal of the EdD structure. For those looking to advance in their careers or improve career prospects, the paced and structured format of the EdD is a strong selling point over a PhD which can be seen as a solitary, unstructured and lengthy alternative. Interestingly, several of the interviewees reported that they had considered or previously attempted a PhD, finding the structure of the EdD a more favourable option. One student reported: "And when I found the EdD and I saw the structure of it, it made an awful lot more sense to me than going the PhD route…" (S3_F_AL). Another graduate revealed:

> …because I did consider doing the five or six-year PhD where you'd be on your own and you'd be reading. I kind of felt that I wanted the input of a class. And I had discussed that with [academic] in the beginning before I enrolled as to what the benefits of going on your own and then going in and doing the EdD would be. (G9_M_SL)

The type of knowledge the EdD aims to produce (i.e. applied, contextual, practice-based) was also a strong motivator according to survey respondents with 80.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing with that statement (Table 5.4). Interestingly, however, during the interviews only one respondent indicated they were motivated by this aspect of the programme:

> But it did feel like a natural progression. But also I guess what comes into it is that because the doctorate is like applied research you're doing it on something that you're working in. You know it's not out there as a... you're doing it I guess because I've been working in it for however many years, you kind of know...the questions that you want to ask….and see if they get answered. So it was that practical application side of it. It's very attractive. (G8_F_P)

In the interviews, another factor also came through which was not considered in the survey. Several of the interviewees spoke of the impact programme leaders had in their decision to pursue the EdD. Several interviewees described having previous links with the University through completing undergraduate and Master's level programmes and these connections appear to have been important in the decision making process. Several interviewees described programme leaders as being key to them choosing the programme, rather than any desire to pursue a professional doctorate specifically:

> …so some of the academics that I valued from my undergrad were teaching it so [academic] was leading the strand that I was looking at… I wanted to work with her wanted to work with, the chance to work with [academic], a chance to work with [academic], big people who were here to spend a bit more time with them. Em so it wasn't to necessarily do a taught doc. or it wasn't necessarily to do this doc…(G1_M_A)

> So I ended up then doing some tutoring in St. Pat's on their [course] and through that then I got introduced to [academic] who was talking to me about the EdD, I had a meeting with him to talk about the EdD. It was really then the idea that I felt that this was a moment in my life where I…there were two things really I could do once which was set myself a goal that I never thought I could achieve and try to achieve it, which would be getting a doctorate. (S5_M_SL)

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed exploration of the findings from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study as they related to the individual learner. The findings demonstrate that engagement in the EdD programme has led to wide-ranging changes and outcomes for individual learners. Some of these findings were very tangible and easily identifiable including career advancement, increased confidence and enhanced professional credibility. Others were more ambivalent and difficult for the participants to identify or articulate, and changes were often described in broad non-specific terms.

The chapter also considered programme specific motivations of learners, demonstrating that the structured, cohort-based approach is a major draw for the majority of participants.

These findings, along with the findings from chapter six are revisited in the final chapter, as they relate to the original research questions. As with many research studies, the findings here raise new questions and beg for further exploration into several key areas. These are also considered in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS:

Considering Broader Contributions: Workplace, Professional and Academic Communities

6.1 Introduction

As detailed in chapter five, the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 were converged, as is consistent with a mixed-methods approach. The two analysis chapters have been structured around the six identified themes as listed in the previous chapter (Table 5.1). While chapter five consider the themes as they related to the individual learner, this chapter moves the focus away from the learner to consider the wider-reaching contributions of the EdD. These wider-reaching contributions are considered as they relate to the three identified themes of 1) workplace engagement and support, 2) contributions to practice and the workplace and 3) contributing to wider professional and academic communities. Each of these themes is considered in turn in this chapter.

6.2 Theme 4: Workplace Engagement and Support

This theme focuses on workplace engagement and support and is considered an important element of this research with several earlier studies arguing a strong relationship between workplace buy-in and potential learner impact (Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2013; Fox and Slade, 2014; Boud et al., 2018). Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2013, p. 83) describes this relationship as "symbiosis" and suggest that employers need to develop the right conditions in order for a graduate to develop and advance in the organisation. This theme considers several aspects including employer involvement in the decision-making process, employer and peer support, recognition of the EdD award and evidence of more practical, tangible supports.

The findings from Phase 1 of this study suggested a perceived lack of buy-in and engagement by employers and this was further explored through the interviews. In the survey, respondents were asked a series of questions relating to employer engagement, support and overall buy-in into the process (Table 6.1). The statements in this section of the survey elicited the most negative responses overall and these findings are explored in further detail below.

Response		*Not at all*	*To a small extent*	*To some extent*	*To a large extent*	*To a very large extent*
18.1 My employer was involved in the decision to pursue the EdD	Count	27	8	8	6	6
	%	49.1%	14.5%	14.5%	10.9%	10.9%
18.2 My employer supported/is supporting my engagement on the programme through time off for research/study	Count	18	7	8	6	15
	%	33.3%	13.0%	14.8%	11.1%	27.8%
18.3 My employer has provided/is providing financial support to me for the EdD	Count	19	3	6	8	19
	%	34.5%	5.5%	10.9%	14.5%	34.5%
18.4 My employer had/has an input into the chosen research area	Count	45	2	3	3	1
	%	83.3%	3.7%	5.6%	5.6%	1.9%
18.5 My employer has shown/shows a vested interest in my research	Count	19	17	9	7	3
	%	34.5%	30.9%	16.4%	12.7%	5.5%
18.6 My employer encouraged/encourages dissemination of my research locally	Count	24	8	13	5	4
	%	44.4%	14.8%	24.1%	9.3%	7.4%
18.7 My research was/is aligned to an existing or urgent organisational purpose or issue	Count	15	11	10	16	3
	%	27.3%	20.0%	18.2%	29.1%	5.5%
18.8 My research built/builds upon existing work practices	Count	16	7	9	18	5
	%	29.1%	12.7%	16.4%	32.7%	9.1%

Table 6.1: Employer buy-in and engagement.

The Decision Making Process

As shown in Table 6.1, almost half of the respondents (49.1%) indicated that their employer was not involved in their decision to pursue the EdD and 83.3% indicated that their employer had no input into the chosen research area. This finding is consistent with other studies including Fox and Slade (2014) and Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016). Notably, those who indicated that their employer shows little or no vested interest in their research (Table 6.1) also reported lower levels of dissemination of their research to members of their workplace as detailed in Theme 5.

During the interviews, the theme of employer engagement and support was further explored with participants, with only three indicating that their employer supported, encouraged or expected them to start a doctorate. All three held academic posts at the time of commencing the programme. One student suggested: "I mean they were in the sense that they were saying listen, you'd want to start thinking about doing something" (S1_M_A). Another graduate expressed how: "there was encouragement across senior management that staff would upskill and upgrade" (G6_F_AL).

Similar to the findings of the survey, interviewees reported little engagement from employers or managers concerning the focus of their research. Only two interviewees indicated that their employer gave any guidance or direction around the topic choice. One graduate linked this to associated funding from the employer at the time, with criteria setting out a broad area of focus rather than any particular research direction:

> So I got funding from [employer] but the criteria they set out for me what that my research had to have [broad area of focus] as part of the emphasis. So I could do it on anything as long as I was inclusive of the people I was working with. (G7_M_A)

A second interviewee who was also employer-funded described it as an encouragement to take a particular direction as opposed to an absolutely stipulation that a certain topic should be pursued. With the exception of the two mentioned interviewees, others did not indicate any employer input into the topic, nor does it appear to have been sought by the learner. One survey respondent clarified:

> The answers above might appear to be negative, but the research was driven by my personal interests, no request for support from others was made by me, and my willingness to make contributions in my school has always been strong (and so did/does not depend on EdD studies). (Respondent 44)

Another student, who holds an academic post, describes a push by her employer for staff to undertake a doctorate but with no emphasis on a particular discipline or area of focus:

> No. Oh none! Absolutely none. I mean nobody asked me, now my head of department would out of interest because I get on with her very well and I'd be telling her what I was doing and she was very impressed by the modules and the different things we were doing and she was kind of interested in that. But in terms of topic selection, they would ask me out of interest but they would never, there would never been any…commentary or direction…or anything like that. (S2_F_A)

Another graduate gave a similar account of support in principle but with no direction or guidance on the area of focus. When asked about any discussion on the topic, he responded: "Oh god no, supportive absolutely and very interested, the principal was very interested in what I was doing" (G1_M_A). This finding is consistent with another study by Fox and Slade (2014, p. 558) who found that there was often no plan or direction offered by the employer, even when financial and other supports are being provided.

Evolving Employer and Peer Support

Despite a lack of engagement at the outset, it appears that, for some interviewees, their employers' interest in the process increased as they advanced in the programme. One graduate described a clear lack of interest or buy-in at the beginning:

> Something I found was there was no push and actually it was quite a sell to get them to kind of engage with me and you know, allow me that kind of space to do it because it meant engaging…the final piece of work I did was quite a substantial action research project with meant engaging all the stakeholders so…(G4_F_A)

However, she goes on the describe how her employer's interest grew and support increased once the project was in train: "… getting the initial support was a bit challenging, I had to go through various levels right up to [senior role] in the department. But once that was in place and once I was showing things happening…it was grand, I got lots of support" (G4_F_A). Similarly, another student described workplace support as the project unfolded: "…so they would be interested in what I come up with and encouraging and sort of em…making me aware of any new developments or any new literature" (S1_M_A).

A number of interviewees also described workplace support coming from work colleagues and peers as they progressed in the programme. For example, one student described that: "I certainly would discuss it at work and with colleagues within the [sector] because of the nature of thinking about the learner, it's of interest to a number of people" (S3_F_AL). Another graduate emphasised the support of colleagues in stating; "So I knew I was luckier than a lot of people. And the fact that I was able to ask, you know I was able to get people to throw their eye over things…" (G5_F_AL).

What was clear from the interviews is that there are vastly different experiences regarding workplace and employer support. One current student, for example, described strong support, way beyond what she had expected:

> On a positive one, I didn't expect the support from the workplace that I get. I thought that whatever course you study, it's your thing, you do it in your own time, get on with it. There is a certain amount of that but I've got quite a lot of support and a lot of interest in the process…(S3_F_AL)

On the other end of the spectrum, a recent graduate described a lack of interest in her topic and a lack of acknowledgement of her expertise in her field. She described how she has not been called upon to contribute to discussions or activities relating to her topic: "Well! Would you believe I

haven't been asked to go on one thing? There's loads of things going and I have never been asked to do it, be involved" (G5_F_AL).

Workplace Recognition of the Undertaking and the Value of the Award

The acceptance of the EdD award in the work context is important in creating an environment where a learner has the opportunity and potential to affect change within their organisation (Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2013; Boud et al., 2018). Burgess, Weller and Wellington (2011, p. 15) found that, while the professional doctorate often leads to the development of the learner, this is '…not always well received in the workplace', however, this was not a finding in this study.

Several of the interviewees described informal workplace support including managers and peers showing a general interest in the process and an interest in the learner's progress. For some interviewees, support was demonstrated through a general acknowledgement of the commitment required to undertake a doctorate, particularly while working full-time. A number of interviewees also described instances of colleagues enquiring as to how they are progressing in their studies and colleagues showing an interest in the focus of the research.

Consistent with interviewee accounts of non-formal support and recognition of their achievements, 76.4% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the EdD in recognised positively in their workplace and only a minority (9.1%) indicated they had experienced a lack of acceptance of the ideas they brought back as a result of engaging in the EdD (Table 6.2). Similarly, 74% agreed or strongly agreed that their increased skills and/or knowledge are valued in the workplace. However, over a third (36.4%) of survey respondents agreed or strongly agree that they have had to defend or explain the equivalence of the EdD to the PhD in their workplace/local work context. One student described mixed perceptions of the award:

> Most people who know both the EdD recognises that it's on an equal footing. People who haven't engaged with it, there are some people who think that it's like a glorified Masters. So in those cases you kind of do have to spell out exactly, you know, how many assignments what the word count the level of academic rigour and then they kind of get it all right. But some people their perception is that it's not as high ranking as a PhD. There are other people who have encountered it and think it's a more demanding route to it you know (S1_M_A).

Interesting, those interviewed who hold academic posts did not feel they were disadvantaged by choosing to pursue an EdD rather than a PhD, as discussed previously in Theme 2.

Item		*Strongly agree*	*Agree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
16.1 I believe that the Doctor of Education (EdD) is recognised in a positive way in my workplace/local work context	Count	20	22	7	3	3
	%	36.4%	40.0%	12.7%	5.5%	5.5%
16.2. I have had to defend or explain the equivalence of the EdD to the PhD in my workplace/local work context	Count	9	11	10	16	9
	%	16.4%	20.0%	18.2%	29.1%	16.4%
16.3 I have experienced a lack of acceptance of the ideas I brought back as a result of engaging in the EdD programme	Count	2	3	10	28	12
	%	3.6%	5.5%	18.2%	50.9%	21.8%
16.4 I have shared ideas and experiences from the EdD with my colleagues	Count	15	34	1	3	2
	%	27.3%	61.8%	1.8%	5.5%	3.6%
16.5 My increased skills and/or knowledge is valued in my workplace/local work context	Count	18	22	9	2	3
	%	33.3%	40.7%	16.7%	3.7%	5.6%

Table 6.2: Recognition of the EdD in the workplace

Practical Supports

While respondents indicated little engagement by employers in either the decision to pursue the EdD or the focus of the research, over three-quarters of respondents indicated they have received at least some level of support through time off (Table 6.1). There is a high variance in the responses with 33.3% indicating 'not at all' and 27.8% indicating this has happened/happens to a very large extent. Similarly, 65.5% of respondents indicated they receive at least some financial support with 34.5% indicating 'not at all' with a further 34.5% indicating 'to a very large extent' (Table 6.1).

6.3 Theme 5: Contributions to Practice and the Workplace

Contributions to practice and the workplace emerged as a strong theme in the interviews. This should perhaps be unsurprising given the expectation of such awards and yet several earlier studies lament the lack of workplace and professional impact of professional doctorates (Thorne et al., 2002; Malfroy, 2004; Wellington and Sikes, 2006). However, it is important to note that several interviewees also expressed some uncertainty or doubt as to how impactful their research is or could be, and this is also explored here.

In this study, three sub-themes emerged relating to workplace and professional impact and these were consistent with the survey findings. The identified subthemes are; 1) motivations relating to enhancement of practice, 2) perceived capacity and barriers to effecting change in the workplace and 3) perceived contributions to professional practice in the workplace and beyond. Each of these is explored here in turn.

6.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Motivations Relating to Enhancement of Practice

Previous studies including Scott et al. (2004), Malfroy (2004), Wellington and Sikes (2006) and Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) suggest that wanting to contribute to one's workplace and professional practice is a key motivator for those undertaking a professional doctorate. Others cite similar reasons including a '…desire to write and desire to speak on education matters with confidence and authority' (Loxley and Seery, 2012) and '…having a specific profession-related problem to address' (Hawkes, 2016, p. 42). Contrary to these studies, respondents to the survey indicated motivations that are more closely aligned to personal and career development with less interest indicated in wanting to develop professional practice (Table 5.2). Surprisingly, only 15.8% of respondents indicated they were motivated to change or enhance their professional practice, only 15.8% indicated they were motivated to make a greater contribution to the practice of their profession and only 8.8% were motivated by wanting to make a greater contribution to their workplace.

Motivations were also explored with interviewees and a similar finding emerged with the learners and graduates typically articulating career or personal reasons for wanting to pursue a doctorate. When questioned on their motivation for choosing the EdD programme, no respondent mentioned specifically the link to professional practice or indicated any overt desire to make a greater contribution in their workplace or their profession. Rather, participants were largely drawn by the programme structure and format and often chose the EdD because of previous links to the University as detailed in Theme 3. For example, one student articulated: "…but when it came to actually deciding to do the EdD and choosing the leadership stream I went to one of the information meetings. And I spoke to [academic] and then spoke to [academic]… was comfortable what they kind of said to me and then just went from there…" (S1_M_A).

6.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Perceived Capacity and Barriers to Affecting Change in the Workplace

Before looking at the contributions of EdD candidates and graduates in their workplace, it is worthwhile considering their perceptions of their capacity to affect change within that working environment, as well as any barriers they perceive. As acknowledged in chapter three, for an individual to affect change in the workplace, the organisation in question must nurture a culture of learning, development and innovation (Fox and Slade, 2014; Boud et al., 2018). Indeed, Fox and Slade (2014), caution that an organisation that fails to do so can result in obstructing the doctorate candidate or graduate from initiating change, developing practice or adding to the body of professional knowledge within the workplace. A number of interviewees described uncertainty regarding the contribution or potential contribution of their research and new learnings in the workplace. This uncertainty featured in six of the interviews and was expressed in several ways relating to perceived employer interest or buy-in, alignment of research to workplace needs and uncertainty around the mechanisms to enact workplace change. These are considered here, along with the findings from Phase 1.

Perceived Employer Buy-In

As detailed in Theme 4, a lack of employer buy-in or involvement in the topic was highlighted in the survey responses and several interviews. For example, one survey respondent stated:

> While I was supported and encouraged in my study there appears not much appetite to formally engage with the research findings despite them being apposite to addressing some challenges experienced by students and teachers within this school community [insider researcher]. (Respondent 38)

The findings as they relate to employer and workplace buy-in and engagement were detailed in Theme 4 and so will not be revisited here. However, it is interesting to note that, survey respondents who indicated that their employer has shown/shows no vested interest in their research (Table 6.1) also reported lower levels of dissemination of their research to members of their workplace and lower incorporation of their research into the professional knowledge repertoire of the workplace (Table 6.4). The survey finding suggests a link between employer buy in and the candidate's ability to initiate change within their workplace, as suggested in the previous theme. Lester and Costley (2010, p. 568) highlight this in stating that '[t]he value of high-level work-based learning to employers does, however, appear to depend on the ability of the work context to respond to individuals who are undergoing rapid personal and professional development'.

Perceived Workplace Influence

A positive finding from the survey was that 65.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that, as a result of the professional doctorate, they have a greater capacity to affect change in their workplace (Table 6.3). Similarly, 66.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have more influence on, and cooperation from, colleagues as a result of engaging in the programme. There was less agreement on other questions within this section of the survey with only 30.9% agreeing or strongly agreeing they have greater access to senior management and 49% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their opinion has been sought in the workplace on change decisions/implementation.

Item		***Strongly agree***	***Agree***	***Neither agree nor disagree***	***Disagree***	***Strongly disagree***
17.1 I have greater capacity to affect change in my workplace	Count	12	24	13	5	1
	%	21.8%	43.6%	23.6%	9.1%	1.8%
17.2 I have more influence on, and cooperation from, colleagues	Count	10	26	13	4	1
	%	18.5%	48.1%	24.1%	7.4%	1.9%
17.3 I have greater access to senior management	Count	8	9	27	8	3
	%	14.5%	16.4%	49.1%	14.5%	5.5%
17.4 My opinion has been sought in the workplace on change decisions/implementation	Count	8	19	18	8	2
	%	14.5%	34.5%	32.7%	14.5%	3.6%

Table 6.3: Perceived workplace influence

Notably, responses to these questions differed between student and graduate respondents (Table 6.4). These differences are perhaps unsurprising and likely due to the fact that contributions may occur over a long time and may not be immediately obvious to a learner who is inwardly focused on the research at hand. The appropriate time for considering contributions has been raised in other studies including Butcher and Sieminski (2006) and Boud et al. (2020), who highlight the need to take into account '…the length of time needed for effects to become apparent.'

Item			*Strongly Agree*	*Agree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
I have greater capacity to affect change in my workplace	*Student*	*Count*	6	11	7	4	0
		%	21.4%	39.3%	25.0%	14.3%	0.0%
	Graduate	Count	6	13	6	1	0
		%	23.1%	50.0%	23.1%	3.9%	0.0%
I have more influence on, and cooperation from, colleagues	*Student*	*Count*	3	11	11	2	1
		%	10.7%	39.3%	39.3%	7.1%	3.6%
	Graduate	*Count*	7	15	2	2	0
		%	26.9%	57.7%	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%
I have greater access to senior management	*Student*	*Count*	1	4	17	6	1
		%	3.5%	13.8%	58.6%	20.7%	3.5%
	Graduate	*Count*	7	5	10	2	2
		%	26.9%	19.2%	38.5%	7.7%	7.7%
My opinion has been sought in the workplace on change decisions/implementation	*Student*	*Count*	2	8	12	6	1
		%	6.9%	27.6%	41.4%	20.7%	3.5%
	Graduate	Count	6	11	6	2	1
		%	23.1%	42.3%	23.1%	7.7%	3.9d%

Table 6.4: Perceived workplace influence (by cohort)

Alignment of the Research

Two of the interviewed graduates drew a link between the currency or alignment of research to the workplace or the profession. One graduate suggested that, where research does not concur with existing professional knowledge or values, this can have implications for the potential impact of the research on that profession:

> Now, again, that's not a thing that any policy-driven group like the trade union, again, or like the [x] network would really want to hear. So there was a whole lot…nobody wanted to hear it, the terribly moany information in it either. (G9_M_SL)

Similarly, another graduate indicated a link between the currency or immediacy of the research and its potential for impact: "And here in Ireland I don't know that anyone was sitting up and paying attention at the time. I don't think that [topic] was high on their list…" (G8_F_P).

Uncertainty about Capacity or Mechanisms to Make a Contribution

A small number of the interviewees expressed uncertainty about the potential contribution of their EdD or how, when or where this might occur. One student interviewed indicated a lack of engagement with the idea that her research might make a contribution beyond her own

development needs. Interestingly, she pointed to the potential to have this addressed in the programme more explicitly:

> I mean I never thought... I never thought that our research was going to have any other avenue than...being done as a piece of research, to be honest with you. You're making me think now shit, I never thought of that which was very narrow-minded of me. I just didn't think of it and I think…was never really said to us, it was you know, there was never any kind of discussion when we were talking about our topics that you know, try to think of a way that this research might be useful to other people because actually that's how you disseminate it and that's how you, you know, how you bring it further. (S2_F_A)

The idea of covering contribution or impact more explicitly during the programme was also called out by three of the graduates in different contexts. One graduate highlighted how the programme challenges learners to address their own personal and professional development and suggested that a focus on the identity of the learner could be made more explicit in the programme:

> So maybe some more kind of input around that might be useful. Yeah. [long pause] and yeah a bit about OK, after the programme, then how do you move on or how do manage your kind of, that identity piece. Are you a practitioner-researcher now, how do you manage, where do you go? Maybe a little bit around that. (G4_F_A)

This is also alluded to in Burnard et al. (2018, p. 42) who highlights that, through taking an outsider perspective of ones' own practice and workplace, learners '…develop identities that become multiple, flexible and changing'.

Another graduate suggested more focus on academic contribution should feature more heavily in the programme: "And if you're looking at bridging that professional with the academic, I think building in the publications piece...is something that works" (G1_M_A). Interestingly, one current student emphasised this point when he spoke of not feeling ready to make a contribution at either conferences or through publications, despite having several elements of his research completed:

> …I suppose at the moment as well I feel like I've done a lit review, I've done a chapter, I've done my methodology but actually, I'm not able to bring anything to the table because I haven't actually done my data analysis yet. (S5_M_SL)

6.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Contributions to Professional Practice in the Workplace and Beyond

As highlighted throughout, there are known issues with the identification and articulation of the contributions or impacts of learners in the workplace. Fox and Slade (2014) highlight the issue,

suggesting that the identification of professional or workplace impact is difficult for learners. Similarly, Boud et al. (2020, p. 8) found that participants:

> …grappled with any definition of impact which viewed their doctoral study as a closed system or one that submitted itself to a simple cause and effect relationship. In part this was because there appeared to be little immediate impact on the organisations or on general industry-level policy from the research.

Despite these issues, Boud et al. (2020, p. 8) concluded that respondents provided accounts of '…either directly deploying the products of their research or associated insights to initiate, influence and sustain significant change initiatives either in their primary focus of attention in their home context or in closely related field'.

Similarly, in this study, the majority of interviewees identified several areas in which they felt they had made a contribution or had an impact in the workplace, although the articulation of these contributions proved difficult at times. Twelve of the fourteen interviewees gave examples of enhanced contributions in their workplace or to professional practice more broadly. These descriptions fell generally into three areas, namely; 1) awareness building and informing professional knowledge in the workplace; 2) improved or enhanced practice in the workplace and; 3) enhanced engagement and participation in their workplace. These are discussed in more detail below. Another less direct impact was also evidenced in four interviews where the interviewees discussed encouraging others in their workplace to pursue similar awards:

> I've become the person to go to, to find out about whether the EdD is worth it...[laughing]... and they're coming at me from all angles. And I'd be very like, I'd be very encouraging of people who want to, you know, push themselves that bit further…(S1_M_A)

The survey responses also indicated that almost two-thirds of respondents (63.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that they believe the EdD had led to enhanced contributions in their workplace/local work context (Table 6.5). However, almost a quarter of respondents (22.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed perhaps speaking to the difficulties in defining and/or identifying contributions, particularly where they might be less tangible. Interestingly, there was little difference in the responses of students and graduates to this question (Table 6.6).

Question		*Strongly Agree*	*Agree*	*Neither Agree nor Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Disagree Strongly*
Overall, I believe my EdD has led to enhanced contributions in my workplace/local work context	*Count*	13	23	13	6	0
	%	22.8%	40.4%	22.8%	10.5%	0%

Table 6.5: Enhanced contributions in the workplace

Item			*Strongly Agree*	*Agree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
Overall, I believe my EdD has led to enhanced contributions in my workplace/local work context (student and graduate responses)	*Student*	*Count*	8	10	8	3	0
		%	27.6%	34.5%	27.6%	10.3%	0.0%
	Graduate	Count	5	13	5	3	0
		%	19.2%	50.0%	19.2%	11.5%	0.0%

Table 6.6: Enhanced contributions in the workplace (by cohort)

Awareness Building and Informing Professional Knowledge

In suggesting a starting point for determining if professional doctorates are meeting the requirements of professional impact, O'Mullane (2005, p.13) suggests a number of measures as described in chapter three (Figure 3.1). This list is hierarchical and places at the upper level the preference for '...the *active* integration of the outcomes of doctoral studies into the repertoire of knowledge and practice of the profession'. Several of the interviewees discussed contribution aligned to the upper levels of this framework, detailing how their learnings have been or can be incorporated into professional knowledge through creating a greater awareness or understanding of their research in the workplace. This finding is consistent with previous research including Kumar (2014) and Hramiak (2017).

Phase 1 also supported this finding with almost three-quarters of respondents agreeing that to some extent their research has been incorporated into the professional knowledge repertoire of their workplace (Table 6.7). A similar percentage indicated that their research has been disseminated to members of their workplace at least to a small extent (Table 6.7). Expectedly, graduate and student responses differed, suggesting that the dissemination and incorporation of research into workplace practices may take some time and can extend way beyond the programme (Table 6.8 and 6.9).

Item		*Not at all*	*To a small extent*	*To some extent*	*To a large extent*	*To a very large extent*
15.1 Research has been disseminated to members of your workplace	Count	14	18	19	3	1
	%	25.5%	32.7%	34.5%	5.5%	1.8%
15.2 Research has been incorporated into the professional knowledge repertoire of your workplace	Count	15	14	14	10	2
	%	27.3%	25.5%	25.5%	18.2%	3.6%
15.3 Research has resulted in improved standards and/or work practices in your workplace	Count	15	19	11	5	1
	%	29.4%	37.3%	21.6%	9.8%	2.0%
15.4 Research has resulted in improved guidelines and/or training in your workplace	Count	22	16	8	7	1
	%	40.7%	29.6%	14.8%	13.0%	1.9%
15.5 Research has resulted in enhanced service evaluation methods in your workplace	Count	29	10	8	6	1
	%	53.7%	18.5%	14.8%	11.1%	1.9%

Table 6.7: Impact of research in the workplace/local work context

Item			*Not at all*	*To a small extent*	*To some extent*	*To a large extent*	*To a very large extent*
My research has been incorporated into the professional knowledge repertoire of my workplace (comparison of student and graduate responses)	*Student*	*Count*	11	9	5	3	1
		%	37.9%	31.0%	17.2%	10.3%	3.5%
	Graduate	Count	4	5	9	7	1
		%	15.4%	19.2%	34.6%	26.9%	3.9%

Table 6.8: Research incorporated into the professional knowledge repertoire of the workplace (by cohort)

Item			*Not at all*	*To a small extent*	*To some extent*	*To a large extent*	*To a very large extent*
My research has been disseminated to members of the workplace	*Student*	*Count*	11	9	5	3	1
		%	37.9%	31.0%	17.2%	10.3%	3.5%
	Graduate	Count	4	5	9	7	1
		%	15.4%	19.2%	34.6%	26.9%	3.9%

Table 6.9: Research disseminated to members of the workplace (by cohort)

For one student the expected contribution related to increasing awareness amongst his own colleagues and other teachers more broadly, about policy and how it can inform and shape the identity of his profession:

> And then I think my contribution would be how to present that to teachers in a way that they can read and access and understand, not just in the kind of peer-reviewed journals or whatever…So even in terms of having the confidence to dissect a policy document in front of the staff and say it says this but if you look at it from this point of view…(S5_M_SL)

Another student described her research as generating a greater understanding of a specific set of learners, something which she sees can ultimately impact policy and how education is provided for those learners. This is described in Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn (2019) as 'collective reflexivity', suggesting this is the primary mechanism in which organisation change is achieved. This particular student suggested that, while she is still engaged in the programme, she has already seen interest in the learnings from her research:

> And obviously, those [providers] are interested to find out what is the profile of the learner, why are they there, are they satisfied. And obviously, there's implications for the other [providers] so there is an interest. They… the funding agency are also interested because we have to meet the needs of our learners, at least we need to know who they are and what those needs might be. That's my intent in any way, in capturing that within my research. (S3_F_AL)

A similar focus on learners is also described by another graduate who explains how his research backed up or supported existing professional knowledge:

> …a better understanding of the needs of these particular students in school, personal, different capacities. And obviously, I would have anecdotal evidence of all this stuff but it was good to be able to get involved in a research idea behind it (G2_M_AL).

Improved or Enhanced Practice in the Workplace

While the idea of disseminating findings and incorporating learnings into the professional knowledge repertoire of one's workplace was evidenced in the survey, respondents were much less certain if this new knowledge resulted in improving guidelines or training in the workplace (with 40.7% indicated 'not at all') or whether it resulted in enhanced service evaluation methods (with 53.7% indicated 'not at all') (Table 6.7). Respondents were more certain of learning having an impact on improving standards and/or work practices in their workplace with more than 70% indicating that this has happened at least to a small extent (Table 6.7).

Evidence of improved or enhanced practice resulting from the EdD also featured in the number of interviews. Three of the participants who are involved in teaching described how their research has had made a tangible contribution to how and what they teach. Likewise, Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) also found evidence of improvement or enhanced teaching while Kumar (2014) cites instances where the research informed the creation of new courses or programmes. For one graduate, the learnings from her research have been very much embedded into the teaching practice within her institution:

> … it's part of the pedagogical method that we now use and we always have used, but it's now kind of, has a much stronger basis in theory you know because of the work that I would have done. (G6_F_AL)

Another graduate described how the learnings and the methodology employed in his research have directly impacted how he delivers content in his modules: "…a module on the master's programme, it's only started last year and everything that I done on my thesis is literally copy and paste and that's my class" (G7_M_A). The same graduate also gave examples of how others in his workplace have used his learnings in their practices:

> And we use it in competition for improving student performance. So I could see a whole, a whole… usefulness on many levels and I always wanted my thesis not to be stuck on a shelf but to be able to improve somebody's life. Cause you know that made much more sense to me. (G7_M_A)

Another student described the impact the process of completing the EdD has had on his teaching:

> The EdD has not impacted on what I teach but has influenced how I teach. It reinforces the need to provide clarity as to assessment requirements, the value of reflection and the need for signposting to help students navigate through a course. (S1_M_A)

Another student in an academic post indicated that, while completing the programme has helped her in her supervision of Master's students, it has not impacted on her teaching: "Realistically, the EdD did not change my teaching practice but that may be due to the sector that I work in" (S2_F_A). She goes on to explain how she sees impact in other areas: "The EdD however, did increase my awareness of many of the drivers of change in HE and I could see the immediate impact of those in my everyday role".

Outside of teaching practice, there were other references to how the EdD has changed or enhanced practice within the workplace. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the three participants who had engaged in action research projects were ablest to articulate clear, tangible impacts of their research in

their working contexts. For example, one graduate explained how her action research project fed back into future work:

> So yeah they would have been... there wouldn't have been questions at the table but certainly people, you know when you're improving things and implementing and in that cycle of re-evaluation at a program level, you are looking to make things easier for people and so that the program gets more traction and so that the policy that comes out of it that you know is something that can be implemented by people. (G8_F_P)

Similarly, another graduate described:

> And the second phase I suppose was the most impactful which was around, I developed a blended learning program for my colleagues who were working in the training function at that time and so out of that then they started developing blended learning programs and the infrastructure that I started to get embedded just became routine... routinised and so that was the legacy I suppose of that work. (G4_F_A)

Larmer, Smythe and Jones (2018, p. 56) describe this as 'research IN practice' where the project '…takes on an action-research type approach for the specific purpose of bringing about change'. For those still engaging in the programme, this impact was sometimes described in aspirational terms, for example:

> I feel like it's a hot topic and I think that following my hopeful completion of the doctorate itself that will then start to influence some of them decisions because one of the plusses of it and this is partly the reason I'm doing it within a [employer] context, is for exactly that, you're doing the study and the research within a [employer] context, it's not looking at an academic paper... (S4_M_IP)

Enhanced Engagement and Participation in the Workplace

This area was described closely alongside Theme 1, and related to how personal and professional developments have led to more confidence to engage in workplace dialogue, greater confidence to question and critique workplace decisions, and enhanced participation in meetings and workplace fora. Equally, a majority of survey respondents felt they had greater capacity to affect change in the workplace and had more influence on, and cooperation from, colleagues as a result of the EdD (Table 6.3). These findings were discussed in detail in Themes 1, so will not be revisited here.

6.4 Theme 6: Contributing to Wider Professional and Academic Communities

There was strong evidence in both interviews and survey responses of new and/or enhanced engagement in and contributions to, wider professional and academic communities. Indeed, enhanced engagement in professional networks featured in several of the interviews and a number of interviewees also indicated an ongoing engagement with the academic community. These findings were supported by the survey results with 61.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that overall, their engagement in the programme has led to their enhanced engagement in wider academic and/or professional communities (Table 6.10). Similarly, over half of the respondents (56.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that their engagement in the programme has led to developments or enhancements within their profession (Table 6.11).

Question		***Strongly Agree***	***Agree***	***Neither Agree nor Disagree***	***Disagree***	***Strongly Disagree***
Overall, my engagement on the EdD has led to my enhanced contribution in the wider professional/academic communities to which I belong.	*Count*	18	17	14	6	2
	%	31.6%	29.8%	24.6%	10.5%	3.5%

Table 6.10: Enhanced contribution in professional/academic communities

Question		***Strongly Agree***	***Agree***	***Neither Agree nor Disagree***	***Disagree***	***Strongly Disagree***
Overall, my engagement on the EdD has led to developments or enhancements in my profession.	*Count*	15	17	17	6	1
	%	26.3%	29.8%	29.8%	10.5%	1.8%

Table 6.11: Developments or enhancements in the profession

In addition, interviewees strongly emphasised the impact of the cohort pedagogy associated with the EdD programme, in building their own community of practice or support network. Findings suggest that the cohort approach not only supported the participants during the process but has led to sustained networks post-award. These findings are discussed further in the subsequent sub-themes.

6.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Engaging in and Contributing to Wider Professional and Academic Communities

Professional Community Engagement

It is evident from the survey responses that, as a result of undertaking the EdD, respondents have contributed to professional networks in a variety of ways (Table 6.12). Most notable areas include the development of new network links with professional communities with nearly a third of respondents (30.3%) indicating this had happened to a large or very large extent, and 80.4% agreeing that this has happened at least to a small extent. Similarly, 72.7% have, at least to a small extent, contributed to new network links between their profession and their academic/university community. Over three-quarters of survey respondents (76.7%) indicated they have contributed towards the development of improved professional standards and/or work practices for their profession and 69.6% have contributed towards the development of new or updated policy relating to their profession.

Item		*Not at all*	*To a small extent*	*To some extent*	*To a large extent*	*To a very large extent*
21.1 I have contributed towards the development of new or updated policy relating to my profession	Count	17	12	14	6	7
	%	30.4%	21.4%	25.0%	10.7%	12.5%
21.2 I have contributed towards the development of improved professional standards and/or work practices for my profession	Count	13	18	11	10	4
	%	23.2%	32.1%	19.6%	17.9%	7.1%
21.3 I have contributed towards the development of new or improved guidelines or training for my profession	Count	20	16	7	9	4
	%	35.7%	28.6%	12.5%	16.1%	7.1%
21.4 I have contributed towards the development of enhanced service evaluation methods for my profession	Count	24	14	8	7	2
	%	43.6%	25.5%	14.5%	12.7%	3.6%
21.5 I have contributed towards the development of increased inter-agency collaboration	Count	22	14	10	8	2
	%	39.3%	25.0%	17.9%	14.3%	3.6%
21.6 I have contributed towards the development of new network links within my professional community	Count	11	17	11	11	6
	%	19.6%	30.4%	19.6%	19.6%	10.7%
21.7 I have contributed towards the development of new network links between my professional and the academic/university community	Count	15	13	13	10	4
	%	27.3%	23.6%	23.6%	18.2%	7.3%

Table 6.12: Contributions towards the wider professional community

Wider professional contributions were further explored with interviewees in Phase 2. Notably, interviewees did not describe the more tangible contributions called out in the survey (Table 6.7) such as developing policy or guidelines but rather described contributions in more broad terms, focusing largely on new and enhanced linkages with their professional community. This emphasis on developing or engaging in professional networks was discussed closely with increased credibility and confidence, as detailed in Theme 1. Kumar and Dawson (2013, p. 173) also draw a link between confidence and professional community engagement, suggesting that '…increased confidence and growth also led to visible professional growth in terms of integration into the field…' One graduate suggested that the networks developed out of the EdD can be more impactful than any other aspect of the programme:

> I think it was much more important than the thesis I came up with because it showed me, first of all, it showed me a human side to academia, that researchers are by and large very generous people, they want you to have your voice heard, they would like for you to meet other people or invite you to conferences or whatever it might be...and…you can't, you can't continue on your own. (G3_F_A)

The focus on new and enhanced engagement in networks was described in the majority of the interviews. Fox and Slade (2014) also noted that network building was one of the more tangible outcomes described by employers and Boud et al. (2020) found that participants built new networks by joining external councils, committees and professional bodies or became more actively involved in external networks as a result of completing their doctorate. One interviewee describes: "… with that kind of confidence to be able to do that will be helpful when you do finish your research in terms of going out and maybe getting your research out there and maybe building up new outside networks for yourself as well I think" (G9_M_SL). Similarly, another student describes how:

> …it does give you a greater confidence to open a conversation with people that are maybe not naturally in your circle of...reference, but you have a legitimate reason for going to them to source information or to ask questions because you have the EdD as a reference point, cause maybe you're asking questions or why you want to engage with and it broadens out into the work-related piece as well. (S3_F_AL)

For some interviewees, the programme led to enhanced engagement in networks in which they were already involved. One graduate described how the doctorate gave her enhanced credibility in engaging in existing networks:

> …in some way they're the same networks that I had been involved with beforehand, it's just...you know what, it's actually a little bit of a thing is that you get a little bit more

> credibility given to you rather than if you're just the writer of a book or if you're just the secretary of a committee or whatever. If you happen to be Doctor something or you're working in the university, you're a little bit more visible...rather than glossed over…(G3-_F_A)

Other interviewees provided tangible examples of new or enhanced network engagement including taking up more active roles such as Secretary and Chair of various professional and academic networks, councils and bodies. The survey responses similarly indicated that over half of the respondents (56.5%) have presented their research at a professional conference or event (Table 6.6) and a small number of interviewees alluded to this in their interviews. One survey respondent described it as representing their sector as well as contributing to sectoral knowledge:

> I also wanted to refine my research skills, and then be able to apply them to my professional context. But there was also the feeling that not many people from the NGO sector get the opportunity to do a professional doctorate, and I was keen in some way to represent the sector and to carry out some research that would benefit the sector - and not just my direct employer. (Respondent 22)

And another described hopes that their research will lead to wider contributions beyond their own school:

> My research will be reported back to all those contacted with respect to questionnaires sent by me; so, I hope that in individual schools greater attention will be paid to the topics I raised in the research project. Perhaps, the latter will be taken up by educational stakeholders at a higher level than schools, e.g. managerial, patronal levels (Respondent 44).

Several of the interviewees indicated they were already involved in wider networks due to the seniority of their roles. One graduate suggested that the EdD may have enhanced these engagements in less tangible, subtle ways: "...I'd say if anything it's expanded it, enriched it…em…but the arena was already there". Boud et al. (2020, p. 13) draw attention to the issues in identifying these subtle changes in stating '[w]hether their doctoral work drove action through the abilities and approaches they had developed on the doctoral programme, or professional actions that were happening anyway or whether it was a synthesis of both is impossible to determine'.

One interviewee described contributing to wide public debate and discussion, raising awareness and interest in her research and her profession more broadly: "…you know, I'd be on the radio or I'd be in the newspaper or something like that…" (G3_F_A). Similarly, 28.07% of the survey respondents indicated that they had disseminated their research to a wider public audience (Table 6.13). Two of the interviewees described the wider contributions of their research in terms of championing or advocacy. One graduate described impact in terms of: "…moving things

forward, really it needs championing. Without a question or a doubt, and the research brings this out…" (G2_M_AL). Another graduate described how the EdD has given him a platform for advocating:

> … I suppose raising the profile and raising this issue of the importance of [topic]. Using the doc as a platform to present not just at academic conferences but more from a, we call it agitation or advocacy you know…(G1_M_A)

Academic Contributions and Engagement

The academic impact of the EdD is evidenced strongly in the survey responses; almost half of the respondents have presented their research at an academic conference (47.4%) and almost 25% have written or co-authored a paper for an academic journal (24.6%) (Table 6.13).

Item		***Indicated***	***Not Indicated***
Presented research at an academic conference	Count	27	30
	%	47.4%	52.6%
Written or co-authored a paper for an academic journal	Count	14	43
	%	24.6%	75.4%
Written or co-authored a chapter for an academic book	Count	8	49
	%	14.0%	86.0%
Written or edited an academic book	Count	4	53
	%	7.0%	93.0%
Presented research at a professional conference or event	Count	26	31
	%	45.6%	54.4%
Published work in a professional journal or other professional publication	Count	12	45
	%	21.1%	78.9%
Disseminated research to a wider public audience (website, publication, blog, radio etc.)	Count	16	41
	%	28.1%	71.9%
Continued or enhanced engagement with the university through lecturing, research projects and/or supervision	Count	19	38
	%	33.3%	66.7%

Table 6.13: Activities during or after the EdD programme

Unsurprisingly, more graduates indicated engagement in the listed activities with a large percentage indicating that they had presented their research at academic conferences (74.1%) and 44.4% indicating that they have written or co-authored a paper for an academic journal (Table 6.14). Interestingly, almost have of all graduates (48.1%) indicated that they have continued or enhanced engagement with the university through lecturing, research projects and/or supervision (Table 6.14).

Item			*Indicated*	*Not Indicated*
Presented research at an academic conference	*Student*	*Count*	7	23
		%	23.3%	76.7%
	Graduate	Count	20	7
		%	74.1%	25.9%
Written or co-authored a paper for an academic journal	*Student*	*Count*	2	28
		%	6.7%	93.3%
	Graduate	Count	12	15
		%	44.4%	55.6%
Written or co-authored a chapter for an academic book	*Student*	*Count*	1	29
		%	3.3%	96.7%
	Graduate	Count	7	20
		%	25.9%	74.1%
Written or edited an academic book	*Student*	*Count*	1	29
		%	3.3%	96.7%
	Graduate	Count	3	24
		%	11.1%	88.9%
Presented research at a professional conference or event	*Student*	*Count*	11	19
		%	36.7%	63.3%
	Graduate	Count	15	12
		%	55.6%	44.4%
Published work in a professional journal or other professional publication	*Student*	*Count*	4	26
		%	13.3%	86.7%
	Graduate	Count	8	19
		%	29.6%	70.4%
Disseminated research to a wider public audience (website, publication, blog, radio etc.)	*Student*	*Count*	5	25
		%	16.7%	83.3%
	Graduate	Count	11	16
		%	40.7%	59.3%
Continued or enhanced engagement with the university through lecturing, research projects and/or supervision	*Student*	*Count*	6	24
		%	20.0%	80.0%
	Graduate	Count	13	14
		%	48.1%	51.9%

Table 6.14: Activities during or after the EdD programme (by cohort)

There was less focus on the tangible academic contributions in the interview but a number of the interviewees provided examples of having presented at conferences both during and after their engagement in the programme. Two interviewees also described their academic contribution in the more traditional, academic sense with both detailing the contribution of their research to methodology. One graduate explained:

> The...I suppose an output though of my research then would have been the quantitative dimension. I was the only one of the eight to do quant and there's... quant in [discipline] is growing in Ireland now and I'm in that little cohort of people who are driving it and I'm really proud of that. But yeah the Irish doctoral research quantitative and [discipline], I'd say if you Googled it you would come up…I'll be in there somewhere. (G3_F_A)

While a large portion of the EdD respondents evidence engagement within their academic communities, three of the interviewees evidenced little interest in this area. For example, one graduate described how: "I mean I suppose I've less sense of the academic impact. I didn't do a

huge amount of writing after the dissertation I did one article but I didn't do any conference presentations or anything like that, so I'm not aware that it's had any significant impact in the academic world" (G4_F_A). Another graduate detailed his focus on the teaching aspect of his role and stated: "…research, like somebody said to me about research, it doesn't really float my boat. It's something that I have to do".

Similar to the survey findings, a number of the graduates described ongoing engagement with the university, programme leaders and their supervisors beyond graduation. One graduate described his ongoing involvement in supervision, teaching and research projects which give him an outlet for pursuing his academic interests outside of his role. For another graduate the EdD led to her ultimately pursuing an academic role with the University:

> So em some people who do it, because they made the connections on the EdD program then do what I have done and maybe take a module or sit in on something and just sort of get your toe in the door that way and if you enjoy it, you know there's always people wanting to help you fill in and do a module. (G3_F_A)

Another graduate described an unexpected outcome of the programme in allowing her to pursue other research projects with peers and her supervisor:

> You know I wasn't going into it knowing that I'd have a set of colleagues that you know, I would be able to work with. And I'm also…I've been able to, like, my supervisor, he's been working in here with us on various things…(G6_F_AL)

6.4.2 Sub-theme 2: The Cohort as a Community of Practice

One of the strongest themes to come from the interviews was the strength of the cohort in supporting learners through the doctoral process and in building long-lasting communities of practice.

The survey also showed that that the cohort approach was a strong determinant in choosing the EdD programme with 80.4% of respondents agreeing that they chose the programme because they liked the idea of being part of a cohort. Interviewees also described the cohort pedagogy as a motivating factor in deciding to pursue the EdD, and this finding is supported by other studies (Wellington and Sikes, 2006; Smith et al., 2011; Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016; Lunt, 2018).

The impact or potential contribution of the cohort approach was not considered in the survey but, nonetheless, this came through strongly in the majority of the interviews. Boud et al. (2020, p.

12) suggest that the doctoral process can be a 'solitary learning process' and learners seek out additional support networks as a way to enhance their doctoral experience. Consistent with Smith (2011), interviewees in this study described the significance of the cohort both during and after the programme, and all but one graduate has maintained contact with the cohort beyond graduation.

During the interviews, the impact of the cohort was described both in terms of providing personal and professional support. One student described how her cohort has provided a support structure during the programme and has also led to the development of a new professional network for her:

> I found being with a group of other like-minded and similarly motivated peers to be one of the most beneficial aspects of the programme and also the most useful and rewarding… It has also given me contacts across the sector which I would not have otherwise had access to. (S2_F_A)

Leach et al. (2020, p. 12) had similar findings, suggesting that the '…cohort approach helped students to develop professional and personal relationships with colleagues as well as to provide students with a peer support network'. Several of the graduates were keen to articulate the strength of the approach, with one describing it as:

> I was in a cohort of people who were very supportive and I was fascinated and like so from a stimulus perspective in class or anything like that I was just like totally focused. I'd be afraid to speak but I'd be listening to everything going on and I learned so much from it. (G7_M_A)

Similar views were expressed by other graduates, with one describing it as the most beneficial aspect of the programme:

> I thought what one of the things that was of most benefit to me in terms of my post was the class, you know, the class, we had a great class on the EdD and I would have met colleagues there that I've become very good friends with, that I now work with and I'm writing a book with you know. So that was a big benefit. (G6_F_AL)

Another graduate described how her cohort worked together outside of the modules, creating a support network as they progressed with their research:

> So there was that side of it and we didn't kind of put pressure on people to rock up on a Sunday night for the Google Hangout but it turned into this well pour a glass of wine and sit down and tell us how your week is going and it wasn't simply talking about research but it was kind of going through the things like I've hit a speed bump on this... And then you bounce it off each other and they'd go 'did you try doing it this way'... (G8_F_P)

Leach et al. (2020, p. 12) describes the cohort as '…a source of accountability and helped motivate students to succeed in and complete the program'. This was also evident from the interviews with some describing it as a source of motivation. One graduate explained how the cohort brought out a competitive side in him which spurred him onto completion:

> …you just kind of say, you set yourself targets that you want to be finished at this thing and then you're looking going... well that person was able to do that and like they're doing the exact same thing as me. I should be doing that a bit quicker (G2_M_AL)

This sense was competition is similarly highlighted in Smith et al. (2011, p.149) who found that students '…perceive (and enjoy) an element of peer pressure, and a sense of competition, within their cohort group'. Jablonski (2001, p.20) also highlights the value of the cohort indicating that students '…recognise the richness of the diverse group and value of different approaches towards a single problem'. However, for one graduate, the diversity of the cohort meant she did not find benefit in forging an ongoing professional network post-award:

> And the cohorts were important in the sense of getting through the program I suppose and in talking ideas out but I didn't any substantial degree maintain contact with people afterwards em... it was just such a diverse group and... I don't think there's anyone in a similar context at that time, quite a few teachers at that time and... yeah no so it didn't have a huge impact (G4_F_A)

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed exploration of the findings from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study as they related to the participants' workplace, profession and wider academic community. The findings demonstrate that, while professional development may not have been a primary motivator for many of the participants, this did not deter participants from making many contributions in their workplace and, more broadly, their professional and academic communities. Indeed, both phases of this study demonstrate enhanced workplace contributions and new or more established engagements with wider networks.

The findings also suggest limited engagement between learners and their employers. Despite this, participants drew on examples of enhanced contributions and influence in the workplace, adding to professional knowledge and influencing workplace practices. Participants also gave examples of academic contributions including the more traditional contributions, as well as ongoing engagements with the university through teaching, supervising and researching.

Finally, participants were keen to emphasise the contribution of the cohort, not only in support progress through the programme but in forming long-lasting communities beyond graduation.

These findings, along with those discussed in chapter five, are revisited in the final chapter, as they relate to the original research questions.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This study explored the contributions of EdDs to personal and professional development, the workplace and workplace practice, and wider professional and academic communities. Professional doctorate programmes are based on the premise that the successful candidate will ultimately make a significant contribution both in the traditional academic sense (i.e. through peer-reviewed work) as well as '…a comparable peer-recognised impact on their profession' (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2014). This view formed the beginnings of this research which commenced with a detailed review of the existing literature and policy as it related to professional doctorates. This review unearthed several issues concerning professional doctorate programmes including the existence of no agreed definition, an absence from policy and a continued focus on the PhD as the sole vehicle for the delivery of doctoral education. The review also highlighted a significant gap in knowledge regarding the contributions, impact or outcomes of professional doctorates, as highlighted most recently by Hawkes and Yerrabati (2018). This informed the research questions for this study, which are revisited in this chapter:

1. What motivated the students/graduates to pursue the EdD?
2. How do the students/graduates perceive the contributions of their EdD? Where and when do these occur?
3. What are the more tangible contributions of the EdD?
4. How do the students/graduates recognise and describe the more intangible contributions?
5. Are these contributions resulting from the process, the product, or both?

This chapter will consider first, what motivated the learners to pursue the EdD. Focus then turns to the questions of contribution, as articulated in questions 2 to 5 above. These sections are structured around the conceptual framework as proposed in Chapter 3 and revisited below.

Hammersley (2012, p. 2) asks '[s]hould research be aimed primarily at producing knowledge about education practices and institutions, or should it be designed directly to improve those practices and institutions'? As a piece of research undertaken to fulfil the requirements of an EdD, it is anticipated that this research will do both. With this in mind, this chapter proposes areas for future research and makes some recommendations relating to the design and delivery of EdD and other professional doctorate programmes.

7.2. Motivations for Pursuing the EdD

The first contextual question was included in recognition of the relationship between a learner's motivations for pursuing a programme of study and the desired or intended outcomes. Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 49) emphasise the importance of considering the '…motivations of the learners to undertake it …and the extent to which these purposes are fulfilled and the programme results in impact'. Indeed, many of the motivating factors identified in the literature review and this study overlap significantly with the identified contributions or outcomes. Furthermore, the exploration of motivations with participants allowed for personal stories, contexts and identities to come to light.

The findings from both phases evidenced motivations most closely aligned to personal reasons and career considerations. Personal reasons such as a desire to learn, personal fulfilment and setting oneself a goal were prominent in both phases of the research, as is consistent with previous research (Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2011; Loxley and Seery, 2012; Hawkes, 2016). Career-related considerations also featured, with improving career prospects and enhancing career credibility the dominant constructs. Career-related motivations also feature in several previous studies including Scott et al. (2004), Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) and Jones (2018), while enhancing one's professional credibility has been identified as a significant driver for many (Leonard, Becker and Coate, 2005; Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Moran and Misra, 2018).

Surprisingly, other anticipated motivations such as wanting to develop practice, make a greater contribution to the workplace or learn research skills that could be applied to practice did not feature in the interviews. These findings were corroborated in the survey findings. This was an unexpected conclusion and one which raises some questions. Most critically, if the defining feature of the professional doctorate is the capacity of its learners to make '...a significant contribution to professional practice through research' (Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016), then does this speak to a misalignment between the purpose of such programme and the needs of the learners?

It is important to note that this finding does not suggest that learners do not contribute to practice. Indeed, participants articulated many instances of the EdD leading to enhanced practice, contributions in their workplace and engagement in wider professional communities. Rather, this finding may speak to the learner profile of EdD candidates, many of whom are high-performing individuals in mid or senior-level roles. Costley and Lester (2012, p. 258) highlight the profile of

these learners who '...already have substantial experience in their fields, and will often have a good evidence base to support this, taking the form, for instance, of documentary outputs, organisational systems, products of various kinds and in some cases significant published works…' With this in mind, it is likely these EdD candidates are already making significant contributions to practice in their organisations and professions. Indeed, the programme may be seen as a way to consolidate, validate or reflect on this expertise rather than as a mechanism for developing practice (Wellington and Sikes, 2006; Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012).

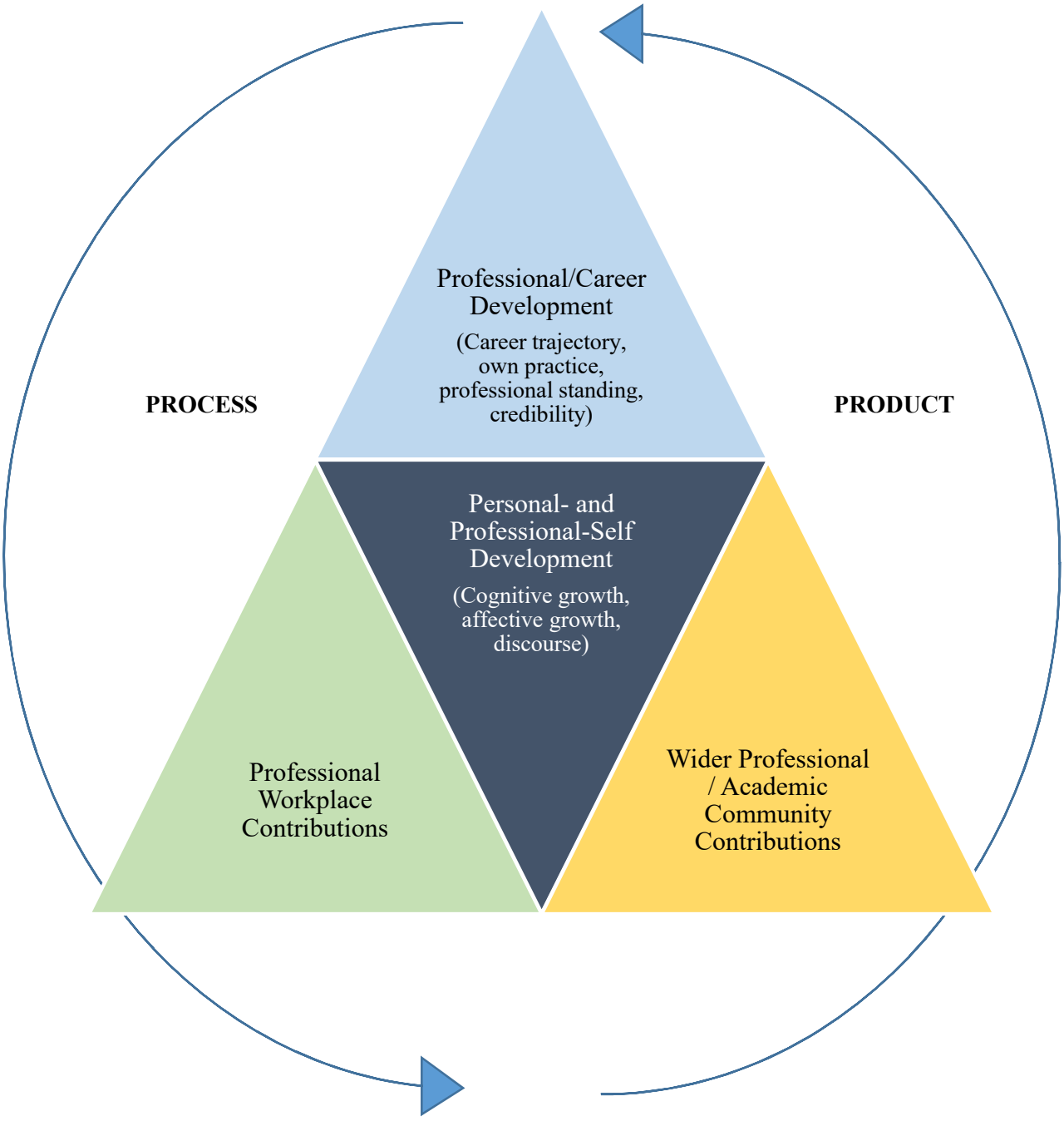
This finding also raises a second question regarding what drives learners to choose the EdD as the route to obtaining a doctoral award. The EdD under investigation here is promoted as '...a research degree for experienced professionals...who would like to extend their professional understanding and develop skills in research, evaluation and high-level reflective on practice' (Dublin City University, 2020). If one assumes, as is suggested by the data gathered as part of this study that this is at odds with the initial motivations of those who apply, it begs the question as to what is the draw of the EdD over a more traditional route (i.e. the PhD)? This research gave some consideration to this in asking what motivated the participants to pursue the EdD in particular. The findings here suggest that, rather than choosing the programme for its focus on practice, participants were largely drawn to the programme structure and the cohort pedagogy. These features were also highlighted as significant motivations in other studies including Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) and Hawkes (2016). Indeed, the majority of participants were drawn to the structured, scaffolded, cohort-based approach with several interviewees also describing how existing links to the university helping to solidify their choice. It is perhaps unsurprising that such structures provide a sense of security, manageability and collegiality for adult learners who have many other demands on their time.

7.3 Contributions resulting from the EdD

As emphasised throughout this research, several previous studies highlight the complexities in identifying and articulating the outcomes, impacts or contributions resulting from engaging in a professional doctorate (O'Mullane, 2005; Fox and Slade, 2014; McSherry et al., 2019; Boud, 2020). Difficulties in defining what we mean by 'contribution' hamper participants ability to identify instances or locations of such contributions and this was evidenced in the interviews. As expected, interviewees descriptions of contributions were often messy, abstract and overlapping. Furthermore, identifying the boundaries between contributions directly related to the EdD and contributions which would have occurred regardless of the learners' engagement in the programme, proved difficult to determine in some instances. The development of a

conceptual framework (as detailed in Figure 3.1 and replicated below) and a survey instrument (Appendix B) was in part an attempt to address this issue by suggesting to participants some of the ways in which contributions might be realised. The development of this conceptual framework followed a deep investigation of existing literature in this space, and the findings presented here corroborate both earlier research findings and the framework itself. The framework builds upon and adds to an earlier framework developed by Butcher and Sieminski (2006) which also places the individual learner at the centre, but with a narrower focus on 'professional self-esteem'. Both models recognise the impact of confidence on the learner's capacity to affect change, both in their own practice and the practice of professional colleagues. Whereas the Butcher and Sieminski model describes this as 'impact on professional colleagues', the model proposed here takes a wider perspective, recognising that workplace impact may go beyond practice to wider workplace knowledge, understanding, direction and focus. While Butcher and Sieminski articulate wider impacts such as 'joining the club', this framework suggests that these new and enhanced engagements are deeper and more meaningful than that. This framework therefore acknowledges the development and enhancement of communities of practice, support networks and indeed, friendships.

The framework presented here, along with the developed survey instrument, proved useful in structuring the interview schedule in Phase 2. The key findings, as they relate to contributions, are revisited in the following sections.



7.3.1 Personal- and Professional-Self Development

The findings from this study demonstrated that the participants most clearly identified those contributions as they related to their own personal- and professional-self development. This is perhaps unsurprising as participants reflect on their own experience of undertaking the EdD programme and is consistent with previous studies (Butcher and Sieminski, 2006; Fulton et al.,

2012; Davis and Frame, 2016; Hramiak, 2017; Lundgren-Rensenterra and Kahn, 2019). Developmental changes resulting from the EdD process were strongly evidenced in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this research. The survey indicated that the majority of participants felt that the programme has led to developmental changes in a wide range of aspects including greater analytical skills, becoming a more reflective practitioner, becoming a more critical thinker and improved listening and communication skills. Confidence and self-esteem were also significantly enhanced as a result of engaging in the EdD programme.

Similar findings emerged in Phase 2 with strengthened critical and analytical skills and changes in discourse and language being highlighted in particular. Participants often described these in non-specific and sometimes abstract ways with limited examples of how these have been applied to their working lives. This was anticipated in the study, recognising that the identification of cognitive and affective changes in an individual are difficult to capture or measure, something which educational institutions themselves have grappled with (Devedzic et al., 2018).

The difficulties in drawing links between personal changes and resultant impact have also been highlighted in other studies, most notably Fox and Slade (2014, p. 547), who caution that where '...indicators of individual impacts, such as increased confidence, are often articulated as an outcome of undertaking a professional doctorate, measuring how this translates into enhanced organisational effectiveness is problematic'. In some of the interviews, however, participants provided evidence of how enhanced criticality and greater confidence in their communication skills have led to them becoming more questioning, challenging and aware of their use of language in their workplaces.

Similar to several earlier studies, confidence and credibility came to the fore as the most tangible personal changes arising from the EdD, with participants linking this to enhanced workplace and professional engagement, greater confidence in producing academic work and new and enhanced external collaborations and engagements (Davis and Frame, 2016; Hramiak, 2017; Lundgren-Resenterra and Khan, 2019; Creaton and Anderson, 2021). Participants expressed how the EdD gave them greater credibility as a professional and as an academic. This research suggests that this enhanced confidence is evident from early on in the research with both students and graduates describing this change. Similarly, Creaton and Anderson (2021) conclude that confidence comes from both developing new skills and knowledge through the programme, as well as by virtue of holding a doctoral award. In this study, confidence was seen to give the participants a platform for putting views and ideas forward in the workplace and enabled them to become more impactful in their participation in external bodies, councils, workshops and conferences. These findings are

supported by earlier studies including Costley and Abukari (2015) who found a link between increased confidence, credibility and professionalism on the one hand and the learners' ability to affect change in the workplace on the other. Butcher and Sieminski (2006) also highlight the significance of increased confidence which they call 'professional self-esteem'. Similar to the conceptual framework proposed here, this earlier study also places this self-esteem as central in their model of impact as was detailed in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.2).

7.3.2 Career Developments

As highlighted above, career-related motivations sat alongside more personal-driven motivations for pursuing the EdD. The contribution or impact of the EdD on the careers of participants was mixed with some participants linking the EdD to career changes and promotions while others suggesting no clear career-related plans.

The survey demonstrated that over a third of respondents have been promoted since starting the EdD. The majority felt that the EdD was at least partly instrumental in these changes. However, as pointed to by one interviewee, the EdD can only be one factor in these changes and personal attributes, work ethic and career opportunity must also have bearing on these promotions. The value placed on the EdD by employers is something that could be further explored in future research. Indeed, it is unclear if the award or title alone is what carries weight, if employers recognise the significant undertaking of completing a doctorate, or if there is an awareness amongst employers of the different focus of an EdD over the PhD. Furthermore, there is limited evidence of employer or professional demand for these programmes and limited understanding of the needs or expectations of employers (Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016).

Changes in career direction were also evident in this study. The findings suggest that these changes can be either planned or emergent. For example, one graduate described how the EdD had unexpectedly left her feeling dissatisfied with the restrictions of her role and this led her to move into an academic role. Indeed, Creaton and Anderson (2021, p. 9) allude to this, highlighting the importance of role autonomy if the learner is to have influence in enacting change in their workplace. Conversely, another graduate detailed an explicit desire to move into academia before commencing on the EdD. A number of interviewees also described the EdD in terms of 'opening new doors' and this appears to have led to unexpected career opportunities for some of the EdD candidates.

Interestingly, for those in academia, the EdD was seen as a necessary pursuit to ensure job stability and progress in an academic institution. While the research did not set out to draw comparisons between the EdD and PhD, the choice of the EdD does not appear to have hampered those working in academic roles. However, given the professional practice focus of this programme and other professional doctorates, how such programmes are viewed by academic institutions and indeed, other academics, is something that warrants further exploration.

7.3.3 Professional Practice, Knowledge and the Workplace

The study considered the workplace context before asking participants to consider the contributions they have made in their workplace and professional communities. This research, like others, speaks to the importance of the relationship between the learner, their research and their workplace in maximising their potential in contributing to professional practice and knowledge. The survey findings spoke to an apparent link between employer buy-in on one hand and the dissemination, incorporation of knowledge and enhancement of practice in the workplace on the other, something emphasised in several earlier studies (Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2013; Fox and Slade, 2014; Boud et al., 2018).

This research demonstrated that the participants' employers have or had limited involvement in the decision of the learners to pursue the EdD, or in the chosen area of research focus. It was not entirely clear if this would have been forthcoming, has the candidate sought this support. Indeed, given the focus on personal motivations, candidates may view their participation in the programme as a personal choice and may consider employer input unnecessary. The role and potential value of involving the employer in the decision-making process remain unexplored to date and research in this area would be useful.

While more formal engagements and inputs by employers was not evidenced in this study, several of the interviewees pointed to increased workplace support as they progressed in the programme. This was shown in less formal ways, through peers and managers showing an interest in the process and the research as it unfolded. Many employers also demonstrated a willingness to support learners with time off for study and/or financial support. This support may speak to a willingness of employers to engage in the process and perhaps the programme, should this input be sought.

As was found in previous studies, some participants found it difficult to pinpoint, or describe in a concrete way, where the EdD has made contributions in the workplace. For some, this was the

first time they had given real consideration to where their engagement on the EdD might have led to changes or enhancements in the workplace. For others, drawing a clear, direct link between engagement on the programme and changes in work practice and knowledge proved difficult. Other studies had similar findings including Fox and Slade (2014) and Boud (2020, p. 8) who highlighted participants' difficulties with '...any definition of impact which viewed their doctoral studies as a closed system or one that submits itself to a simple cause and effect relationship'. Interestingly, a small number of participants spoke of the potential benefits of embedding a focus on contributions into the earlier stages of the programme, thus creating greater awareness of learners of the ways and places in which they may make contributions to professional practice and professional and academic knowledge.

Despite difficulties in identifying what are often intangible and fuzzy workplace contributions, several of the interviewees were able to identify where their research and new knowledge has been applied in the workplace. The survey proved helpful here in pointing to some of the areas identified in previous literature and illuminating these potential contributions to participants. In the survey, the majority of survey respondents agreed that their EdD has led to enhanced contributions in the workplace. Interestingly, in the interviews, this was most easily articulated by those who undertook action research projects. Several participants gave accounts of research informing what and how they teach, informing workplace practices and contributing to the professional knowledge of their organisation. In discussing their personal development, interviewees also gave accounts of how their enhanced confidence, critical thinking and reflexivity allows them to more fully engage in, and sometimes challenge, workplace discussions and decisions. It was clear from the study that these contributions arise from both the process and the final product. Examples given included evidence of new competencies being applied in the workplace. Other examples showed how the research itself has been applied to inform teaching and other workplace practices.

Phase 1 proved useful in helping to identify for participants, some of the ways and means in which contributions may occur in the workplace. The survey also demonstrated that workplace influence and contribution appears to take some time, with graduates indicating a stronger agreement to the statements around their capacity to affect change, having more influence and cooperation from colleagues and having greater access to senior management. Similarly, graduates reported higher agreement to statements relating to workplace contributions, suggesting that taking a longer-term perspective would be useful in future research in this area. Most positively, the majority of students and graduates reported that their research has been disseminated to members of their workplace, has been incorporated into the professional

knowledge repertoire of their workplace and has resulted in improved standards and/or work practices.

7.3.4 Wider Contributions

Looking beyond the workplace, students and graduates also provided accounts of wider professional community engagement. Examples given in the interviews were more tangible than workplace contributions, perhaps as these related to activities outside of the normal duties of participants, thus making them more easily identifiable.

Interviewees provided several accounts of new or enhanced professional engagements, emphasising how increased confidence has led them to become more active in their networks. Several interviewees gave accounts of taking up roles as chairpersons and secretaries on various boards and committees and there were examples of research being presented at professional conferences and events. This engagement is closely described in relation to newfound confidence developed through engaging on the programme as well as perceived enhanced credibility by virtue of the award.

The survey supported these findings with over half of respondents indicating they have presented their research at a professional conference or event and the majority indicating that they have developed new network links, contributed towards improved professional standards or work practices in their professional and contributed towards new or updated policy. Again, as with other areas of contribution, there is evidence that these contributions take time. Two summative questions in this section of the survey relating to enchanted contribution and developments in the wider communities found that graduates were more likely to agree/strongly agree with these statements.

Participants in both phases also provided evidence of new and enhanced engagements with the academic community, including producing academic publications and presenting at academic conferences. Interviewees also provided accounts of continued engagement with the university, through part-time lecturing, supervising, researching and in some instances, moving into full-time academic roles. Given the breadth of this research, these contributions were only touched upon in this research and the full contributions to academia could be more fully explored in a later study.

Finally, through the exploration of wider engagement and contributions, an unexpected finding emerged relating to the cohort as a community of practice and a support network. The findings here demonstrate that the cohort acts not only as a key support and motivator during the programme, but often has much wider, sustaining benefits post-award. Phase 2 of the study showed that the cohort can go on to become a community of practice, a professional network and a personal support system for EdD graduates and the majority of participants were keen to emphasise this during their interviews.

7.4 Recommendations

Based on this research a number of recommendations are posed by the researcher concerning policy, programme development and delivery. These are based on the findings from this case study, however, these recommendations might be usefully considered more broadly in relation to other professional doctorate programmes.

Recommendation 1: Strategic Focus and the Development of Good Practice Guidance

Whilst not the explicit focus of this study, the review of existing policy, guidelines, regulations and literature on professional doctorates unearthed a lack of strategic focus, policy or guidance in relation to EdD programmes, or indeed professional doctorates more broadly. This was detailed in chapter two which pointed to an absence of professional doctorates from both the national and European education and research agendas. This issue was highlighted as far back as 2006, by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, who called for the development of best practice guidelines. Whilst Ireland's most recent *Framework of Good Practice for Research Degree Programmes* (Quality and Qualifications Ireland, 2018) includes some broad statements which recognise the professional doctorate, a more strategic and directed focus on such programmes is necessary to ensure the viability and currency of professional doctorate awards into the future.

Recommendation 2: Greater emphasis on the personal and professional development aspects of undertaking an EdD

The findings in this study demonstrated a cohort of learners who were driven to pursuing the EdD for personal as well as career-related reasons. This focus on self-actualisation, personal and professional development and newfound confidence was also found to be one of the primary outcomes of the programme suggesting the programme is meeting the needs of its learners.

The findings indicated that changes at the individual level were most profound for the participants. Fulton et al. (2012, p. 143) warn that these changes cannot be underestimated as it is these personal developments that can ultimately transform the learners '...into professionals who can view their workplace through a fresh lens; who are intellectually agile; who can think creatively, unconstrained by the norms and routines of what is often many years' experience within their given profession…'. These personal changes are born from the process of undertaking the EdD and, as described by one participant, involve a significant personal journey that requires the learner to "unpack" oneself along the way. As such, it is recommended that such programmes consider embedding explicitly a focus on personal and professional development into the early stages of the programmes.

Recommendation 3: A focus on outcomes, contributions or impacts

Focusing on the learners' personal and professional development early on in the programme, as suggested above, will not only support learners as they navigate the complexities of the change process but also encourage self-reflection, helping learners to make connections between practice, research and theory. Professional doctorate candidates should be encouraged to reflect early on in the process on what changes they might expect, what will be the outcomes of such changes and how might they apply new skills, competencies and knowledge to contribute to professional practice and knowledge. A focus on academic contributions might also be made more explicit in the expected outcomes of such programmes. Students should be encouraged to consider where and how they might disseminate their research through academic and professional conferences and publications. This wider focus will ensure contributions are not limited to the immediate workplace but may make wider professional and academic contributions.

Recommendation 4: Supporting the Cohort

The cohort, structured approach should not be underestimated as a key selling point of professional doctorate programmes. The cohort was strongly emphasised by participants, not only as a motivating factor but also in its long term impact on the learners. The participants were keen to highlight the value of the cohort in motivating them to completion. Programme leaders could consider how to embed the cohort approach beyond the early, taught elements into the later phases of the programme where learners may feel, most significantly, the solitary nature of undertaking a significant piece of independent research.

The focus on the cohort in this study also raises questions regarding the number of remote, online professional doctorates currently on offer throughout the UK and more recently, Ireland. The value of the cohort should not be lost in these programmes and programme leaders might consider how best to embed a cohort pedagogy through online learning environments, block release components or through face-to-face workshops, seminars and colloquiums.

Recommendation 5: Employer Engagement in the Process

Given the evidenced lack of engagement with and by employers in the decision-making process, there is an apparent missed opportunity for those organisations in supporting the learners to enact changes, enhance practice and information professional knowledge and understanding. As suggested by Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016, p. 61) '[r]elatively little is known about which pedagogical approaches support professional learning and the ways employers and professional bodies would be best involved in shaping the curriculum or pedagogy of professional doctorates…' The engagement of employers in the process could benefit not only the organisations but also the learners, the programmes and indeed the institutions involved. Ways in which employer engagement in the process could be harnessed are plentiful, including encouraging employer buy-in at an early stage through input into the direction of the research, encouraging industry supervisors to be included on supervisory panels and possibly, exploring industry partner assessment through the examination of taught and research elements. This area requires further exploration and is recommended as a key area of focus for future research. In summary, as highlighted by Fox and Slade (2014, p. 55):

> A fundamental question might be whether organisations want employees with the enhanced attributes…[which] have been developed as part of the professional doctorate programme. If this is the case, then universities need only continue to do what they currently do. However, if more concrete, rational indicators of impact are desired…[t]his in turn might well act as a catalyst for universities to further clarify the purpose of this kind of doctoral qualification.

7.5 Further Research

Research Focus 1: Considering the Employer and the Workplace

This study, similar to earlier studies, speaks to the value of research which is rooted in and supported by the workplace. As suggested in recommendation 5 above, further research which explores the needs and expectations of employers and indeed the demand for professional doctorate graduates would prove useful for those designing and delivering such programmes.

Research Focus 2: Motivations

While previous studies have explored the motivation of EdD and professional doctorate candidates, there has been only one such study to date looking at EdD candidates in an Irish context. This research evidenced the need for further research in this area, exploring the often complex reasons for pursuing an EdD award. Indeed, while findings from previous studies suggest wanting to develop or contribute to professional practice as a motivator, this was not a finding of this study (Scott et al., 2004; Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016; Hawkes, 2016). A greater understanding of the profile of these learners, their motivations, goals and ambitions would allow for the programmes of this kind to continue to meet the needs of the learner and their workplace.

Research Focus 3: Further exploration of contributions: Deepening Focus

This research was broad and purposively so, in order to address the widest number of areas possible within the research. While the research has unearthed many areas in which EdD programmes and their learners can and do make contributions, further exploration of each area of consideration is warranted. Indeed, any of the key areas of contribution highlighted here could benefit from more focused, in-depth exploration as studies in their own right. In particular, the study highlights a need for a further focus on the relationship between the learner, their workplace and the employer. This study, as with others, also raises questions as to when such contributions might be realised (Boud, 2020). As such, longitudinal studies, or further studies which focus on graduates is needed to address this question.

Research Focus 4: Exploration of other EdD and other professional doctorate programmes: Broadening Focus

Whilst the study calls for further exploration of key findings, there is also merit in broadening the focus to consider other EdD programme in Ireland and indeed, EdD programmes in the UK and beyond. A comparative study would go some way to identifying the common features and differences across EdD programme and highlight areas of good and novel practice in the design and delivery of these programmes.

In addition to this, it is recognised that a number of other professional doctorates have been established in Ireland in recent years. The literature demonstrates a primary focus on EdDs in existing literature (Hawkes and Yerrabati, 2018). A study that looks across the range of programmes would be beneficial in setting out the key differences and similarities between these

programmes, different approaches, cohort differences, and ultimately, similarities or differences in regard to the contributions of these programmes. Indeed, a most recent study by Creaton and Anderson (2021) considers the contributions to professional practice, looking at two professional doctorate programmes in the UK, in criminal justice and security risk management. Further research on the various professional doctorate programmes in Ireland is required.

Research Focus 5: The Perceptions of EdD and other PDs amongst academics

Whilst not a specific focus of this study, the findings suggested that the EdD is seen as a viable alternative to the PhD for those in or seeking to pursue academic careers. There was no suggestion in this study that the EdD hinders those in academic posts, nor does it appear to be viewed any differently to the PhD. However, further research exploring the perceptions of EdD and other professional doctorate holders by academic institutions could usefully be explored.

7.6 Concluding Remarks

This study commenced on the premise that definitions of professional doctorates emphasise a professional practice grounding as a definite feature of such programmes. Yet, as concluded by Hawkes and Yerrabati (2018, p. 17), '[w]hile it is clear for those who work with professional doctorate students that there is a wider value, this is not well documented in the literature'. This research was focused on addressing this gap in knowledge, grounded in the context of one Irish EdD programme. The research explored and examined the contributions of this programme and its learners to personal and professional development, workplace knowledge and practice and wider professional and academic communities. A review of the literature also highlighted some key issues including a significant absence of professional doctorates from Irish and European policy and discourse, a lack of clarity around the definition of such awards and limited focus on the contributions of professional doctorate programmes.

The study was purposely broad by design, exploratory in nature and intended as a springboard for further research and discourse in this area. As was anticipated the findings raises as many questions as it answers but provides a framework and a context in which future research in this space might be conducted. It is also expected that this research will prove beneficial for those involved in the design and delivery of professional doctorate programmes. Indeed, the study supports the view that such programmes can, and do, make significant contributions to both professional and academic knowledge and practice and this may go some way to solidify the legitimacy of such programme in the doctoral education framework.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Motivation (5 minutes)
Tell me about what motivated you to pursue the EdD?
Focus on own context: Personal/Professional Development (15 minutes)
Tell me about your work/role at the time of pursuing the programme? Has this changed since you commenced the programme? If yes, how instrumental was the programme in the career/job change? In your opinion, has the EdD impacted on your own personal development? If yes, what examples can you give? (i.e. confidence, communication, reflective, analytical skills etc.) Has there been any unexpected personal or professional changes which you attributed to the EdD?
Focus on workplace your employer: Workplace (15 minutes)
Tell me about your research and specifically, where you see its biggest contribution? (i.e. academic/professional knowledge/practice/social etc.) How aligned is/was your research topic to current organisational needs/practices? How involved is/way your employer? (i.e. in the decision to pursue, interest in topic, encouraging dissemination etc.) Do you think the EdD has led to enhanced contributions in your workplace? (i.e. enhanced work practice, guidelines, shared knowledge/research etc.) Did/does anything hamper your ability to make contributions in your workplace? Do you think the EdD is recognised in a positive way in your workplace? Do you think it has impacted on how others treat you or engage with you in work? (i.e. authority, advice being sought etc.) Has there been any unexpected workplace changes which you attribute to the EdD?
Wider Context (10 minutes)
Do you think the EdD has led to greater impact in the broader professional/academic community? (i.e. networking, policy involvement, developing guidelines, academic conference attendance etc.) Do you think there are any barriers to wider engagement?
Other aspects (5 minutes)
Are there any other areas in which you think the EdD has had an impact, which I have not asked you about?

APPENDIX B: SURVEY

Education Doctorates: Exploring the Contributions

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to explore in detail how Education Doctorates can contribute to professional development, the workplace, and professional and academic communities more broadly. These questions are being explored through the experiences and perceptions of those who are currently undertaking or have completed, a Doctor of Education programme awarded by DCU.

This is the first of a two-phase, mixed methods study. Should you choose to participate in this phase, you will be asked a series of open-ended and closed questions in the following survey.

All responses are anonymous, however, at the end of the survey, you will be asked if you are willing to engage in a follow-up, interview. If you do wish to participate in the interview, you will be required to provide your contact details and the researcher may contact you at a later date. This will be the second phase of the study.

The study will ask you a series of questions relating to contributions of the Doctor of Education (EdD) as well as your motivations for pursuing the award. The survey should take no longer than 25 minutes to complete and you can exit at any point prior to submitting the survey.

This study is being undertaken by Rachel Keegan in order to fulfil the requirements of the Doctor of Education programme in DCU. Further details on the study are available in the plain language statement which you will have received along with the link to this survey.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this survey please contact Rachel Keegan at
rachel.keegan@dcu.ie.

A link to the plain language statement can be found here:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bqxPP2bVUYubAeMPNz74aLkkI-3IwvtO/view?usp=sharing.

*Required

Informed Consent *

- [ ] I have read the plain language statement and I know what is expected of me if I choose to participate.
- [ ] I understand the purpose of the study and the information provided to me.
- [ ] I have had sufficient time to consider whether I want to take part in this study.
- [ ] I understand I can withdraw from the study up to the point of submitting the survey.
- [ ] I understand that it may not be possible to withdraw my data once the anonymous survey has been submitted.
- [ ] I understand that there will be no negative repercussions if I choose not to participate.
- [ ] I understand that my data will be treated with confidence, within the limitations of the law.
- [ ] I understand that my anonymised data may be shared with the researcher's supervisory panel.
- [ ] I understand my participation is voluntary.
- [ ] I understand the findings from the research may be published in the future as a thesis, a research paper or a conference proceeding. I understand the research may also be presented at conference.
- [ ] I understand my data may be held securely, on an encrypted laptop in a password-protected files, for up to five years after the study. I understand that all personal identifiers will be remove from these files.
- [ ] I consent to take part in this research study.

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Background Information

1. Which of the following best describes your engagement with the Doctor of Education (EdD) Programme? *

- [ ] I am currently enrolled in year 1 or year 2 (taught phase)
- [ ] I am currently enrolled in year 3 + (research phase)
- [ ] I am a graduate (1 - 2 years since graduation)
- [ ] I am a graduate (3 - 5 years since graduation)
- [ ] I am a graduate (5 + years since graduation)

2. Are you currently in employment?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3. If yes, please provide a brief description of your work title or role:

Please avoid including any specific identifiers.

Your answer

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Motivations

4. Did you consider pursuing a PhD before enrolling on the Doctor of Education Programme?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Unsure / cannot remember

5. I chose to pursue the Doctor of Education programme because:

Note: Please tick only one response per statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I liked the structure of the programme	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I liked the idea of being part of a cohort	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I liked the subjects being covered in the 'taught' phase	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I liked the practical nature of the coursework	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I liked the type of knowledge it aims to produce (i.e. applied, contextual, practice-based)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

6. Please select your top three reasons for pursuing the Doctor of Education Programme. *

- [ ] To improve my career prospects
- [ ] To pursue a possible career change
- [ ] To improve/enhance my professional credibility
- [ ] To validate my existing knowledge and expertise
- [ ] To allow me to write/speak on educational matters with greater confidence and authority
- [ ] To change/enhance my own professional practice
- [ ] To make a greater contribution to my own organisation
- [ ] To make a greater contribution to the practice of my profession
- [ ] To make a contribution to knowledge (professional and/or academic)
- [ ] To learn new research skills which I could apply to my work
- [ ] For personal fulfilment
- [ ] Because of a desire to learn
- [ ] To increase my confidence
- [ ] To prove something to myself and/or others

7. Do you have any other comments you would like to add about your motivations for pursuing the Doctor of Education programme?

Your answer

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Contributions to Personal and Professional Development

This section focuses on how the Doctor of Education has contributed to your own personal and professional development.

8. I believe that, as a result of engaging in the Doctor of Education programme:

Note: Please tick only one response per statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have become a more reflective practitioner	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have developed greater analytical skills	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am a more critical thinker	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I take a more evidence informed approach to decision making	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I can make a more reasoned and balanced case when presenting an argument	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have greater influencing and negotiating skills	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have more confidence and self-esteem	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have developed a stronger academic voice	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

I have greater confidence in my use of language	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have a greater grasp of listening critically to others	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I can better link theory to practice	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am more confident discussing research in my practice	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I believe others have greater confidence in me professionally	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

9. Have you been promoted since you commenced the Doctor of Education Programme?

◯ Yes

◯ No

10. If yes, how instrumental, in your view, was the Doctor of Education in getting the promotion?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all instrumental	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very instrumental

11. Have you changed profession or career direction since you commenced the Doctor of Education programme?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

12. If yes, how instrumental, in your view, was the Doctor of Education in this change?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all instrumental	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very instrumental

13. Overall, I believe my EdD has had a positive impact on my own personal and/or professional development.

Choose

14. Do you have any other comments you would like to add about the EdD in relation to your own personal or professional development?

Your answer

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Contributions to the workplace / local work context

The following questions focus on contributions in your workplace/local work context. These questions focus on local dissemination (Q.15), workplace influence/recognition (Q.16 and Q.17) and employer engagement (Q.18).

15. In considering your workplace/local work context, to what extent do you believe your research has:

Note: Please tick only one response per statement.

	Not at all	To a small extent	To some extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
been disseminated to members of your workplace	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
been incorporated into the professional knowledge repertoire of your workplace	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
resulted in improved standards and/or work practices in your workplace	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
resulted in improved guidelines and/or training in your workplace	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
resulted in enhanced service evaluation methods in your workplace	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

16. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements.

Note: Please tick only one response per statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe the Doctor of Education (EdD) is recognised in a positive way in my workplace/local work context	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have had to defend or explain the equivalence of the EdD to the PhD in my workplace/local work context	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have experienced a lack of acceptance of the ideas I brought back as a result of engaging in the EdD programme	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have shared ideas and experiences from the EdD with my colleagues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My increased skills and/or knowledge is valued in my workplace/local work context	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

17. I believe, as a result of the Doctor of Education,

Note: Please tick only one response per statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have greater capacity to affect change in my workplace	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have more influence on, and cooperation from, colleagues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have greater access to senior management	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My opinion has been sought in the workplace on change decisions/implementation	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

18. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

Note: Please tick only one response per statement.

	Not at all	To a small extent	To some extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
My employer was involved in the decision to pursue the EdD	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My employer supported/is supporting my engagement on the programme through time off for research/study	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My employer has provided/is providing financial support to me for the EdD	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My employer had/has an input into the chosen research area	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My employer has shown/shows a vested interest in my research	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My employer encouraged/encourages dissemination of my research locally	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My research was/is aligned to an existing or urgent organisational purpose or issue	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My research built/builds upon existing work practices	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

19. Overall, I believe my EdD has led to enhanced contributions in my workplace/local work context

Choose

20. Do you have any other comments you would like to add about the EdD in relation to contributing to your workplace/local work context?

Your answer

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Contributions to the wider professional and/or academic communities

The following questions focus on contributions to the wide professional and/or academic communities to which you may belong. These questions focus on professional influence (Q.21) and wider dissemination of your research (Q.22).

21. As a result of my engagement in the EdD programme, I have contributed towards the development of:

Note: Please tick only one response per statement.

	Not at all	To a small extent	To some extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
new or updated policy relating to my profession	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
improved professional standards and/or work practices for my profession	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
new or improved guidelines or training for my profession	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
enhanced service evaluation methods for my profession	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
increased inter-agency collaboration	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
new network links within my professional community	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
new network links between my professional and the academic/university community	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

22. Please indicate which of the following activities you have engaged in either during or after the Doctor of Education programme:

- [ ] Presented research at an academic conference
- [ ] Written or co-authored a paper for an academic journal
- [ ] Written or co-authored a chapter for an academic book
- [ ] Written or edited an academic book
- [ ] Presented research at a professional conference or event
- [ ] Published work in a professional journal or other professional publication
- [ ] Disseminated research to a wider public audience (website, publication, blog, radio etc.)
- [ ] Continued or enhanced engagement with the university through lecturing, research projects and/or supervision

23. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Overall, my engagement on the EdD had led to my enhanced contribution in the wider professional/academic communities to which I belong	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall, my engagement on the EdD has led to developments or enhancements in my profession	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

24. Do you have any other comments you would like to add about the EdD in relation to contributing to your wider professional and/or academic communities?

Your answer

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Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you have any comments or queries regarding any aspect of this survey please contact Ms Rachel Keegan (rachel.keegan@dcu.ie).

This is the first phase of a mixed-method study. Phase two involves semi-structured interviews with a sample of respondents from this phase one. If you are interested in volunteering to partake in the follow-up interviews please provide your contact details below.

I am interested in taking part in a follow-up interview. My name and email address are:

Your answer

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APPENDIX C: TEST STATISTICS

	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
5.1 I chose to pursue the Doctor of Education programme because: [I liked the structure of the programme]	394.000	859.000	-.210	.834
5.2 I chose to pursue the Doctor of Education programme because: [I liked the idea of being part of a cohort]	372.500	750.500	-.341	.733
5.3 I chose to pursue the Doctor of Education programme because: [I liked the subjects being covered in the 'taught' phase]	326.500	704.500	-1.353	.176
5.4 I chose to pursue the Doctor of Education programme because: [I liked the practical nature of the coursework]	336.000	687.000	-.935	.350
5.5 I chose to pursue the Doctor of Education programme because: [I liked the type of knowledge it aims to produce (i.e. applied, contextual, practice-based)	389.500	767.500	-.271	.787
15.1 In considering your workplace/local work context, to what extent do you believe your research has: [been disseminated to members of your workplace]	247.500	682.500	-2.292	.022
15.2 In considering your workplace/local work context, to what extent do you believe your research has: [been incorporated into the professional knowledge repertoire of your workplace]	238.000	673.000	-2.416	.016
15.3 In considering your workplace/local work context, to what extent do you believe your research has: [resulted in improved standards and/or work practices in your workplace]	259.000	584.000	-1.302	.193
15.4 In considering your workplace/local work context, to what extent do you believe your research has: [resulted in improved guidelines and/or training in your workplace]	326.000	732.000	-.693	.488
15.5 In considering your workplace/local work context, to what extent do you believe your research has: [resulted in enhanced service evaluation methods in your workplace]	333.500	739.500	-.578	.563
17.1 I believe, as a result of the Doctor of Education, [I have greater capacity to affect change in my workplace]	316.500	667.500	-1.079	.280
17.2 I believe, as a result of the Doctor of Education, [I have more influence on, and cooperation from, colleagues]	229.000	580.000	-2.509	.012
17.3 I believe, as a result of the Doctor of Education, [I have greater access to senior management]	260.500	611.500	-2.104	.035
17.4 I believe, as a result of the Doctor of Education, [My opinion has been sought in the workplace on change decisions/implementation]	246.500	597.500	-2.296	.022
19. Overall, I believe my EdD has led to enhanced contributions in my workplace/local work context	372.500	807.500	-.080	.936
16.1 To what extent do you 2/4 with the following statements. [I believe the Doctor of Education (EdD) is recognised in a positive way in my workplace/local work context]	301.500	652.500	-1.352	.176

16.2 To what extent do you 2/4 with the following statements. [I have had to defend or explain the equivalence of the EdD to the PhD in my workplace/local work context]	301.500	736.500	-1.304	.192
16.3 To what extent do you agree with the following statements. [I have experienced a lack of acceptance of the ideas I brought back as a result of engaging in the EdD programme]	333.000	768.000	-.804	.422
16.4 To what extent do you agree with the following statements. [I have shared ideas and experiences from the EdD with my colleagues]	315.000	666.000	-1.212	.225
16.5 To what extent do you agree with the following statements. [My increased skills and/or knowledge is valued in my workplace/local work context]	239.000	564.000	-2.270	**.023**
18.1 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: [My employer was involved in the decision to pursue the EdD]	288.500	723.500	-1.597	.110
18.2 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: [My employer supported/is supporting my engagement on the programme through time off for research/study]	336.000	742.000	-.501	.616
18.3 To what extent do you agree with the following statements [My employer has provided/is providing financial support to me for the EdD]	305.500	740.500	-1.261	.207
18.4 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: [My employer had/has an input into the chosen research area]	284.500	719.500	-2.085	.037
18.5 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: [My employer has shown/shows a vested interest in my research]	343.000	778.000	-.597	.551
18.6 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: [My employer encouraged/encourages dissemination of my research locally]	313.000	748.000	-.908	.364
18.7 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: [My research was/is aligned to an existing or urgent organisational purpose or issue]	294.000	729.000	-1.442	.149
18.8 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: [My research built/builds upon existing work practices]	214.500	649.500	-2.835	.005
21. As a result of my engagement in the EdD programme, I have contributed towards the development of: [new or updated policy relating to my profession]	304.500	769.500	-1.446	.148
21. As a result of my engagement in the EdD programme, I have contributed towards the development of: [improved professional standards and/or work practices for my profession]	304.000	769.000	-1.457	.145
21. As a result of my engagement in the EdD programme, I have contributed towards the development of: [new or improved guidelines or training for my profession]	333.500	798.500	-.965	.334
21. As a result of my engagement in the EdD programme, I have contributed towards the development of: [enhanced service evaluation methods for my profession]	350.000	785.000	-.481	.631
21. As a result of my engagement in the EdD programme, I have contributed towards the development of: [increased inter-agency collaboration]	324.000	789.000	-1.133	.257

21. As a result of my engagement in the EdD programme, I have contributed towards the development of: [new network links within my professional community]	360.000	825.000	-.506	.613
21. As a result of my engagement in the EdD programme, I have contributed towards the development of: [new network links between my professional and the academic/university community]	350.500	785.500	-.459	.646
13. Overall, I believe my EdD has had a positive impact on my own personal and/or professional development.	319.000	697.000	-1.554	.120
23.1 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: [Overall, my engagement on the EdD had led to my enhanced contribution in the wider professional/academic communities to which I belong]	238.500	616.500	-2.765	.006
23.2 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: [Overall, my engagement on the EdD has led to developments or enhancements in my profession]	272.000	623.000	-2.017	.044

Programme Specific Motivations of the Learner

Case Processing Summary

		N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Cases	Valid	55	96.5	.822	5
	Excluded	2	3.5		
	Total	57	100.0		

Contribution to Practice and the Workplace

Case Processing Summary

		N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Cases	Valid	50	87.7	.548	10
	Excluded	7	12.3		
	Total	57	100.0		

Workplace Engagement and Support

Case Processing Summary					
		N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Cases	Valid	51	89.5	.713	13
	Excluded	6	10.5		
	Total	57	100.0		

Contribution to Wider Professional and Academic Communities

Case Processing Summary					
		N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Cases	Valid	54	94.7	.745	9
	Excluded	3	5.3		
	Total	57	100.0		