Steering Transformative Workforce Leadership in Times of Crisis:
The Case for Doctoral Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter of the book explores the potential for strategic organisational frameworks and applied methodological perspectives to aid workforce contexts in harnessing the transferable agency of those equipped experientially for leadership in times of unprecedented crisis. Academic research and scholarship must be needs led not methods driven, and as the recent pandemic demonstrated, authentic leadership has never been more important. Transitional change through the crisis of the global pandemic led to shifts to greater acknowledgement of the need for a different type of knowledge creation and replacing the contexts of validity and reliability in empirical research with those of trustworthiness and authenticity. In providing some of these organisational frameworks and methodological perspectives in an accessible manner, many can be systematically applied to the context of everyday strategic planning and institutional management settings so that tangible target outcomes are visible, achievable, and perhaps, most importantly, remain person centered.

INTRODUCTION

Business in the context of the 21ˢᵗ Century knowledge economy is driven by the dynamics of policy, practice and the institutions and organisations which drive their capacity to function and develop professionally and in the context of applied research (Bogoviz, 2019). It is within these contexts that the emergence of Professional Doctorate programmes, the Doctorate of Business Administration, in particular, which has forged a landscape of the need to address the professionalisation of knowledge, to acknowledge the agency that applied knowledge equips personnel with and how more traditional mechanisms of doctoral education are less suited to the application of theory to practice and more suited to theoretical emergence and academic contexts such as education (Cardoso et al, 2020). The gap between perceptions of usefulness and purposefulness of the two though, has narrowed in recent years (Aarnikoivu, 2021). The prospect of responding reflexively and adaptively to new events and key epiphanies such as crisis has ensured the visible and tangible impact of professional doctorate programmes in practice, reflecting a shift to greater respect for a different type of knowledge creation and replacing the contexts of validity and reliability in empirical research with those of trustworthiness and authenticity in applied praxis environments such as the workplace (Dirks and de Jong, 2021).The objectives of this chapter are threefold in a) providing a theoretical basis for the facilitation of knowledge creation in work based settings and its translation into practice via optimal leadership b) Framing the translation of doctoral knowledge in crisis by mid-career professionals; b) The consideration of the complex ambiguity surrounding knowledge creation from a methodological perspective and c) Introducing transformative learning theory as a lens through which the need for cognitive, metacognitive and epistemic perspectives can be acknowledged and used to drive positive action in workplace crises.

BACKGROUND

Reliance on transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary and the multiple perspective they bring to a civic society is also significant. In positioning the professional doctorate as a key indicator of change both situational and axiological in the latter parts of the 20ᵗʰ and early parts of the 21ˢᵗ Century, there ought also to be a consideration of how flexible these programmes are in equipping middle management to deal with the complex ambiguity of crisis scenarios, skills of reflexive responsiveness and the capacity to engage with reflection on key aspects of crises and how most importantly how lessons might best be learned for the future of industries and sectors where knowledge is the harness and staff are the key drivers of responsiveness in

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