

Pharmacists managing capably: A grounded exploration and reconceptualisation of managerial capability

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Griffith Business School

Department of International Business and Asian Studies
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**Pharmacists managing capably:
A grounded exploration and reconceptualisation of
managerial capability**

Phillip Stephen Woods

Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Pharmacy, Graduate Certificate in
Science

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Pharmacists managing capably: A grounded exploration and reconceptualisation of managerial capability.

ABSTRACT

Successful business enterprises require capable managers who readily learn and adapt so as to respond with sensible actions to meet increasing business environment changes. Capability as a concept is generally understood to be the ability of a manager to identify and act to solve unfamiliar problems in unfamiliar situations. Managerial capability is characterised by adaptability and flexibility. However, understandings of the concept ‘capability’ and what it means to be ‘capable’ are indirect and incomplete.

Theoretical explanations concerning capability have arisen from the dominant functionalist philosophical paradigm, that is, dual (or realist) ontology and a positivistic epistemology. This perspective has delivered explanations of capability as a collection of attributes such as skills, abilities, and particular knowledge. The meanings of these attributes are taken for granted and are believed to objectively exist, or not, within individuals or organisations. Little is understood about how supposedly crucial attributes or capabilities are enacted. Explanations of capability are disconnected from the social context and temporal dimension through which the management performance takes place. The ‘how and why’ of previous explanations of managerial capability has remained indirect and under-theorised.

In response to calls for philosophical approaches to theorising that enable closer explanations of ‘the how’ of human endeavour, this study has utilised a social constructionist mode of the grounded theory methodology to explore managerial capability not as something that a manager has, but rather something a manager does. Social constructionist research relies upon philosophical tenets that eschew ontological dualisms and the notion of objects or entities, but preserves relationality, temporality, situatedness and interpretive open-endedness (Tsoukas, 2016).

The context for the study is the community pharmacy industry in Australia, which is presently undergoing serious disruptive changes through a range of regulatory, competitive and other pressures. The focus of this thesis is upon *how* capable management is accomplished by top Australian managers of community pharmacies who are attempting to find their way while experiencing unprecedented business environment change.

The purpose of the research is captured in the thesis-response to the research question: *How can we understand managerial capability as it relates to effective*

community pharmacy management? The aim of the research was to reconceptualise the phenomenon of managerial capability as an ongoing accomplishment in the given emergent context, getting to the heart of how managerial capability is performed through time.

Following the grounded theory methodology as explained by Corbin and Strauss (2008), and utilising the wisdom of the Pragmatist philosophers as the bedrock of the methodology, the study engaged an in-depth exploration of pharmacists' experiences as managers. Interpreting these experiences through the Pragmatist philosophical lens revealed how managers enacted meaningful social processes through emergent context and time. The emerging world of managers was interpreted as a social arena (Strauss, 1993), which is constituted by relational trans-actions: a dynamic nexus of comings and goings, doings and sayings, in time. Trans-actions across individuals rather than interactions between individuals formed the relevant level of analysis, and trans-actions are shown as being either divergent or convergent in character.

Three Sub-core categories are offered as constructed but grounded findings, which together represent the foundations of a substantive grounded theory of managerial capability. The Sub-core categories are titled "Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity", "Re-orienting meaningfully" and "Inquiring". The Core category, "Wayfinding – Knowing as you go" emerged as the central explanation which binds the three Sub-core categories into the grounded theory of managerial capability in this research context. The Core category reconceptualises how pharmacist managers 'find-their-way' through engaging in a range of iterative (mostly) social processes that produce incremental knowledge-in-action, or 'knowing-as-they-go'. "Wayfinding" occurs as an effect of patterned relationality, involving relationships that unfold within an emergent and continuously changing social arena. Managers learn as an effect of a variety of specified social and experimental processes, which result in the continuous acquisition of more varied predispositions to act.

A range of exploratory interpretations and implications resulting from this research are discussed. Interpretations involve both theoretical and practice related assertions and useful implications are elucidated for research methodology, management theory and pharmacy management practice and education. The central theoretical contribution is represented by the grounded theory "Wayfinding – Knowing as you go", as a new and insightful reconceptualisation of managerial capability in the context of the Australian community pharmacy sector. The theory illuminates a closer logic of managerial practice by including i) the meaningful totality in which individuals

are immersed within a life-world, ii) the situational uniqueness of context as it relates to individuals and what they do, iii) time as experienced by individuals within their unfolding life-world, and therefore iv) relationality and dynamism within the resultant theory (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). The grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” bridges the theory/practice gap by presenting a clear and direct understanding of the enactment of managerial capability within the chosen managerial group. Limitations of this research and suggestions for future research are discussed at the conclusion of this dissertation.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

This thesis describes work undertaken in the Griffith University Business School, under the supervision of Dr. Rod Gapp (Griffith Business School) and Dr. Michelle A. King (Griffith University School of Pharmacy and Pharmacology).

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the dissertation itself.

Signed: _____

Name: Phillip Stephen Woods B.Sc., B.Pharm., GradCert.Sc.

Date: 23 March 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the commencement of this thesis-journey I came to this project after thirty years of grinding day-to-day practice as both a pharmacist and owner-manager of small to medium pharmacy enterprises. During that time I have had the privilege of witnessing and often being involved in the great variety of ways that people see their world and accomplish their work. Among the many with whom I have had either direct or distant contact, I have been captivated by the extraordinary mastery that some individuals exhibit in their ability to ‘know what to do’ in the face of equivocal or even turbulent environmental circumstances.

Observing and being involved with such people has also been a matter of self-interest. For what people do and how they do it, and the judgements about the quality of the ‘ends’ they produce affected me through my connection with them. My interpretation of their accomplishments and the ‘ends’ they produced also caused me to reflect upon, or ‘see and feel’ my own comparative performance. Thus I reveal some aspects of my personal motivation for this study and I acknowledge the many whose extraordinary and masterful managerial performances have developed my self-awareness and piqued my curiosity.

I also have a concern for my profession – pharmacy. My focus for this study is the Australian community pharmacy sector. This sector has been experiencing extraordinary change since the beginning of the 21st century. Some would see these circumstances as the worst of times for this significant but small industry. It also brings into sharp relief the importance for managers to ‘do the next right thing’ as seemingly everything around them is changing. Difficult times reveal the weaknesses in any industry sector and this is true for community pharmacy in Australia, where ‘management’ of the pharmacy enterprise has been found wanting, evidenced by a rash of bankruptcies in recent years. I hope the modest contribution of this thesis adds something to understanding the phenomenon of capable management and its development.

Difficult times also make it easier to identify those individual managers within the pharmacy profession who have a successful history of adapting to change. Like other industries, community pharmacy holds individuals who are ‘capable’ of seemingly independently sensing emergent changes in environmental circumstances, making sense of it, and responding with changed but sensible actions, continuously over time. I would like to know more about how they do it. This study would not have been possible without the generous willingness of such individuals to participate with me. I not only

acknowledge, but also express sincere gratitude to the pharmacist owner-managers who generously participated in this study. Without exception, their engagements were honest, authentic, un-guarded and most of all enjoyable.

I also express gratitude to my supervisors Dr Rod Gapp and Dr Michelle King who have guided me through years of ‘learning experiences’. You have given me solid support and engagement in growing my knowledge, given me feedback on numerous outputs and shown great patience in participating in seemingly endless conversations. In particular, I thank Rod Gapp for his patient and sage-like guidance through the years of my journey. Rod, your assistance in helping me to understand and move between contrasting worlds of philosophical perspective has been highly valuable. This type of scholarship and learning is far more than ‘academically productive’. It has profoundly developed my awareness of self and others, and the world we share. There could be no greater outcome for a learning-journey. Thank you.

I acknowledge and thank the Pharmaceutical Society’s Queensland Pharmacy Research Trust for their support by means of a research start-up grant at my project’s commencement. Many individuals have walked parts of the way with me and given me advice, wisdom and encouragement at various stages. I thank Dr Ron Fisher for his guidance and supervision early in my candidature. Dr Heather Stewart has shown me great generosity and I am very grateful for her help both as a colleague and fellow student and eventually in guiding me in getting this thesis together for submission.

My completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the supportive culture of my academic institution and employer, Griffith University, Griffith Business School and my main element, the School of Pharmacy and Pharmacology. My many Pharmacy School colleagues have given me great respect and encouragement to push this project to its completion, for which I am grateful. In particular, I thank Dr Sara McMillan for her encouragement and for wading through dense chapter drafts and helping me with final document assembly.

Finally, I feel I must recognise the many academics from around the world, mostly personally unknown to me, whose academic work has shaped both this thesis, but more profoundly my own understanding. Academics know that a bibliography is not a mere decoration at the end of a document but rather, a cement foundation upon which new ideas are constructed. To the many from whom I have borrowed, or upon whom I have relied, I thank you sincerely. I can only hope I have honoured your work in what I have produced. In any event, I salute you!

PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Early in the development of the thesis, conference presentations were made relating to concepts and theory central to the progress of the thesis. Later, three peer-reviewed journal papers were published relating to explication of philosophical perspectives, grounded theory methodology and the interpreted findings of the first few participant interviews. These contributions are listed below. Two of the peer-reviewed journal papers are included as chapter parts, according to Griffith University policy.

Peer-reviewed journal papers

- Woods, P. S., Gapp, R., & King, M. A. (2016). Generating or developing grounded theory: methods to understand health and illness. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38(3), 663-670. doi:DOI 10.1007/s11096-016-0260-2 [Included as part of Chapter 3 of this thesis.]
- Woods, P. S., Gapp, R., & King, M. A. (2015). A grounded exploration of the dimensions of managerial capability: A preliminary study of top Australian pharmacist owner-managers. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 11(5), 623–638. doi:doi:10.1016/j.sapharm.2014.11.008
- Woods, P., Gapp, R., & King, M. A. (2015). Researching pharmacist managerial capability: Philosophical perspectives and paradigms of inquiry. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 11(2), 265-279. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2014.07.004 [Included as part of Chapter 2 of this thesis.]

Conference proceedings

- Woods, P. S., Gapp, R., & King, M. A. (2013). *Exploring the complexity of managerial capability: Insights from the competence-capability debate*. Paper presented at the 27th Annual British Academy of Management Conference [BAM], September 10-12, 2013, Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool, UK.
- Woods, P. S., Gapp, R., Fisher, R., & King, M. A. (2012). *Developing an understanding of managerial capability: A pilot study of top SME managers in the healthcare sector*. Paper presented at the 26th Annual British Academy of Management Conference [BAM], September 11-13, 2012, Cardiff Business School, Cardiff, Wales, UK.
- Woods, P. S., (2011), *Understanding the capabilities and knowledge required for the effective management of (Australian) community pharmacies*, Paper presented at the doctoral colloquium of the 11th Annual Conference of the European Academy of Management [EURAM]: Management Culture in the 21st Century, June 1-4, 2011, Estonian Business School, Tallinn, Estonia.
- Woods, P. S., (2011), *Pharmacy Management Research - what's new? and why it matters*, Presented at the 22nd Annual Conference of the Australian College of Pharmacy [ACP], April 13-17, 2011, Auckland, New Zealand for the Australian College of Pharmacy, Canberra.
- Woods, P. S., Gapp, R., Fisher, R., & King, M. A. (2010). *Understanding: Its importance to the management of community pharmacies in Australia*. Paper presented at the 24th annual conference of the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management [ANZAM], December 10-11, 2010, Adelaide, South Australia.

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES: INCLUSION OF PUBLISHED PAPERS WITHIN THE THESIS

Griffith University permits and encourages the inclusion of published papers within a thesis and specifies the reasoning for the permission, requirements for the inclusion of papers within the thesis, formatting advice and examination considerations. In addition to guidance given by the university, the Griffith Business School (GBS) also specifies requirements that must be adhered to by the submitting candidate. This thesis has been completed within the Griffith Business School element of Griffith University. Notes on how this thesis complies with relevant guidance is briefly discussed in what follows.

The Griffith University websites that outline the requirements for paper inclusion are:

- Griffith University: <https://www.griffith.edu.au/higher-degrees-research/current-research-students/thesis/preparation/inclusion-of-papers-within-the-thesis> and
- GBS: https://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/840433/GBS-Group-Publication-Requirements-3.pdf
- Griffith University copyright guides: <https://intranet.secure.griffith.edu.au/copyright-matters/copyright-guide/hdr-candidates/articles-in-thesis> Accessed: August 9, 2017.

Types of papers and authorship

GBS specifies that “only peer reviewed refereed journal publications and book chapters may be included in the body of the thesis”, that is, excluding conference papers. Where a paper to be included in the body of the thesis has been co-authored, the candidate is required to have made a substantial contribution (at least 60%) to the intellectual content and writing of the text, and be the 1st named or principal author. In this thesis, published papers are included as parts of Chapters 2 and 3 respectively, and their inclusion complies with the listed requirements.

Griffith University and GBS require signed declarations stating candidate contribution to paper authorship. They are to be completed for each paper submitted as part of the thesis. Declarations are made at the front of the thesis regarding the publication status of the papers, the candidate’s contribution to the papers, and the copyright status of the papers. In addition, each of Chapters 2 and 3 in this thesis contains a signed “Statement of contribution to co-authored published paper” at the commencement of each chapter. The inclusion of the papers has been approved by the lead principal supervisor based on the impact factor of the journal demonstrating publication quality.

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Formatting considerations

Griffith University permits the inclusion of papers as either in the same format as the published paper, that is, the publisher's version, or as a post-print version (the version that has undergone the peer review process; i.e., the final version but without the publisher's layout). In this thesis, the two papers are included in the same format as the published papers. Griffith University permits the inclusion papers in their published format subject to the copyright considerations outlined above. The inclusion of papers must be executed in such a way that there is seamless integration of the papers into the thesis. The two papers in this thesis have been integrated as seamlessly as possible into each of Chapters 2 and 3 and add authority and coherence to the overall thesis argument and findings.

ALL PAPERS INCLUDED ARE CO-AUTHORED

Acknowledgement of papers included in this thesis

Section 9.1 of the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (“Criteria for Authorship”), in accordance with Section 5 of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, states:

To be named as an author, a researcher must have made a substantial scholarly contribution to the creative or scholarly work that constitutes the research output, and be able to take public responsibility for at least that part of the work they contributed. Attribution of authorship depends to some extent on the discipline and the publisher policies, but in all cases, authorship must be based on substantial contributions in a combination of one or more of:

- conception and design of the research project
- analysis and interpretation of research data
- drafting or making significant parts of the creative or scholarly work or critically revising it so as to contribute significantly to the final output.

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Researchers are expected to:

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- Accept or decline offers of authorship promptly in writing;
- Include in the list of authors only those who have accepted authorship
- Appoint one author to be the executive author to record authorship and manage correspondence about the work with the publisher and other interested parties;
- Acknowledge all those who have contributed to the research, facilities or materials but who do not qualify as authors, such as research assistants, technical staff, and advisors on cultural or community knowledge. Obtain written consent to name individuals;

Included in this thesis are published papers in Chapters 2 and 3 which are co-authored with other researchers. The thesis author’s contribution to each co-authored paper is outlined at the front of each chapter.

Permission has been sought to reproduce the work in the thesis and allow for a digital copy to be made available on the Griffith University (library) Research Theses Repository, upon successful examination of the thesis. The bibliographic details for the published papers included in Chapters 2 and 3, including all authors are:

Chapter 2: Woods, P., Gapp, R., & King, M. A. (2015). Researching pharmacist managerial capability: Philosophical perspectives and paradigms of inquiry. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 11(2), 265-279.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2014.07.004>

Chapter 3: Woods, P. S., Gapp, R., & King, M. A. (2016). Generating or developing grounded theory: methods to understand health and illness. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38(3), 663-670. doi:DOI 10.1007/s11096-016-0260-2

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GLOSSARY

Term	Explanation
AJP	Australian Journal of Pharmacy
Basic Social Process (BSP)	The BSP is the process (see definition of ‘process’ in this glossary), that enables the accomplishment of particular phenomenon described by the Core Category of grounded theory. For example, in this thesis, the Core Category is titled “Wayfinding” and the BSP that enables it is titled “Knowing as you go”. Together the Core Category and BSP together explain the phenomenon of managerial capability in the context of this study.
Code and Coding	A code is an analyst-created abstract representation of an event, whose purpose is to establish a relationship with the data (e.g., interview transcript), and with the participant. It is vital that the code is primarily linked to the data, and not to the preconceived ideas of the analyst. Analysis of multiple codes, and through constantly comparing codes with codes permits the analyst to capture conceptual patterns and themes in the data which can then be clustered under a meaningful categorical name, or ‘category’. Coding ultimately enables the analytical reintegration of the concepts to theory.
Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) Forward dispensing	<p>The Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) is a leaflet that contains information on the safe and effective use of a prescription or specified over-the-counter medicine.</p> <p>The term ‘forward dispensing’ refers to the location of the prescription-dispensing activity in a community pharmacy. Commonly, the pharmacist-dispensing activity is conducted within a raised-counter area at the rear of the pharmacy, perhaps within customer sight, but not enabling customer access. The forward-dispensing setup relocates the dispensing bench (usually a desk), to the front of that rear area, making the pharmacist and the dispensing activity within both sight and access for the customer. This arrangement is deemed to be less remote for the customer, making the pharmacist more accessible and the dispensing experience more engaging.</p>
The gerund	The gerund is a non-finite verb that can function as a noun, and can name the action of the verb. For example the noun ‘experiment’ in the form of a gerund is ‘experimenting’, or the noun ‘change’ becomes ‘changing’, and ‘learn’ becomes ‘learning’ (Charmaz 2006). The use of gerunds alters the imagery in answering the question ‘what’s going on here?’, and moves away from the mostly taken for granted and dominant process of logical abstraction, which has a focus on nouns and adjectives.

Term	Explanation
Immanent	Meaning: existing or operating within; inherent.
Interns and Intern training for pharmacists	Graduates of an approved program of study are required to complete a period of supervised practice (internship) in accordance with the requirements set out in the Pharmacy Board of Australia's Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements to be eligible to apply for general registration. An intern training program must also be successfully completed and the registration examination must be passed to be eligible to apply for general registration at the end of the required period of supervised practice.
Knowing	Following the Pragmatists philosophical perspective, the concept of 'knowing' is founded upon the notion that human action is always imbued with and shaped by internalised meaning. 'Knowing' refers to an aspect of action itself. 'Knowing' can be understood as enacted meaning. 'Knowing' is considered as neither something to be used to effect action, nor something which forms the foundations of action (Cook and Brown, 1999). Quoting the Pragmatist philosopher Dewey, Cook and Brown (1999, p. 387) assert that "Knowing is literally something that we do, not something that we possess".
Life-world	Meaning: Life-world is a concept used in philosophy and some social sciences, meaning the world "as lived" <i>prior</i> to reflective representation or analysis. Life-world includes all the immediate experiences, activities, and contacts that make up the world of an individual or social set. The German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is credited for introducing the term 'life-world' as being the fundamental consideration for all epistemological enquiries in social science.
Methadone and the Opioid Treatment Program	Reference to 'methadone' and "customers that come to you for methadone" refers to individuals who are being treated under a State or Territory Opioid Treatment Program. People who are addicted to narcotic substances (including prescription narcotics) are provided with a legally-sanctioned and prescribed opioid-substitute 'methadone' to sustain them in their experience of opioid dependence. This individual-dose treatment is commonly carried out as part of normal pharmacy practice in participating community pharmacies. Enrolled patients/customers usually pay the pharmacy a service fee for the supply and professional oversight service. The aim of treatment is to reduce the health, social and economic harms to individuals and the community.
Obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA)	Patients with obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) have repeated episodes of partial or complete obstruction of the throat (also known as "pharynx" or "upper airway") during sleep. A narrow floppy throat is also more likely to vibrate during sleep, which causes snoring. This condition can lead to dangerously reduced respiratory function overnight and to a range of consequent adverse health conditions.

Term	Explanation
The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)	The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is an Australian Government program that benefits all Australians by subsidising medicines to make them more affordable. Pharmacists are paid by the Australian Government for dispensing PBS items. The government sets the selling price of the dispensed medicine, the profit margin achievable from sale (including professional fees), and the proportion of the selling price (co-payment) to be paid by the patient. To claim their subsidy, pharmacists lodge claims with the government detailing PBS prescriptions dispensed.
Planogram and planogramming	A planogram is a diagram that shows how and where specific retail products should be placed on retail shelves or in displays in order to increase customer purchases. Planogramming is a retail management strategy process used in merchandising and retail space planning.
Pragmatism	The term Pragmatism refers to a distinctive system of philosophy as articulated by the philosophers George Herbert Mead, John Dewey, William James and Charles Sanders Peirce. Together, these philosophers are referred to as the philosophers of Pragmatism. The word ‘Pragmatism’ when used throughout this thesis is denoted with a capital “P”, to specify its meaning. Pragmatism’s contribution refers specifically to the indivisible dynamic linkage between knowledge and action, or ‘knowing’ which suggests that enacted ideas in a given moment are more than accretions of past experience. Rather, enacted ideas of the moment are imbued with prospective anticipations of the future. Such anticipations thus influence future experiences. Emerging context, momentary action and future anticipations continually mutually constitute each other.
Process	“The flow of action/interaction/emotions that occur in response to events, situations, or problems. A change in structural conditions may call for adjustments in activities, interactions and emotional responses. Actions/interactions/emotions may be strategic, routine, random, novel, automatic, and/or thoughtful.” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 87).
Professional pharmacy services	The term “professional pharmacy services” is also referred to in the literature as cognitive pharmacy services, primary care services, pharmaceutical care or enhanced services. For the purpose of this thesis, the terms ‘professional pharmacy services’ or ‘services’ will be used. Professional pharmacy services are defined as “professional services provided by pharmacists using their skills and knowledge to take an active role in contributing to patient health through effective interaction with both patients and other health professionals” (Benrimoj, Feletto, & Wilson, 2010).

Term	Explanation
Substantive theory	Substantive theory is developed from inquiry in a specific area, such as a particular type of organisation, for example, Australian community pharmacy (Goulding, 2002), and is the most common type of theory derived from grounded theory (Morse, 2001). This theory differs from more general or formal theory in that formal theory would have explanatory power across a range of organisation (or industry) types and not just one industry context, for example, Australian community pharmacy.
Social world or Social arena	Clarke (1991) in her essay on Strauss's view of social worlds defines social worlds as "...groups with shared commitments to certain activities, sharing resources of many kinds to achieve their goals, and building shared ideologies about how to go about their business" (p. 131).

Chapter 1: Background and justification for the study

“Pharmacists managing capably: Exploring and reconceptualising managerial capability”

You are desperate to communicate, to edify or entertain, to preserve moments of grace or joy or transcendence, to make real or imagined events come alive. But you cannot will this to happen. It's a matter of faith, persistence and hard work. So you might as well just go ahead and get started (Lamott, 2007, p.7).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Sustained organisational viability is built upon a progression of actions and processes matched to the relevant work environment and the desired outcomes of the times. Appropriate actions and processes are usually enacted by capable managers (Felin & Foss, 2005). A generic notion of ‘capability’ according to Loasby, “implies the potential to deliver consistent performance...” (Loasby, 2010, p. 1303).

Seeking to understand what patterns of managerial actions account for deft organisational navigation, decision making and successful outcomes, is a major theme in organisational behaviour research. Multiple and diverse streams of inquiry include the nature of managerial work (Mintzberg, 1980), managerial skills (Katz, 1974), entrepreneurial decision processes (Pech & Cameron, 2006), executive motivation (Goleman, 1995), managerial perceptions (Anderson & Paine, 1975), managerial cognition (Adner & Helfat, 2003; Johnson & Hoopes, 2003) and sensemaking (Weick, 1979, 1995), to name several. Empirical research demonstrates the linkage between managerial capabilities and performance (Adner & Helfat, 2003; Kor & Leblebici, 2005; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Moliterno & Wiersema, 2007; Nadkarni & Barr, 2008; Ray, Barney, & Muhanna, 2004; Rosenbloom, 2000; Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000).

Generating and sustaining competitive business advantage is also a concern of the strategic management field. It is from this field that the concept of organisational dynamic capability (Di Stefano, G., Peteraf, M., & Verona, G. 2014; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997; Vogel & Güttel, 2013) has evolved from the theoretical framework of the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). RBV theorists suggest that organisational-level resources can be a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). The organisational dynamic capabilities concept extends this proposition to include business environments that are shifting and unpredictable (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Vogel & Güttel, 2013).

Building on a growing conceptual literature concerning organisational dynamic capabilities, Adner and Helfat brought the focus back to the manager and introduced the concept of ‘dynamic managerial capabilities’ (Adner & Helfat, 2003). This focus once again raises the importance of managers’ capability to enact managerial decisions concerning the resource base of their organisation, in a changing environment. Dynamic managerial capabilities are defined as “the capacity of managers to purposefully create, extend, or modify the resource base of an organization” (Helfat et al., 2007, p.24). In an extensive review of the literature, Bititci et al (2011, p. 163) suggest: “...that dynamic capability theory is converging towards the notion that a firm’s dynamic capabilities are resident in the firm’s managerial processes.” This understanding brings into the foreground the need to understand ‘the how and why’ of capable management.

A major contributor to organisation science and particularly to understanding the processes of organising is the so-called sensemaking perspective. The sensemaking perspective was originally proposed and developed by Karl Weick (Weick, 1979, 1995; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005), and has had considerable influence in organisation studies (Colville, Brown, & Pye, 2012; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). Sensemaking is understood as an important process in organising through which managers ‘make sense’ of apparent disruption (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). Sensemaking is said to unfold as a sequence, starting with the engagement of contextual circumstances, and then the development of plausible ideas in retrospect, that rationalise what is going on (Weick et al., 2005). The sensemaking process is shaped by the sense-maker’s identity and social interaction. Order is then enacted into the ongoing circumstances, having a ‘transient’ effect, before it is repeated (Weick et al., 2005).

While the sensemaking perspective is not described in terms of managerial capability *per se*, the perspective does directly address ‘the how and why’ of managerial processes. However, it is argued that the perspective also has significant limitations (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014), of which two are of particular interest here. Firstly, the process is theorised as retrospective, failing to appropriately integrate anticipation (including emotion) and the future orientation of actions (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). When unstable emerging environments are a central concern, how the future is integrated into present action is a key consideration, if dynamism is to be preserved in the resultant explanation.

Secondly, the perspective relies on an ontology that portrays processes as sequences of sub-processes and a linearity of explanation that requires “sense” and

“action” to interact to produce “enactment” (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). Examples of sub-processes are: creation, interpretation and enactment (Weick, 1995) and interaction sequences such as single, double and treble interactions (Weick, 1995). The problem with explanations that invoke sub-processes, interaction sequences and linearity is that they are not closely reflective of how life is lived and experienced (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). Alternative views, for example, consider sense and action as inseparably entwined and mutually constituting (Thompson, 2010).

There are calls for philosophical approaches to theorising that enable explanations of ‘the how and why’ of human endeavour that preserve the togetherness of emerging context (including emotion), sense, action and time-as-experienced (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). Such approaches actuated by an appropriate methodology can elucidate the ongoing patterns through which important phenomena are enacted in particular contexts, delivering theory that is closer to practice (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Simpson, 2009). Developing theory concerning *how and why* managerial capability is achieved while preserving the holism of experienced context, action and time (past, present and future), is worthy of pursuit. It is with this background in mind that the idea for this thesis was initiated. (The concept ‘capability’ and the reasoning for choice of philosophical paradigm will be more generously explained in Chapter 2).

The context for the study is the community pharmacy industry in Australia, which is presently undergoing many disruptive changes through a range of regulatory, competitive and other pressures. The focus of this thesis is upon *how and why* capable management is accomplished by top managers of community pharmacies in the Australian health care industry. In current times these managers are attempting to find their way through unprecedented business environment change.

The occurrence of ongoing disruption in the contexts in which management unfolds can be highly useful for research inquiry (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). This is because disruption causes breakdown in the usual taken-for-granted flow of management practice, potentially making managers more conscious and thoughtful of the what, why and how of their actions. This circumstance can make such managers suitably sensitive and revealing for research inquiry (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). The context for this industry is described next.

THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY PHARMACY CONTEXT

For community pharmacy in Australia, the fundamental organisation is the community pharmacy practice. Australia has approximately 5,500 pharmacies which are small to medium-sized enterprises (SME's). (SME's are those with more than five, and less than two hundred, employees (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). They are mostly privately owned by registered-pharmacist individuals, pharmacist-partnerships, or in some states pharmacist-controlled companies. Community pharmacies meet a range of health related needs such as provision of prescription medicines, non-prescription medications, specialised health related goods, as well as other products. Most community pharmacy revenue is earned from the sale of medicines, including non-prescription medicines and government subsidised prescription medicines (KordaMentha, 2014; PGA, 2016).

For Australian community pharmacy over the past ten years, there has been an unfolding coalescence of several extraordinary challenges such as government prescription pricing reform (Department of Health and Aging, 2010a; Sweeny, 2013), a dramatically increasing competitive environment (KordaMentha, 2014; Singleton & Nissen, 2013; Woods, 2009) and generally negative national and world economic factors (Tradingeconomics.com, 2016). Evidence that many businesses in the community pharmacy sector are struggling to adapt is emerging through unprecedented reports of pharmacy bankruptcies (Brooker, 2011; Haggan, 2015; O'Donoghue, 2013). The recurring themes in commentaries and reviews on the sector centre on community pharmacy's need to adapt to emerging health system needs and competitive forces (PGA, 2010; Singleton & Nissen, 2013).

The Australian community pharmacy enterprise is typical of many small businesses that populate the nation. Like many business models run by professionals, the pharmacists who own and run them seldom receive any formal business training (Millsted, 2013; Ram et al., 2015; Singleton & Nissen, 2013). However, as the continued survival of the industry and annual industry awards (PGA, 2018) make evident, there are many pharmacy managers who have a history of exemplary business management. The community pharmacy business model is unique among the professions in that it requires a blend of professional pharmacy practice (for example, prescription and medicines dispensing, pharmaceutical advice and services), with a strong retail component, in a highly competitive arena (Benrimoj et al., 2010; Scahill, 2010; White & Klinner, 2012). Historically, little attention has been paid to the

discipline of management in the context of the community pharmacy enterprise (Clark & White, 2009; Feletto, Wilson, Roberts, & Benrimoj, 2010a; Jesson, Blenkinsopp, Wilson, & Langley, 2004; Ram et al., 2015). More recently however, there has been increased research attention on pharmacy management issues as practitioners struggle with the challenges of recent rapid environmental changes. This research is summarised next.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND JUSTIFICATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Given the rapid state of change in the Australian community pharmacy business environment there is concern that many owners and managers of community pharmacies lack the necessary managerial capability and leadership expertise to address the emerging threats and to grow their opportunities and strengths (Annabel, 2007; Benrimoj et al., 2010; Holland & Nimmo, 1999; Mospan, 2017; Ram et al., 2015; Roberts, Benrimoj, Dunphy, & Palmer, 2007; Singleton & Nissen, 2013). Various investigations have been undertaken to identify the barriers and facilitators to the implementation of new professional pharmacy services (see Glossary), at the level of the individual practitioner-manager (Gastelurrutia et al., 2009; Roberts, Benrimoj, Chen, Williams, & Aslani, 2006a; Roberts, Benrimoj, Chen, Williams, & Aslani, 2008; Venkataraman, Madhavan, & Bone, 1997) and at the organisational level (Berbatis, Sunderland, Joyce, Bulsara, & Mills, 2007; Roberts et al., 2006a; Roberts, Benrimoj, Chen, Williams, & Aslani, 2004; Scahill, Carswell, & Harrison, 2010). Despite a significant advance in the understanding of what needs to be done to implement and manage professional services in response to the changing business environment, community pharmacy has been slow to embrace this change (Mossialos et al., 2015; PSA, 2010a; Roberts, Benrimoj, Chen, Williams, & Aslani, 2006b).

Research drawing on organisational flexibility theory (Volberda, 1992, 1996) has sought to identify and describe the organisational capacity of pharmacy business models (Feletto, Wilson, Roberts, & Benrimoj, 2010b). The aim of this research was to identify capacity needs that are important for the implementation of new professional pharmacy services as a means of strategic differentiation (Feletto et al., 2010a). The analysis by Feletto et al. (2010a) highlights gaps in both the organisational design and managerial capability dimensions. Key concepts of managerial deficit include planning, performance setting, service awareness and human resource management to facilitate

staff capability and capacity building. These studies reveal concerns that invite further inquiry.

Beyond the focus on new professional pharmacy services, there is little research concerning the overall management of the community pharmacy enterprise in Australia. Considering the rapidly fluxing Australian business environment, and related concerns that Australian pharmacist owner/managers generally lack appropriate managerial and leadership capability, a research-contribution that illuminates how pharmacist managerial capability might be better understood may be timely. What relevant studies do exist, are mainly from international sources. For example, studies originate from the United Kingdom (UK) (Ottewill, Jennings, & Magirr, 2000), the United States of America (USA) (Faris, MacKinnon, MacKinnon, & Kennedy, 2005; Latif, 2002; Meadows, Maine, Keyes, Pearson, & Finstuen, 2005) and New Zealand (NZ) (Ram et al., 2015).

The common links between these studies are findings that advance a ‘list of ingredients’ including important behaviours, skills and abilities that could or should improve managerial performance. For example, Ottewill et al. (2000) suggest that a range of key management competencies (skills), both operational and strategic, are required for successful operation of a professional service enterprise. Skills include clusters of entrepreneurial, ownership and managerial skills as well as a set of critical common core skills. Faris et al. (2005) found differences and similarities in pharmacy managers' opinions of the importance of managerial skills and identified gaps in training. Latif (2002) suggested that pharmacist managerial success requires a combination of three components that are respectively a behaviour-set, a skills-set and a particular style of motivation. Meadows et al. (2005) defined certain clusters of managerial skills, knowledge and abilities. Ram et al. (2015) also list a set of crucial human, technical and conceptual skills (also variously described as “acumen” and “expertise” and ability).

In summing up the pharmacy-specific research contributions, two concerns become apparent that together reveal a gap in current knowledge. The first concern is that research efforts are mainly with professional pharmacy practice change as the primary concern, rather than overall management of the community pharmacy enterprise. This change is primarily directed toward implementation of professional pharmacy services. The research has thus been conducted with an *a priori* assumption that services development is the point of any transformative outcome. While there is little argument that development of services is likely to be very important for viable

adaptive outcomes in the industry, there is little if any research exploring how and why effective managers manage capably to deliver continuous viability over time, without underpinning assumptions of what they *should* do.

The second concern is that the research efforts more generally concerned with managerial capability have been conducted within a single and particular philosophical framework. The dominant philosophical framework assumes a functionalist paradigm, that is, dual (or realist) ontology and a positivistic epistemology (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). This perspective assumes managerial capability is a collection of ‘abilities’, such as planning abilities, human resource abilities, skills et cetera. The meanings of these attributes are taken for granted and are believed to objectively exist, or not, within individuals or organisations. Little is understood about how and why supposedly crucial capabilities are enacted.

Research of this type is useful, but also has limitations in that knowledge created this way is disconnected from the social context and temporal dimension within which the managerial phenomena under investigation exists (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). As will be expanded in Chapter 2, there is a need to get closer to ‘the how and why’ of managerial capability by understanding more directly how it is accomplished. Indeed, there is a gap in pharmacy management research in that no studies have yet dealt with how and why managerial capability in community pharmacy is achieved. The emerging Australian community pharmacy context presents an ideal opportunity to explore the concept further, from a fruitful philosophical perspective. The forces of change sweeping through the Australian community pharmacy sector make any improved understanding of the phenomenon of managerial capability in this industry most pertinent. In the next section, the concept of ‘capability’ is introduced. A statement of research purpose and aim for this thesis follows this brief introduction.

INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF CAPABILITY

The concept of ‘capability’ (at the level of the individual) emerged from the United Kingdom in the mid-1980’s (Hase & Davis, 1999). Capability and its potential advantages as a perspective were raised in response to the perceived changing and uncertain nature of work and workplaces caused by an increasingly globalised and interconnected world. The concept is concerned with the ability of individuals to enact appropriate and consistent performance (work or personal) while traversing through both familiar and unfamiliar contexts over time (Cairns & Stephenson, 2009; Fraser & Greenhalgh, 2001; Stephenson & Yorke, 1998).

Central to the concept of capability is the notion of adaptability in response to emerging change and the implication that self-initiated learning is involved (Basile & Faraci, 2015; Hase, Tay, & Goh, 2006; Phelps, Hase, & Ellis, 2005). Knowing how to learn is considered a major part of what it means to be capable (Hase, 1998; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Stephenson, 1994). Conceptualisations of capability seek to encompass the emergent dynamism of context, complexity, time, continuous learning, flexibility and adaptability. Capability does not preclude the expression of competence but capability is also not regarded as a higher level of competence. Rather, competence is viewed as an essential part of being capable (Gardner, Hase, Gardner, Dunn, & Carryer, 2008). The concept of capability is more fully developed in Chapter 2.

As previously discussed, and as will be thoroughly expanded in Chapter 2, very limited research has attempted to explain directly the accomplishment of capable management. It will be shown that current theory neither includes the unfolding dynamic contexts, nor temporality. Broadly, this is the gap that this thesis seeks to fill, by developing a substantive theory (see Glossary) of managerial capability in the context of Australian community pharmacy management.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND THE RESEARCH QUESTION

This study seeks to explore managerial capability, not as something that a manager has, but rather something a manager does. Instead of looking at identifying objectified variables, the research approach seeks to explore, describe and explain managerial capability as enacted by pharmacy managers who are considered exemplars of capable management, in the current dynamic environment.

The purpose of the research is captured in the thesis-response to the research question: *How can we understand managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management?* The aim of the research is to reconceptualise the phenomenon of managerial capability as an ongoing accomplishment in the given context, getting to the heart of how and why managerial capability is performed through time. The purpose and aim of this study are intended to come together by development of theory that is grounded in descriptions from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and to construct a holistic, integrated and dynamic perspective of capable management within the current turbulent context of Australian community pharmacy.

The purpose is underpinned by the opportunity to contribute to management theory that delivers explanations of *how and why* human practices, such as managing, are constituted and enacted. Theory of this type can make closer connections between

the actions of managing and the knowledge-theory that supposedly enables it (Chia & Holt, 2006; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). Theory that narrows this theory-practice gap may not only complement existing academic knowledge but edge closer to producing practically useful knowledge that is both recognisable and applicable by managers-in-practice and their educators (Mintzberg, 2004; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Van de Ven, 2007). To achieve research findings that meet these challenges of purpose, aim and theoretical outcome requires careful consideration of methodology.

METHODOLOGY

As explained earlier, research conducted within the functionalist research paradigm can only go so far in explaining the accomplishment of human performance-phenomena. The functionalist research approach based on the ontology of realism assumes that human reality and the reality of the world are closely proximate but conceptually separate entities. Research from this approach usually seeks to understand what identifiable but variable characteristics contained within the human are of use in dealing with the identifiable but variable characteristics of the reality ‘out-there’.

Rationalistic theories developed through this positivistic lens are prone to produce theories that are distant from the phenomena they seek to explain (Chia, 1995; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Tsoukas, 2016). This distance is created because explanatory theories mostly seek to interlink clusters of discrete attributes as a basis of explanation (Sandberg & Targama, 2007). The theory then becomes more of an explanation of prerequisites necessary for the phenomenon to occur, than a direct explanation of the phenomenon itself (Sandberg & Targama, 2007; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Tsoukas, 2016).

Rationalistic theories fail to include the unfolding contextual circumstances that are perceived uniquely by different practitioners in their lived-experience. As a consequence the “meaningful totality” as experienced by practitioners is minimised or ignored (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011, p. 341). Therefore social-dynamism, anticipation, emotion and temporality are abstracted out of resultant theory (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Tsoukas, 2016). The substantial distance between theory and practice, that is, between knowledge and action remains.

Alternative theoretical outcomes are made possible if research is undertaken from a different philosophical perspective. The interpretivist and social constructionist research approaches arise from the ontological perspectives of relativism or nominalism. These perspectives are considered to be at the opposite end of the

ontological spectrum to realism (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2012). From the relativist/nominalist viewpoint, reality is not seen as either objective or separate, but socially constructed by the practitioner. Therefore reality is individually and relationally experienced and infused with meaning (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Liamputtong, 2010). Social constructionist research relies upon philosophical tenets that eschew ontological dualisms and the notion of objects or entities, but preserves “relationality, temporality, situatedness and interpretive open-endedness” (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009; Tsoukas, 2016, p. 1).

A range of philosophers and social theorists have provided theoretical and philosophical bases to support interpretivist and social constructionist research methodologies. These include perspectives of thinkers such as Bourdieu and Heidegger (Chia & Holt, 2006), Giddens (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Whittington, 2006), Vygotsky (Jarzabkowski, 2003), Wittgenstein (Shotter, 2006) and Schatzki (Jørgensen & Messner, 2010). The Pragmatist philosophers Dewey, Mead, James and Pierce have also created philosophical foundations for social constructionist research methodologies (Charmaz, 2008; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009). For example, grounded theory is regarded as “a direct methodological descendent of the Pragmatist tradition” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 5).

Given the research aim for this project is to develop a theoretical reconceptualisation of managerial capability as an accomplishment through time, it will be argued in Chapters 2 and 3 that a constructionist mode of grounded theory is a suitable methodological pathway for this project. For Pragmatists, the source of the practical knowledge of action arises from “pure experience” (James, 2012/1912, p. 15). ‘Experience’ is understood not as the growing accumulation of sequential experiences over time, but “comprises both passive effects of situations upon selves and active influences of selves on situations” (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011, p. 64). The Pragmatist idea of experience therefore fuses experienced context, meaning and action and considers them to be mutually constitutive (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Reality is said to be an “experience-continuum” (James, 2012/1912, p. 9), where we are said to “continuously construct and reconstruct meanings of both our worlds and ourselves” (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011, p. 60).

Pragmatism (with a capital ‘P’), is thus framed as “distinctive system” of philosophy (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011), or a “philosophical stream” (Lorino, 2018, p. 15), and distinct from the concept of ‘pragmatism’ used in common conversation. In other words, Pragmatism is concerned more with the making of meanings and

explanations through time (process), whereas pragmatism is more concerned with practical outcomes (ends). Meaning making derives from lived experience where humans are engaged in an entangled manner with their worlds continuously (Buch & Elkjaer, 2015).

Pragmatism and its inspired methodologies are considered as being useful perspectives for studies that seek to understand action-transformation in unpredictable environments (Buch & Elkjær, 2015). The advantage of utilising the Pragmatist philosophical perspective is that it enables the development of a social view of action, where social relation (relationality) is the most fundamental enacted process (Dionysiou & Tsoukas, 2013; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). From this viewpoint, action is understood as inseparable from meaning and the experience of unfolding context. Indeed, action, meaning and context are seen as mutually constitutive (Simpson, 2009).

From the Pragmatist viewpoint temporality is preserved and as time flows, contextualised social action enables the continuous construction and reconstruction of meaning that in-turn shapes experienced context (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Objects, entities and other variables are no longer the units of analysis for explanation. Rather selves, situations and actions are considered as an integrated and dynamic unity, and it is this unity that provides the basis for explanation of performed accomplishment (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

Chapter 2 will further set the scene for the justified use of a philosophy such as Pragmatism. Chapter 3 will explain how the grounded theory methodology is an effective methodology to develop a theory concerning a dynamic human phenomenon such as managerial capability. In constructing a substantive theory of managerial capability the aspects of unfolding context and time can be properly included and better understood in relation to the phenomenon.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis has nine chapters. Figure 1 illustrates the chapters to demonstrate the ‘ground-up’ approach applied to the development of the Core category and grounded theory in Chapter 8. A summary of the contents of each chapter is then offered.

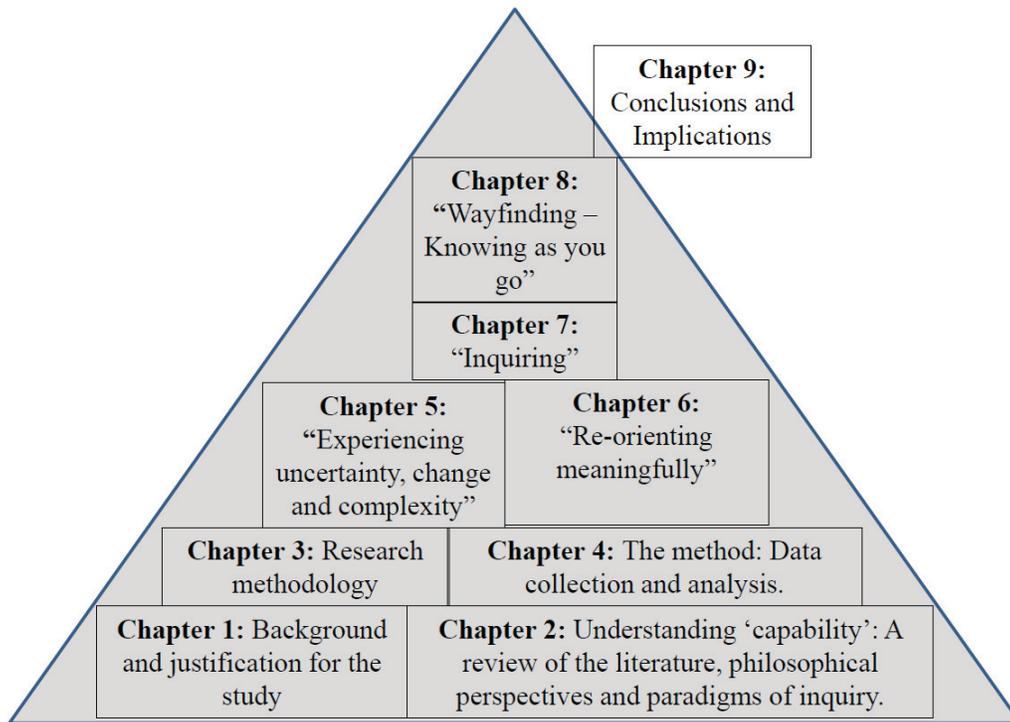


Figure 1: An illustration of the nine chapters constituting the thesis “Pharmacists managing capably: Exploring and reconceptualising managerial capability”

Chapter 1 has introduced the research by providing an overview of the study. The overview commenced with a brief summary of the management research background, followed by an explanation of the industry context (Australian community pharmacy), in which the study is conducted. The research problem was then broadly described followed by arguments of justification for research into the phenomenon of managerial capability. The concept of capability was briefly unpacked. The purpose of the study was articulated culminating in posing the research question and a statement of the intended aim of the research. The methodological approach was then briefly argued and explained.

Chapter 2 undertakes a broad review of the literature from several academic domains. Not only does the review seek to determine what is known about the concept of capability, but also looks into the closely related concept of competence. More

particularly, the epistemological origins of current theory concerning both concepts are probed and examined. This analysis reveals the mostly taken for granted assumptions concerning context and time, and the psychological theory through which individuals are assumed to perceive, know and learn. The review further sets the scene for the exploratory research direction. The analysis of the literature settled the choice of an interpretive philosophical perspective that would prove most fruitful for the development of informative and interesting theory.

Chapter 3 details and justifies the selection of grounded theory methodology (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) within the interpretive paradigm, to achieve the research purpose and aim. The grounded theory methodology encourages the inclusion of social process in the development of theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The Pragmatist roots of grounded theory enable the inclusion of emergent context, embedded practitioner meaning (identity) and time in the development of theory (Charmaz, 2008). The aim of the research is to develop a new and substantive grounded theory of managerial capability based upon the ways that managers engage and interpret their world. The potential weaknesses and pitfalls of utilising grounded theory are also discussed.

Chapter 4 describes in detail the collection, management and analysis of the interview and observational data. Data collection commenced after ethical clearance was granted for the project. Analytical techniques including the coding techniques utilised to construct the theoretical properties and dimensions and then Sub-core categories are described and explained. The management of the considerable volume of data collected is also explained in an Appendix to this chapter showing how important data were preserved and recorded throughout the research process. Sub-core categories representing how managers experience the emerging context, how and why managers re-orient themselves and their business processes and how they learn are identified in this chapter. The Core category representing the substantive theory of managerial capability and the Basic Social Process (BSP) that enables it are identified in this chapter, in readiness for the explanation of how the theory was constructed in subsequent chapters. An explanation outlining the preservation of research rigour and credibility of findings is offered at the end of Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 presents the data constituting the first of three Sub-core categories that together ultimately develop the substantive grounded theory. This first Sub-core category, that deals with the experience of emerging context is titled “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”. The discussion in Chapter 5 focuses on three key

aspects to understand how an environment of uncertainty, change and complexity is experienced by the managers. Together these three aspects inform *how* the managers are experiencing the unfolding contexts and establish the point that it is this emerging experience that precedes and anticipates future action.

The presentation and analysis of data in **Chapter 6** is raised to explain the second Sub-core category titled “Re-orienting meaningfully”. This Sub-core category demonstrates what the managers *are actually doing*, given the contextual experiences they are having. The chapter also introduces the Pragmatist philosophical notion of ‘trans-action’ as a refinement of the notion of ‘interaction’. Using trans-action to understand social process reveals social processes as relationally integrated and whole, where the individuals are aspects of the whole (Simpson, 2009). Trans-action viewed as holistic relationality accentuates participations as continuous flowing sites of meaning sharing. Focusing on actions emphasises connected sequences that include context and time. In this chapter it is argued that perceptions of environmental context and meaning/identity are experienced similarly.

In **Chapter 7**, the third and final Sub-core category “Inquiring” is developed through two explanatory properties, “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting”. The meaning of “Inquiring” relies on understanding social processes as continually unfolding sites where meanings are constructed and re-constructed, through engagement with other people. This Sub-core category accentuates how managers learn on-the-go through their habits and practices of inquiring. Learning is achieved as an effect of relentless searching, engagement in a range of social practices and purposeful experimentation.

Chapter 8 introduces the Core category and Basic Social Process (BSP) titled “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”, and establishes a substantive grounded theory explaining the phenomenon of managerial capability in this context. The Core category and BSP was developed through the theoretical linkage of the three Sub-core categories. The linkages are discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 8 argues their unification, also utilising supporting concepts from the literature. This theory is a new reconceptualisation of the phenomenon managerial capability in the given context and achieves the research aim. A clear statement of theory is offered with an accompanying illustrative diagram.

The reconceptualisation of managerial capability as “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” also provides a new way of understanding the phenomenon and thus satisfies the purpose of the research. As required, the theory when taken as a whole, accounts for

the variations and similarities interpreted through the narratives and observations of participants. Comments addressing the “credibility” and “empirical grounding” of the developed theory are addressed in appendices to this chapter.

In **Chapter 9** the final chapter, the main conclusions and implications that arise from the development of the theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” are discussed. Five conclusions are proposed but the theory’s value as a fruitful open-ended perspective is emphasised, rather than its status as a fixed representation. The conclusions also show how several previously identified theoretical shortcomings concerning managerial capability are addressed through this theory. Three sets of implications arising from the research are discussed. These comprise methodological, theoretical and practical implications. The chapter concludes with a frank but brief discussion of the limitations of this research and makes suggestions concerning the conduct of future research.

**STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO CO-AUTHORED PUBLISHED PAPER
INCLUDED IN CHAPTER 2**

**Researching pharmacist managerial capability: Philosophical perspectives and
paradigms of inquiry**

This chapter includes a co-authored paper. This peer-reviewed critical-analysis paper was published in *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy* in Issue 2, of Volume 11, in March-April 2015, pages 265-279. The authors of this paper are:

Phillip Woods, Rod Gapp, Michelle A King.

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The contribution to the paper by the thesis author involved: database searches, article selection and collation, reading and cross-referencing and critical analysis of literature from different academic domains. The thesis author was responsible for writing all progressive drafts while seeking critical oversight from the co-authors and the anonymous peer reviewers. The thesis author holds primary responsibility for manuscript integrity.

Phillip Woods (thesis author)

on the 23rd March 2018

Dr Rod Gapp (Primary supervisor)

on the 23rd March 2018

Dr Michelle A King (Co-Primary supervisor)

on the 23rd March 2018

Chapter 2: Understanding ‘capability’- A review of the literature, philosophical perspectives and paradigms of inquiry

In so far as the word "knowledge" has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings (Nietzsche, 1968).

INTRODUCTION

A range of conceptual understandings of the terms ‘capability’ and ‘capable’ are included and used in burgeoning literature from higher education, vocational training, military defence, workplace learning, management, management learning, organisational studies and strategy literature, among others. The concept is applied at the level of the individual and organisations, through to that of national defence systems and nations themselves. The terms capability and capable also bring with them a flotilla of related concepts such as competence and capacity and derivatives such as capabilities, competencies and capacities. Further, the adjectives ‘capable’ and ‘competent’ are often used interchangeably and the terms ‘capability’ and ‘competence’ are used to explain each other from differing philosophical perspectives and conceptual levels (Garavan & McGuire, 2001).

The aim of this chapter and the critical review of the literature is to more thoroughly clarify conceptualisations of ‘capability’ in the context of management. Doing so identifies both opportunities and justification for further research and an appropriate methodology (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) to respond to the proposed research question: *How can we understand managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management?* It is unfeasible to review the entire range of the literature mentioned above so as to define and untangle all of the terms. Instead, a broad range of seminal and meaningful literature will be examined to proffer understandings and conceptualisations of the concept ‘capability’ and more particularly, ‘managerial capability’.

In the discussion of the literature these conceptualisations are examined as well as the different philosophical perspectives from which different conceptualisations arise. The matters of philosophical perspective will be shown to be vitally important in reviewing current understandings of capability and its related concepts. This is because fundamental assumptions about the nature of work, the individual, the organisation, time, knowledge and learning are determined by the philosophical stance that is taken to view the phenomena (Garavan & McGuire, 2001; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011).

Different theories about capability imply different ways of explaining how humans know and do things.

This chapter begins with an overview and explanation of a spectrum of philosophical perspectives vital for understanding the literature analysis which follows. The first consideration is the differing ways in which the nature of reality is conceived, or ontology. The second consideration is the differing nature of knowledge that can be produced from different ontological positions, referred to as epistemology. The close linkage between epistemology (the nature of knowledge produced), and ontology (the perspective of reality from which knowledge arises), is a critical one. Research methodologies are fundamentally defined by their underpinning ontological and epistemological assumptions. The overview of spectrums of ontology and epistemology creates a foundation for the discussion and analysis of literature which follows.

The main body of the literature review and analysis is addressed in the manuscript titled “*Researching pharmacist managerial capability: Philosophical perspectives and paradigms of inquiry*”. The manuscript clarifies current theories regarding the concept of capability at the level of the individual, and makes more explicit what is known and not known about the phenomenon. In particular, the review also considers the consequences that different conceptualisations imply, given the epistemological assumptions that underpin them. The manuscript concludes by identifying gaps in the theoretical understanding of managerial capability and highlights methodological approaches that may be most fruitful in progressing research to address the gaps.

HOW WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW: CONSIDERING ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

ONTOLOGY: PERSPECTIVES ON ‘TRUTH’ AND ‘FACT’

Different understandings of reality bring forth particular assumptions on matters of ‘truth’ and ‘fact’ (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Set out in Table 1 are four different ontological perspectives summarising a range of understandings about ‘truth’ and ‘facts’. The contrasting descriptions (horizontally) should be viewed as a spectrum of understandings, rather than independent and fixed positions.

Table 1: Four different ontological perspectives. Sourced from Easterby-Smith et al (2012, p. 19)

Table 1 has been redacted for copyright reasons. Please refer to the original reference source.

Realism is the dominant ontological understanding within the natural sciences domain. This perspective considers the world and its contents and happenings as concrete and external to an observer. What is going on in the world is regarded as existing prior to explanations and interpretations that may be offered by an observer, and thus reality is pre-given (Stacey, 2003). Bhaskar (1989, p. 12) explains this perspective by stating, “the ultimate objects of scientific inquiry exist and act (for the most part) quite independently of scientists and their activity.”

The realist view implies that there are two realities existing – one, within which the ‘objects’ of scientific inquiry exist, and one other which is external, in which the observer/researcher exists. This perspective is often referred to as a viewpoint of *dualist* ontology (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Sandberg & Targama, 2007). This viewpoint reflects an assumption of two realities, but a single truth. A further assumption underpinning this view is that the single truth (fact being investigated), is eventually able to be uncovered and exposed, with ever more thorough efforts of research inquiry.

Internal realism also assumes a dualist ontology and a single truth, however affords a concession that scientists can never access that truth directly. Evidence that may be gathered will likely be an indirect indication of what is going on (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Facts are thus deduced from less direct observations in logic which flows according to the model “if-then”, for example, to develop theory. Internal realism is accepting of a view that once scientific laws are discovered, they are independent of further observations, thus absolute (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Research findings

coming from a perspective of internal realism will often refer to the phenomenon under investigation as a complex system, consisting of sub-systems, where the notion of 'boundaries' and interaction between systems is invoked. The perspectives of realism and internal realism hold that the researcher is objectively observing the happenings (reality) occurring 'inside' a system, from their own independent position (reality), 'outside' the system.

At the opposite end of the ontological perspectives realism and internal realism is nominalism (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), sometimes called (strong) constructionism (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012) or postmodernism (Stacey, 2003). This stance argues that people classify their experiences into categories in their own minds, thus self-constructing their reality. Reality is not external to themselves (Stacey, 2003). From this perspective there is no pre-existing 'truth' and research inquiry focuses broadly on how and why people self-construct their individual 'facts' or 'truths' (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Explanations that people come up with are seen as projections of their own minds. The nominalist perspective holds that while a single personal reality exists for every person, there is only one (whole) reality 'perceptible' to any human, including the observer or researcher. An observer therefore is seen as unable have a privileged view of another person's or group's 'inside' of from that observer's view, 'outside'. Given there is no independent reality from this stance, there exists "only the stories we tell each other and one story is as good as another" (Stacey, 2003, p. 7).

The ontology of relativism has consequences somewhat distant from the poles of realism and nominalism. Like nominalism, this view considers that the way a person thinks shapes their experience. On the other hand, like realism this perspective also sees something of a reality external to the human mind. The 'relativist' positioning of this ontology is expressed well by grounded theory methodologist Juliet Corbin who writes, "I realise there is no one 'reality' out there waiting to be discovered however I do believe there are external events, such as a full moon, a war, and an airplane crashing into a building" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 10). Her position concurs with a view that concepts and ideas are invented and not discovered, but yet relate to some things that are 'real' in the world (Schawndt, 1998).

The single relativist reality is not like realism being pre-given and unproblematic. Relativism considers reality as a selected, constructed and enacted reality (Stacey, 2003). 'Truth' as observed by a person is considered as 'constructed' through social interaction, especially conversation (Stacey, 2003) and is also influenced by the person's reputation and their past experience (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). This

position does relate to strong constructionism or nominalist ontology, but in not such a complete manner. What is in common with nominalism is the perspective that a researcher cannot adopt the role of independent, objective observer and that explanations of human phenomena can only be given through some form of participation in what is being observed. What is in common with realism is that, for practical purposes, it is conceded that there is a reality ‘out there’ which all humans have to negotiate, but may interpret differently.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND RESEARCH PARADIGMS

The reason that understanding ontological viewpoints is important is that each viewpoint determines both the way that knowledge can be sought (research methodology) and the type or nature of knowledge that arises from it (findings and theory). In social science two important contrasting epistemologies are positivism, which arises from the realist end of the ontological spectrum, and social constructionism (Berger, 1991; Bourdieu, 1990) which arises from the nominalist – relativist end.

Positivism is a worldview attributed to Auguste Comte (Comte, 1970/1853). Positivism is also referred to as functionalism (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and is founded on the idea that the social world exists externally, and the elements of human phenomena can be objectively measured (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). This way of thinking, or ‘paradigm’, assumes reality is external and objective (that is, realist ontology) and that knowledge is only of significance if it can be observed and measured in this external reality. In social science, the positivist/functionalist paradigm is generally aimed toward identifying causal explanations and laws that explain the patterns in human social behaviour. Understanding complex human phenomena is approached by seeking to ‘reduce’ the observed phenomena into the simplest elements or objects possible. This approach, known as reductionism, assumes firstly that elements or objects (things) can be found to be measured, and secondly, that the phenomenon as a whole can be understood through deconstruction of the phenomenon into smaller things, which together better explain the whole (Liamputtong, 2010).

Social constructionism arises from the opposite end of the ontological spectrum where reality is not seen as either objective or exterior, but socially constructed, internal and infused with meaning, by each individual person (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Liamputtong, 2010). Individual people make sense of their world, not through some patterned interaction of elements or objects external to them, but through human social factors, particularly through the language of social relations (Stacey, 2003). This way of

thinking, or paradigm, views knowledge as a product of our own making (Liamputtong, 2010). Knowledge therefore is considered subjective.

The subjective worldview is an epistemological paradigm which is anti-positivistic in orientation and is known as interpretivism (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), or social constructionism (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). To understand complex human phenomena, research approaches within this paradigm seek to appreciate and understand the different meanings and interpretations (the sense) that people apply to their lived experience (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Gergen, 1985). Elements and objects (things) are not assumed to be the key to understanding phenomena, rather, the focus is upon human experience. Methodologically, rich data are collected often in the form of words or observed behaviour, from which insightful ideas about the phenomenon are induced. Utilising this paradigm, the observer-researcher is not external to the phenomenon under inquiry, but is more or less a participant in what is being observed.

What follows in the manuscript titled “*Researching pharmacist managerial capability: Philosophical perspectives and paradigms of inquiry*”, is a critical analysis of the literature that aims to clarify current theories regarding the concept of capability to make more explicit what is known about the phenomenon, but more particularly, how we know what we know. The review makes clear how extant understandings of ‘capability’ and associated concepts arise from both ends of the ontological spectrum.

Since this thesis is concerned with advancing understanding about ‘managerial capability’ it is not only important to report ‘what’ the literature says about capability, but also ‘how’ particular descriptions elucidating capability have been conceived, which is not always made explicit. That is, the review and critical analysis considers what ontological and epistemological assumptions underpin each description of capability. As shown in Table 2, (Note: This table is labelled “Table 1” in the following manuscript titled “*Researching pharmacist managerial capability: Philosophical perspectives and paradigms of inquiry*”), assumptions regarding ontology and epistemology have implications for further assumptions about the nature of work, the individual, the organisation, time, human psychology and performance. The tabular summary of how competence and capability can be understood and investigated shows the quite profound differences in the way that knowledge can be conceived.



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Commentary

Researching pharmacist managerial capability: Philosophical perspectives and paradigms of inquiry

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Summary

In successful community pharmacy business enterprises suitably responsive actions to meet ever-increasing change require capable pharmacy managers who readily learn and adapt. Capability as a concept is generally understood to be the ability of a manager to identify and act to solve unfamiliar problems in unfamiliar situations. Capability is characterized by adaptability and flexibility. However, different understandings of the concept ‘capability’ and what it means to be ‘capable’ are indirect and incomplete. This paper aims to clarify current theories regarding the concept of ‘capability’ at the level of the individual, and through this to make more explicit what is known about the phenomenon, but more particularly, how we know what we know. The analysis includes the concept of ‘competence’ because explanations of capability include competence, and the two concepts are not clearly separated in the literature. By probing the epistemological origins of current theory concerning both concepts, the limiting taken for granted assumptions are revealed. Assumptions about context and time, and the psychological theory through which individuals are assumed to perceive, know and learn, are illuminated. The analysis, in connection with the literature, shows how the interpretive philosophic research approach may reveal a different and useful theoretical perspective for explaining capability as a dynamic performance. It is suggested that such a perspective may narrow the gap between the theory of capability and its practice. The interpretive perspective holds potential to reveal how capability, as performed by successful community pharmacy managers, might be further researched and strengthened. This paper supports the challenging suggestion that pharmacy social research needs to rebalance the dominance of purely empirical research by exploring interpretive methodologies to better understand human actions and relations in the context of pharmacy.

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Keywords: Managerial capability; Competence; Epistemology; Interpretive; Knowing; Learning; Pharmacy management

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Introduction

Australian community pharmacies are currently experiencing a range of major challenges affecting business viability. Influences such as government prescription pricing reform, a dramatically increasing competitive environment and generally negative national and world economic factors are affecting pharmacy commercial viability.¹ Some describe the coalescence of these changes as “the perfect storm.”^{2,3} Many Australian community pharmacies are struggling to adapt as evidenced through reports of pharmacy bankruptcies escalating to unprecedented levels.⁴ Similar industry pressures are evident in comparable nations. The need for constructive responses to ensure continued professional and commercial viability is present in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada and the US.^{5–8} The recurring theme is centered on community pharmacy’s need to adapt to align with emerging health system needs and commercial circumstances.⁹

Rapid rates of change require pharmacy managers who can effectively navigate their enterprises through this complex environment. Effective action to meet changing environments requires capable managers.^{10–13} Financial pressure on the community pharmacy business model requires capable management toward solutions that benefit both profit as well as professional practice.¹⁴ Capability at the level of the individual is commonly but loosely understood to mean the ability to engage with emergent changes in environmental circumstances, and respond with changed but sensible actions, continuously over time.^{13,15–17} However, clearly understanding the concept ‘capability’ and what ‘capable’ means as ongoing action, or performance, is not straightforward. As Australian community pharmacy managers face daunting economic circumstances,¹ it is timely to review the phenomenon of capability, and how the phenomenon might be better understood in the community pharmacy management context.

The terms capability and capable bring with them the related but different concept, competence. Conceptualizations of capability at the level of the individual implicitly or explicitly include competence.^{15,18–20} For example, the National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia views capability as a demonstration of competence.²¹ Interest in capability and competence is hardly surprising because in their broadest sense, these concepts are concerned with explaining the relationship between knowledge and action.

This relationship goes to the heart of understanding how desired managerial performance outcomes might be achieved.^{15,16,20,22–25}

This paper aims to clarify current theories regarding the concept of capability at the level of the individual, and to make more explicit what is known about the phenomenon, but more particularly, how we know what we know. This has been achieved by critically probing the research paradigms which underpin the different literature based understandings of the phenomenon capability and the related phenomenon of competence. The clarification comes from considering important assumptions and implications that arise from the philosophical perspectives through which the concepts competence and capability are currently understood. Uncovering these assumptions illuminates how pharmacist managerial capability might be further researched and strengthened. Achieving better understanding of the linkage between human knowledge and action is crucial for better understanding capability in the context of pharmacy management and learning.

The paper is organized in the following manner. Two contrasting conceptualizations of competence are described and analyzed, followed by a review of two different conceptualizations of capability. Explanations of competence are dealt with first because theories of capability include competence and the two concepts are far from clearly separated in the literature.²⁶ To gain better conceptual clarity about capability begins with gaining better conceptual clarity about competence. A comparison of the concepts is brought together in [Table 1](#). In the discussion that follows, the merits and limitations of different philosophical approaches to researching capability are discussed. A particular philosophic approach and potential methodologies are suggested as likely to provide greater insight into capability as a dynamic human performance. The analysis supports the challenging suggestion that pharmacy social research needs to break from the dominance of purely empirical research to better understand human behavior and complexity in the context of pharmacy.²⁷

Conceptual analysis: competence and capability

‘Capable’ and ‘competent’ are often used interchangeably in the literature, and the terms ‘capability’ and ‘competence’ are often used to explain each other from differing philosophic perspectives.^{26,28,29} For the concept capability to become

Table 1
Assumptions which underpin the reviewed theories of competence and capability at the level of the individual

Assumption domain	Competence – Rationalistic perspective	Competence – Interpretive perspective	Individual capability (strategy literature)	Individual capability (education and training literature)
Epistemology	Positivist	Interpretive – Social constructionism	Positivist	Positivist
Concept description	Competence consists of competencies which are assemblages of knowledge and skills, possessed by an individual and used to accomplish work to a prescribed standard. Individual competence functions by application of the correct knowledge and skills as the work and context arises.	Competence is an expression of an individual's understanding of their work and thus a 'way of being.' Individuals simultaneously develop and enact their understanding of work within their life-world which then organizes the use of particular knowledge and skills in particular ways to deliver their individual work performance, or competence. Context is continually self-constructed and reconstructed within the life-world of the individual through the understanding they enact in their work. Understanding is always in process and in part contains perceived history, influencing how work will be interpreted (forming context) next time it is encountered. A person's perceived context includes time in its meaning and both context and time are included in the meaning of competence.	Capability consists of a collection of capabilities, capacities and competences possessed by the individual with which they build, integrate and reconfigure resources. Individual capability functions by application of the correct capabilities and capacities as the work and context arises.	Capability is a complex human system, considered 'holistic' but consisting of particular interacting human attributes and processes. Individual capability is considered beyond but inclusive of competence and functions through the individual's interaction with the emerging and often unknown work context.
Relationship with context and time	Context is considered an independent, external variable able to be rationally assessed and responded to. Individual competence is assumed to exist independent of context. Time is not included within the concept's meaning.	Context is continually self-constructed and reconstructed within the life-world of the individual through the understanding they enact in their work. Understanding is always in process and in part contains perceived history, influencing how work will be interpreted (forming context) next time it is encountered. A person's perceived context includes time in its meaning and both context and time are included in the meaning of competence.	Context is considered an independent, external variable able to be rationally assessed and responded to after learning. Individual capability is assumed to exist independent of context, and context can be used to build improved capabilities to meet the context. The passage of time is acknowledged but time is not included within the concept's meaning.	Context is considered an independent, external variable and while not entirely knowable is able to be rationally assessed and responded to after learning. Individual capability arises as a learned-response from interaction with the context which remains external to the individual. The nature of capability depends on both context and the passage of time, but the concept itself does not include either in its meaning.
Underpinning philosophic/psychological theory	Behaviorist and cognitivist psychological theories	Founded on the philosophic notion of life-world in which	Behaviorist and cognitivist psychological theories	Social cognitive theory

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Assumption domain	Competence – Rationalistic perspective	Competence – Interpretive perspective	Individual capability (strategy literature)	Individual capability (education and training literature)
Conception of knowledge/ knowing and learning	<p>Knowledge and skills (explicit and tacit) are considered as variables able to be developed through cognitive learning processes.</p>	<p>person and world are inextricably related through lived experience as time unfolds. Knowledge is socially constructed in time, and its primary form is understanding which is 'knowing-in-action,' that forms and organizes explicit and tacit knowledge to be used in relation to perceived context. Knowing is holistic, relational and emergent. Learning is an inseparable ongoing process and what is learned occurs through changing of enacted understanding, or knowing.</p>	<p>Knowledge and skills (explicit and tacit) are considered as variables able to be developed through cognitive learning processes.</p>	<p>Knowledge and skills (explicit and tacit) are considered as variables able to be developed through cognitive learning processes. Knowledge appears 'emergent' over time as a result of the assumed complex systems theory. The nature of knowledge remains objectified. Cognitive learning processes are primarily and strongly self-initiated.</p>

more comprehensible and useful for researchers and pharmacy management practitioners, it is necessary to understand individual capability as a concept in itself. Competence is conceptualized in the literature from both the positivistic and interpretive perspectives, while capability from only the former. While the positivistic perspective may dominate academic discourses, both perspectives can deliver important knowledge through different ways of knowing. To gain greater clarity, illuminating the assumptions which underpin current theories about both concepts is an important starting point to progress research.

The positivistic and interpretive research perspectives differ in relation to at least 4 key issues which are crucial for shaping understanding of capability and competence as enacted human phenomena. The issues relate to i) the nature of reality, ii) human nature and how people engage that reality, iii) the role and nature of context and time, and iv) the nature of knowledge and learning.^{26,30,31} As will become clear in the next section which reviews current theories of competence and capability, differing philosophic perspectives deliver very different ways of understanding human phenomena.³¹ The 4 key issues listed above are utilized as a loose framework for the analysis that follows, which is also summarized in [Table 1](#).

Competence

The dominant positivistic perspective is to view competence as consisting of competencies, which in turn are seen as individual work relevant knowledge and characteristics possessed by people.^{25,26} Alternatively, competence can be understood from an interpretive perspective, as an holistic concept, or ‘way of being’ for an individual, where competence is dynamically constituted by the meaning work takes on for people in their experience of it.³²

Competence as competencies: a positivistic view

The positivistic perspective of competence regards the phenomenon as attribute based where constituent attributes such as personal characteristics, knowledge and skills, are often referred to as competencies. Competencies are considered to be the main elements producing competence. The key assumption underpinning this perspective is that human action can be explained by possession of some combination of the competencies in any given context.²⁵ It is assumed that what people know and what people do can be separated and

that accumulating explicit knowledge through learning will have a direct effect on how people perform.³³ This approach assumes that the prescribed competencies, and the standards to which they are directed, can be achieved with a single meaning in a range of work activities and contexts.³² This assumption is basic to the formulation and application of the National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia.²¹

Within this perspective, knowledge is commonly understood as either explicit or tacit.³⁴ Explicit knowledge is able to be transferred to the individual in a formalized way, such as through education. Tacit knowledge is seen as the key component of skills and differs from explicit knowledge in that it is hidden or inaccessible, but can be accumulated nonetheless through experience on the job. While explicit and tacit knowledge are seen as different in one sense, they are also treated as fundamentally the same as “... two variations of one kind of knowledge, not separate, distinct forms of knowledge.”³⁴ Knowledge, in both explicit and tacit variations is therefore objectified in that individuals can possess and accumulate such knowledge. The link between competencies and the desired outcome is linear, according to the model: if you know (or are able to do) ‘this,’ then you will produce ‘that’ as an outcome, every time.

The positivistic conception of competence accentuates the underlying ontology of realism which assumes 2 realities.²⁵ One is the human reality containing human attributes and characteristics. The other is external to the individual, such as work and its context, which is regarded as the ‘real’ reality where ‘truth’ resides. This perspective is often referred to as a viewpoint of dualist ontology, reflecting an assumption of two realities, but a single truth.^{25,35,36} The idea is that the person in their own world is able to accumulate the necessary competencies so as to be able to ‘act competently’ when they meet the ‘other’ world which is work and its context. It is in this ‘other world’ where the single and ‘real’ reality exists. The assumption of separation of what people know from the context in which they apply it also abstracts time away from the concept of competence.³⁰ That is, competence when possessed is viewed as a timeless state which appropriately matches a timeless ‘real’ work context. The work context is assumed as stable, in that context is able to be described. This then allows the prediction of what knowledge, skills and abilities are required.

Realism also holds assumptions regarding the nature of the individual and how they interact with the world in order to learn. Given that context and time are seen as independent and external to the person, human choices are assumed to be made rationally. Learning is considered as cognitively bounded but goal directed, and oriented toward resolving challenges which are known, or able to be known.²⁵ Learning is therefore seen mostly as a rational accumulation process, aimed at reducing the gap between what a person knows and the facts of the ‘real world,’ which is external to the person.^{37,38}

Knowledge is considered as an important but objectified variable, the correct form and amount of which needs to be accumulated to undertake rational decision making and choices. This rationalistic approach for explaining how humans sense and respond to the external stimulus from the world has largely arisen from the positivistic psychological theories of cognitivism, which have dominated learning theory for several decades.^{25,39} Cognitive theories largely eclipsed or subsumed earlier behavioral psychological theory, although cognitive and behavioral theories are often seen as complimentary.⁴⁰

Competence when viewed from a positivistic perspective is researched and theorized by seeking to ‘reduce’ the observed phenomenon into the simplest elements or objects possible, usually human attributes or characteristics. These characteristics are then correlated with contextual elements of the ‘real world,’³¹ allowing competence to be characterized as a collection of various attributes such as skills and abilities.³² Competence when theorized this way does not include key issues such as the situational uniqueness of context as *experienced* by the individual, nor the emergent dynamic of contextual change and the passage of time.³⁰ A summary description of the positivistic notion of competence is provided in [Table 1](#). Next an interpretive understanding of competence is considered. This perspective adds considerable insight into the way in which competence is accomplished.

Competence as understanding: an interpretive-relational view

Alternative perspectives concerning human competence which arise from the interpretive research tradition are evident in the literature.^{32–34,41–50} Of common concern in this literature is the lack of inclusion of work specific contextual

aspects in the dominant positivistic notion of competence, and therefore how competence is accomplished.⁵¹ Interpretivism suggests that people classify their experiences into categories in their own minds – self constructing their reality, thus reality is not external to themselves.³¹

From this perspective there is no pre-existing ‘truth’ and research inquiry focuses broadly on how people self-construct their individual ‘facts’ or ‘truths.’⁵² ‘Truth’ as experienced by a person is considered as ‘constructed’ through social interaction, especially conversation³¹ and is also influenced by the person’s perceived past experience.⁵² With this view, context is not separate from the individual, but is continually self-constructed and re-constructed as perceived circumstances change with time.³⁰

Studies utilizing interpretive research to study competence in different work contexts suggest that the way knowledge and skills are used in accomplishing work tasks are in fact situational and context dependent, such as in education,⁵³ nursing,⁵⁴ and motor engineering.³² Schön (1983) observed a range of workers engaged in different disciplines and concluded that attributes used in performing their work are not separate from their experience of the work, concluding that the attributes used seemed to be related to the work through their way of framing the particular work situation.⁵³ Schön’s findings suggested that the actions that workers applied to work based problems arose not primarily from standard knowledge sources, but from continuous and ongoing conversation and reflection within their specific work context.⁵¹ The knowledge interventions appeared to be developed in the action of doing the work revealing a “kind of knowing ... inherent to the action itself.”^{51,53}

Cook and Brown (1999) argue that not everything a person knows and does can be explained by the explicit and tacit knowledge they possess.³⁴ Instead, they suggest there is a distinction between “... knowledge *used in action* and knowing *as part of action*” (emphasis original).³⁴ Using the example of bicycle riding, their theorizing separates the concept of ‘knowledge’ as that which is possessed (explicit and tacit knowledge), from ‘knowing-in-action’ which is only accessible to the individual through some act of ‘doing,’ or in their example, actually riding the bicycle. They suggest: “Being able to ride requires interaction between the (tacit) knowledge we possess and the present activity of being in motion on a bike. The activity of riding, itself, is a form of

knowing,” which means that knowledge acts as “a tool in the service of knowing.”³⁴

Sandberg’s (1994; 2000) observations of engine optimizers,^{32,48} and later theoretical development,²⁵ further establishes the idea that knowledge acts as a tool for knowing.⁵¹ The original studies of Sandberg with workers in the motor engineering industry showed that workers’ different ways of *understanding* their work explained different ways their work was performed, or their competence.^{32,48} In these studies, understanding does not represent some type of cognitive filter or belief system residing in the mind of the individual, but is integrated in the “dynamic, intersubjective” actions of individuals, over time.³³

Rather than relying on psychological theories of cognition and behavior to explain human action and learning, this perspective of competence is founded on the notion of life-world, a concept originally proposed by the philosopher Edmund Husserl.⁵⁵ The concept of life-world considers that the human world is an experienced world and never separate, such that “... person and world are inextricably related through lived experience.”⁵⁶ With this perspective, the person is not primarily assumed to be a rational and cognitive being who attempts to deal with a complex external world, but is a ‘being in the world’ and in constant relationship with their experienced world involving body, mind, emotions and practices over time.⁵⁷ According to Husserl we come to ‘know’ through our lived experience which then enables our particular way of understanding and engaging the world.⁵⁵ This means that the life-world is prior to thinking and cognition.⁵⁶ Understanding is regarded as being intertwined within the life-world of the individual and is therefore integrated with knowing, acting and being.³³

Sandberg’s central findings suggest that while knowledge, skills and other attributes are vital to the concept of competence, their use is *preceded* by and based upon the person’s understanding of the work.^{32,48} Given that understanding is not static but is always in process,²⁵ the enacted nature of understanding implies that like ‘riding’ in the bicycle riding example given above, it is a type of ‘knowing.’ Put another way, the ‘knowing of understanding’ organizes the individual knowledge and skills (tools) into distinctive competence in work performance, therefore demonstrating how knowledge and skills are used as tools for enacting understanding (knowing). This shows how understanding (knowing) is a *part of* action which also organizes the knowledge and skills *used in*

action, together forming and constituting an individual’s competence. Competence is therefore understood as holistic performance. Person and work performance are unified and irreducible which provides a more direct explanation of how individual competence, or a particular way of performing at work is accomplished.³²

The ongoing process of understanding creates and shapes the perceived context, as experienced by the person.²⁵ Through the patterns of constant action and interaction within their context, individuals affect that experienced context which affects them simultaneously, both enabling them to do certain things but also constraining them from doing others.³¹ Understanding is also historical in that in part, present understanding is defined by history. Understanding thus incorporates the temporal dimension into the relationship between the person and the work, where historical understanding of work establishes how work will be interpreted next time.²⁵

The specific meaning tacitly applied to knowledge and skills by the individual is what gives priority to what knowledge and skills are maintained and developed in accomplishing the work,³² and as such establishes the context and direction of that learning. Therefore to change a person’s competence requires a change in a person’s understanding of their work and therefore the meaning of what it is they are trying to accomplish. This is regarded as the most fundamental form of learning.²⁵ At the most basic level, learning can be seen to be either that new aspects are made sense of and integrated into an individual’s already existing understanding, or that new aspects cannot be made sense of, unless and until a ‘change in understanding’ takes place.²⁵

The key here is that a person’s understanding within their lived experience precedes and therefore shapes learning through further experiences, social interaction or formal education.⁵⁶ Knowledge is regarded as an outcome, or activity of our own making and learning is primarily an ongoing social process inseparable from the individual’s lived experience.³⁴ It is acknowledged that it is difficult for individuals to identify let alone question their own understanding, being mostly taken for granted and beyond reflection.^{25,30} The implication is that learning mostly requires the intervention of others if competence is to be changed. [Table 1](#) contains a summary of the key points pertaining to the interpretive-relational view of competence. In the next section the concept of capability as theorized from two

different literatures is examined, both of which include a notion of competence.

From competence to capability

Cairns and Stephenson (2009) point out that the word ‘capability’ has had a long and interesting history within the English language.¹⁵ Meaning more than just ability, these authors point out that most dictionary definitions also refer to “unused capacity,” as being part of the meaning, inferring some “potential ability” or “an underpinning latent or potential store of ability.”¹⁵ Interest in potential ability to meet planned or unknown futures has been at the center of the concerns of the strategic business management discipline, the literature of which is reviewed next.

Individual capability – as a component of organizational capability

The dominant conceptualizations of capability are viewed as an organizational, not individual phenomenon, with less if any relevance placed on the individual.^{20,58,59} Within the organizational context, capability refers to “a firm’s capacity to deploy resources, usually in combination, using organizational processes, to effect a desired end.”⁶⁰ Capability in this context is concerned with information and its development, carriage and exchange within the human capital of the firm. To emphasize organizational capability in relation to rapidly changing business environments, the notion of organizational capability has been extended into what has become a field in its own right, the field of organizational dynamic capability.^{20,61}

Organizational capability scholars have sought to specify the role and effect of individual managers in firm level capability theory, albeit in most instances as a supplement to existing explanations of firm dynamic capability.^{10,16,17,62} For example, Adner and Helfat (2003) proposed the concept ‘dynamic managerial capability’ to help explain differences in decisions that managers make in producing different firm performances in changing business circumstances.¹⁶ They define dynamic managerial capability as “... the capabilities with which managers build, integrate, and reconfigure organizational resources and competences.”¹⁶ These capabilities have been further explained as ‘capacities,’ for example, to sense and seize opportunities and to transform and reconfigure firm assets.¹⁷

Capability at the individual level is disaggregated into constituent parts, capabilities or capacities. This theoretical model is consistent with the positivistic

explanation of competence as consisting only of competencies described variously as knowledge and skills. Individual capability is also considered to be constituted by knowledge and skills, where these attributes are the right ones to deal with issues of dynamic complexity and change. Learning is seen as a key feature in the idea of dynamic capability,⁶³ and even that learning is itself a dynamic capability, rather than just a producer of it.⁶⁴ Learning is considered in terms of being a variable resource and follows a path dependent mechanism.⁶³ As a resource it enables the emergence of dynamic capabilities as a result of “co-evolution of tacit experience accumulation processes ... (and) knowledge.”⁶⁴ Knowledge is viewed as a variable and is explicit, and able to be codified and articulated.⁶⁴

The positivistic conception of individual (dynamic) capability, similar to the positivistic conception of competence, accentuates the underlying ontology of realism where the person and the world are assumed to exist separately. From this view, managers are considered to be collections of capabilities and are understood from a cognitive and procedural perspective with rational decision making framed, within a behavioral view of the firm.⁶² Individual competence is implicitly assumed to be a component of capability but is referred to as ‘competences’, suggested by Teece et al (1997) as “spanning individuals and groups.”²⁰

While the conceptualization of individual capability is primarily concerned with an individual’s ability to meet their specific and changing context, the description rendered in terms of capabilities and capacities remains devoid of time. Similar to the positivistic view of competence, capability as a concept is constructed as a timeless state which appropriately matches the timeless ‘real’ work context. The concept is framed by the changing context and passage of time, but neither is included in the concept itself, other than pointing to certain abilities which do not explain how capability happens. [Table 1](#) summarizes the key issues described. The main difference between the positivistic concepts of individual competence and capability is that learning ability is accentuated in conceptualizing capability. Learning is also the central ability in conceptualizations of capability within the education and training literature, which is reviewed next.

Individual capability – an education and training perspective

According to Hase and Davis (1999), the concept of capability emerged from the United

Kingdom in the mid 1980's.⁶⁵ Capability and its potential advantages as a perspective were raised in response to the perceived changing and uncertain nature of work and workplaces caused by an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. The proponents of the capability concept suggest that the turbulent and continuously changing operating contexts of the current times create an additional need, beyond, but inclusive of competence.^{66,67} It is important to note here that reference to competence in this literature pertains to the positivistic view of competence, with alternative interpretive-relational perspectives of competence uncited. Competence is considered limited in that competencies expressed as some combination of knowledge and skills were seen as not sufficient to explain how competence is enacted to produce appropriate and effective action in changing circumstances.⁶⁸ The application of values, commitment, creativity, intuition, integrity and other personal qualities are considered unaccounted for in the common understandings of competence, which are consequently seen as simplistic.⁶⁹

Capability in this literature is theorized as 'going beyond' the conceptualization of competence⁷⁰ by expanding the focus from current to potential abilities, and the use of this combination as a way of learning to succeed with both familiar and new circumstances.^{13,66} Competence is regarded as being a part of being capable,⁷¹ however capability is theorized to contain attributes above and beyond competence,^{13,15,68} and identifies learning as key.

Central to the concept of capability is the notion of adaptability in response to changing contextual factors and that self-initiated learning is involved.^{67,72} Knowing how to learn is considered a major part of what it means to be capable.^{73,74} Capability has been defined as holistic, "... an integration of knowledge, skills and personal qualities used effectively and appropriately in response to varied, familiar and unfamiliar circumstances."⁷⁴ Cairns and Stephenson¹⁵ have described capability as being constituted by a range of abilities, capacities, and characteristics and their notion is based on the social cognitive theory of Bandura.^{75–77} Social cognitive theory, suggests that an individual's knowledge is gained not only through the cognitive use of brain and mind, but also by the observing of others through social interactions and experience. Both activities are viewed within a cognitive framework of learning and gaining knowhow. Thus, people learn by observing others, with the environment,

behavior, and cognition all as key factors in influencing development.

Empirical studies supporting this concept of capability are limited, but can be summarized into two types of explanations: those that conceptualize capability as an attribute based phenomenon,^{71,78,79} and those that conceptualize the phenomenon as a system or complex system.^{15,72,80–82} The conceptualizations differ at more than one level, however a key difference between these approaches is the attempt in the latter studies to conceptually capture 'holism,' and to explain a more realistic nonlinear relationship between knowledge and action.

For example, Cairns and Stephenson (2009) theorize capability as an emergent ability resulting from the intertwinement and interactions of three key attributes with three key processes, which are necessary for implementation of the attributes.¹⁵ The attributes include current competence, self-efficacy and values which are also shared. Processes that are necessary for enactment of capability include self-managed learning, approaches to problem solving and being mindfully open to change.¹⁵ The implication is that the attributes and processes contained within the individual interact as a complex system to produce capability, rendering a 'holistic' conceptualization of capability.

When the actions of people are considered from a systems approach, their actions are said to result from processes of interaction between parts (or internal sub-systems). With this view, the person is also implicitly perceived as a sub-system as they interact with the myriad of other 'systems' that are implied as making up 'the context' in their world.³¹ Conceiving capability as driven by interacting systems allows the concept to be about the passage of time, but temporality itself is not included within the concept.³¹ Time therefore remains an external variable.

Systems thinking and the ideas of wholes, levels and boundaries arise from realist ontology,³¹ and as such, views the attributes and processes of capability as variables contained within an individual which can then interact in sophisticated ways with aspects of the external context. The concept as theorized by Cairns and Stephenson is also founded on social cognitive theory, which like other cognitive psychological theories, arises from the realist end of the ontological spectrum.¹⁵ Learning is considered to be the most important theoretical aspect of capability. As stated by Cairns and Stephenson: "Capability

is a learning process. That is, each individual changes and develops across a range of attributes that constitute the idea of capability as they grow and proceed through actions, successes and failures ...”¹⁵ The role of ‘attributes’ in constituting the phenomenon capability, is similar to the explanation of dynamic managerial capability being constituted by capabilities. This perspective reveals an objectified view of both explicit and tacit knowledge.

Using the mechanisms of systems theory and social cognition, capability is regarded as ‘holistic’ from a viewpoint of realism.³¹ Context is emphasized by its changing nature, but it remains an external variable in this theory, as does time.³¹ While the nature of capability depends on both context and the passage of time, the concept itself does not include them. The main issues to be considered with this concept of capability are summarized in [Table 1](#).

Discussion

The aim of this paper is to provide clarity of current theories of capability at the level of the individual, so as to illuminate further research possibilities into managerial capability in the pharmacy context. Competence is included because some literature fails to clearly distinguish the concepts competence and capability. Pharmacist education and professional registration in Australia is also strongly regulated around a highly stipulated idea of competence.^{21,83} The analysis here focused primarily on the ontological and epistemological origins of each of the concepts. This type of analysis reveals the mostly taken for granted assumptions concerning the phenomena on matters including: relationship with context and time, the underpinning philosophic or psychological theory through which individuals are assumed to function, and assumptions about how individuals know and learn. This analysis is summarized in [Table 1](#). Making the assumptions of the differing paradigms of inquiry more explicit gives greater clarity to the quality of outcomes that can be achieved from methodologies which arise from different research philosophies.

The analysis demonstrates the similarities in the two different conceptualizations of capability, from the strategy and the education and training literature. Both literatures explain capability on the basis of positivistic epistemology, with both conceptualizations including a positivistic notion

of competence. The idea of capability differs from competence as it includes what Cairns and Stephenson refer to as “unused capacity,” inferring “potential ability,” or an ability to deal with the unknowns of what comes next.¹⁵ This implies a future focus within the meaning of the concept,¹⁵ or an ability to ‘sense’ what is brewing ‘out there’ in the imminent future.¹⁷ To explain this ability, both conceptualizations of capability theorize that learning ability is key. Capable individuals learn by being able to rationally assess their world, work out what needs to be done through rational (although bounded) thought and cognition. Necessary knowledge is then accumulated to match the arising circumstances. A key attribute noted in the meaning of capability within the education and training literature is that cognitive learning is strongly self-initiated.¹⁵

The positivistic perspective of capability views the human world as a collection of aggregated forms, such as the environment or context, the organization, the individual and the abilities of the individual. The human phenomenon of capability within this view is an internally aggregated collection of other smaller structures, for example, attributes, process-systems or capabilities.⁸⁴ This method of theorizing is the dominant method in sociology, psychology and the management sciences³⁰ where each structure has a boundary, thereby creating an ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’ separating the structure or system from that which contains it.⁸⁴ This way of explaining human phenomena has been referred to as the ‘container view’ of human practices,^{33,84,85} which explains human achievements in terms of the characteristics contained within them.

Investigating and theorizing the nature of capability using a ‘container view’ is useful in that theorizing in terms of the ‘things’ that are believed to be important for enacting capability, reveal important forces that shape the phenomenon.³⁰ This provides a language in the form of named attributes, processes and capabilities that serves very useful for discourse. Several limitations of this type of theorizing have also been identified in the literature. As illustrated by Sandberg in his study of competence at work, the most fundamental limitation is that the often fragmentary list of knowledge and skills is an indirect, and not direct, description of competence.^{32,48}

Sandberg insightfully demonstrates that inventory type lists of knowledge and skills are more accurately described as ‘prerequisites’ for accomplishing competence rather than a direct

description of the phenomenon of competence itself.²⁵ Competence described this way does not demonstrate which knowledge or which skills are actually used, how they are used or with what emphasis, in relation to accomplishing some aspect of work.²⁵ The same can be said of capability when theorized this way, where an aggregated notion of ‘competence’ is also assumed to be on the list of necessary abilities ‘contained’ within the individual. The explanation of capability thus remains indirect.

Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011) assert three limitations within theory generated through positivistic epistemology: (1) that the meaningful totality in which individuals are immersed is not accounted for; (2) that situational uniqueness of context remains unrelated to individuals and what they do and (3) that time as experienced by individuals is abstracted out of the resultant theory.³⁰ Together the limitations produce theories that are distant or indirect representations of the phenomenon under investigation, and as such can only be of limited use to practitioners.³⁰ On the other hand, research and theory constructed through interpretive epistemology holds the promise of achieving inclusion all of the aspects deemed as limitations of the positivistic perspective.

Revisiting the analogy of bicycle riding, Cook and Brown suggest in addition to explicit and tacit knowledge that other forms of knowledge or ‘knowing,’ such as “the act of riding the bicycle,”³⁴ are required to more fully understand how riding occurs. ‘Knowing’ can be said to be in the ‘doing.’³⁴ As demonstrated in the analysis of competence theorized through the interpretive perspective, what people are actually doing in connection to their perceived motivations becomes the departure point for gaining a dynamic understanding of what is going on.^{32,48} Sandberg’s approach is an example of bringing into view *how* individuals perform so as to produce particular outcomes, which reveals the particular ways that individuals enact performances, or their ‘knowing.’ Far from the ‘container view’ of explaining human performance, the interpretive view considers the irreducible life-world as prior and permits explanations of how phenomena are accomplished in terms of relational totalities.³⁰

Capability is about enacting appropriate and immediate responsive action in the face of contextual change which requires the inclusion of dynamism and the passage of time in its

conceptualization. To progress pharmacy social research which captures how individuals accomplish particular outcomes, such as managerial capability, requires methods which privilege ‘knowing’ before ‘knowledge’³⁴ and the relational whole before clusters of attributes and characteristics.^{30,86,87} As evident from the work of Sandberg,^{32,48} seeking to explain phenomena through interpretive epistemology enables research methodologies that can deliver findings which describe patterned consistencies of action^{88,89} or patterns of relationality.³¹ Such patterns reflect the meanings that individuals apply to their world, and give insight into ‘the how’ of human performance.^{31,86} Elements and objects (‘things’) are not assumed to be the key to understanding phenomena, rather, the focus is upon the relational nature of human experience.³¹ Capturing the ways in which people act routinely in achieving particular outcomes can be approached using various qualitative methods such as the phenomenological life-world interview,^{30,32,90} ethnomethodology⁹¹ and narratives of practice⁹² (A review from the strategy literature summarizing exemplar methods for exploring social practices is contained in an article by Vaara and Whittington (2012).⁹³).

Conceptualization of capability from an interpretive perspective is not strongly positioned in the literature, and not at all in the pharmacy literature. However, through insights offered by an interpretive conceptualization of competence^{32,48} the completely different assumptions concerning how human actions arise from what they ‘know’ is emphasized. The interpretive perspective of competence and the research philosophy upon which it is based offers potential as a departure point for gaining insights into capability and its accomplishment in the pharmacy management context. Should fruitful outcomes arise from such research, it could compliment already significant research contributions that are assisting the Australian and New Zealand community pharmacy sector to adapt to the changing times. These include pharmacy organizational studies which have focused on areas such as organizational change management,^{94,95} organizational capacity building,⁹⁶ and organizational culture.^{97,98}

Conclusions and implications for further research

This review and analysis provides clarification for progressing research of pharmacist managerial capability at two levels. Firstly, the analysis reveals

what we know about the related concepts of competence and capability. Capability is distinct from competence in that capability expresses an outcome which includes handling of unknown problems and contexts as they arise, and that self-initiated learning is regarded as a primary means through which capability is accomplished. This invites research which seeks a better understanding of how capable pharmacy managers self-initiate and enact learning in the face of emerging contextual changes.

Secondly, the analysis reveals how we know what we know about the concepts. This was achieved by probing the epistemological origins of current theory concerning both concepts. The mostly taken for granted assumptions concerning context and time, and the psychological theory through which individuals are assumed to perceive, know and learn was revealed. To progress understanding of pharmacist managerial capability the interpretive conceptualization of competence is considered a most useful departure point for further research to understand capability as a holistic human performance. The interpretive view of competence reveals a very different theoretical perspective and style of thinking⁸⁶ and language in explaining competence as an accomplishment. This perspective enables the inclusion of context with time because the approach considers the individual's unfolding life-world as simultaneously prior to and a product of what the individual does.²⁵ Learning is considered an inseparable ongoing life-world process and what is learned occurs through a changing of enacted understanding, or knowing.

More generally, this commentary contributes a response to the recent challenge published in this journal that social pharmacy researchers need to devise new ways to explore the “complexity which manifests within social phenomena,” by taking interpretive/subjectivist approaches.²⁷ The interpretive-relational philosophic approach can provide access to methodologies which can deliver on this necessity.^{30,93} In recommending interpretive-relational approaches as a potentially fruitful perspective, the important positivistic approaches which have dominated social research for several decades are not dismissed or diminished. The point, demonstrated in the analysis of competence and capability, is that both perspectives deliver important knowledge through different ways of knowing and that far from being competing viewpoints, the perspectives should be regarded as complimentary.^{30,86} Complementarity

begins with being explicit about the assumptions we bring, and can produce with different perspectives.³⁰

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CONCLUSION

The review and analysis of literature has revealed that conceptualisations of capability remain either fragmentary lists of knowledge and skills or a phenomenon that occurs through the operation of a complex internal system with the right ingredients. These conceptualisations identify important characteristics of capability, however conceptualisations do not provide explanations getting to the heart of *how and why* capability is performed. Current conceptualisations remain indirect by not incorporating the emerging and experienced context, dynamism or the movement of time in their meanings. Learning is understood to be an accumulation of correct objectified knowledge prior to action. Potential ability to learn in the face of newly arriving problems is explained as mysteriously stored “unused capacity” (Cairns & Stephenson, 2009). It has been shown that the limitation of this type of theorising occurs as a consequence of the positivistic research paradigm through which such conceptualisations arise.

The conclusion delivered from the literature and research paradigm analysis is that researching the phenomenon from an interpretivist viewpoint including social constructionism can deliver more direct insights into ‘the how and why’ of human performance. To understand managerial capability as a dynamic accomplishment requires the incorporation of crucial aspects. These are the meaningful totality of ongoing action and experience, the situational uniqueness of experienced and emerging context, and the innate temporality that is implied by the notion of managing capably in unfolding circumstances.

The purpose of the thesis is to usefully respond to the research question: *How can we understand managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management?* The aim of the research is to reconceptualise the phenomenon of managerial capability as an ongoing accomplishment in the given context. The literature review and analysis settles the choice of a constructionist research paradigm, implying the necessity of a qualitative methodology. The next step is to select an appropriate methodology and method that both fits within this constructionist perspective and can deliver suitable theoretical reconceptualisation as a constructed finding. The selection of research methodology is argued in the next chapter.

***STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO CO-AUTHORED PUBLISHED PAPER
INCLUDED IN CHAPTER 3***

**Generating or developing grounded theory: methods
to understand health and illness**

This chapter includes a co-authored paper. This peer-reviewed methodology paper was published in the *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy* in Issue 3, of Volume 38, in June 2016, pages 663–670. The authors of this paper are: Phillip Woods, Rod Gapp, Michelle A King. [doi:10.1007/s11096-016-0260-2]

The contribution to the paper by the thesis author involved: database searches, article selection and collation, reading and cross-referencing and critical analysis of literature from different academic domains. The thesis author was responsible for writing all progressive drafts while seeking critical oversight from the co-authors and the anonymous peer reviewers. The thesis author holds primary responsibility for manuscript integrity.

Phillip Woods (thesis author) on the 23rd March 2018

Dr Rod Gapp (Primary supervisor) on the 23rd March 2018

Dr Michelle A King (Co-Primary supervisor) on the 23rd March 2018

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Chapter 3: Research methodology

The purpose of an exploratory investigation is to move toward a clearer understanding of how one's problem is to be posed, to learn what are the appropriate data, to develop ideas of what are significant lines of relation and to evolve one's conceptual tools in the light of what one is learning about the area of life. (Blumer, 1969, p. 40).

INTRODUCTION

Methodology is a study of methods in response to theory of how the research ought to proceed given the nature of the phenomenon that the research seeks to address (Liamputtong, 2010). The intention to undertake research presents the researcher with a range of choices concerning the theoretical approach and the methods that might be used to advance it. A suitable approach is guided by the nature and purpose of the research as well as the position adopted by the researcher (Liamputtong, 2010).

The nature of this study is an exploration of an enacted human phenomenon, managerial capability, in the specific context of the Australian community pharmacy healthcare sector. The aim of the research is to reconceptualise the phenomenon of managerial capability as an ongoing accomplishment in the given context. This aim seeks to serve the purpose of developing an alternative and more direct theoretical understanding of managerial capability than those summarised in the previous chapter. The last chapter argued for the selection of a constructionist research paradigm, implying the necessity of a qualitative research methodology. This chapter explains the selection of a suitable qualitative methodology that enables the construction of a useful and insightful explanatory theory concerning the enactment of managerial capability in the stated context.

The chapter is organised as follows. The chapter commences with a consideration of a range of potentially appropriate qualitative research methodologies that might suit the purpose and aim of this study. The consideration of the grounded theory methodology is argued. An overview of two epistemologically distinct modes or methods of grounded theory is then given within the manuscript titled "*Generating or developing grounded theory: methods to understand health and illness*".

The chapter continues by justifying the consideration of the particular grounded theory method espoused originally by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1994; 1998), and more recently by Corbin and Strauss (2008). A range of criticisms concerning grounded theory is then addressed. The chapter concludes by nominating appropriate criteria

regarding the achievement of credibility in a grounded theory and guarantee of its empirical grounding.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY SELECTION

Ideally, a more direct theoretical explanation of managerial capability will take into account the meaningful totality in which pharmacy managers are already immersed. It will also capture the situational uniqueness which every manager experiences, including their learning practices in the world they encounter. The considered methodology must enable direct theoretical description of the phenomenon, which reveals it more as a dynamic “practical accomplishment” (Gherardi, 2000, p. 217) within emerging context and time, rather than as a static product of constituent, interacting attributes and human functions, separated from context. Important considerations include, but are not limited to developing insight into i) how managerial capability is constituted through social processes and other actions; ii) how and why actions toward emergent novelty and stability are enacted and balanced and iii) how identity and meaning shape action.

Methodologically, delivery on such ideals can only be undertaken if priority is given to an ontological and epistemological position opposite to that reflected in the positivistic paradigm. The constructionist paradigm, situated within relativist or nominalist ontology permits qualitative methodologies that can incorporate and deliver the ideals expressed. Qualitative research methodologies can preserve the meaningful totality of managers’ immersion in their practices, and their experience of their unique context within a temporal flow of practice (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). When time is not abstracted away from the phenomenon under investigation descriptions of temporal aspects such as directionality (Bourdieu, 1990), anticipation, uncertainty and urgency (Nicolini, 2009a) are able to be preserved in the resultant theory (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011).

There is a wide range of qualitative methodologies that fit the constructionist paradigm. The next step in determining a suitable qualitative methodology is to consider the many methodological traditions through which qualitative research can be undertaken (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Liamputtong, 2009; Silverman, 2013). Stern (1994) suggested that there are five major interpretive methodologies: ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, action research, and historical research. Postmodernist methodologies such as discourse and narrative analysis could also be considered. All of the traditions share common aspects such as data collection involving

observations and language based data collection (for example, interviews), however the methodological framework within each tradition differs, as does the central purpose or focus (Silverman, 2013).

The focus of *ethnography* is the meanings and significances that people give to their behaviour and that of others (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Liamputtong, 2010). Insights are provided through *rich descriptions* that are made possible through the researcher becoming immersed in the cultural scene (Hammersley, 1983; Stern, 1994; Van Maanen, 2011). *Phenomenology* emphasises the meaning of an experience for a number of individuals, and its focus is to develop understanding of the *essence of experiences* about a phenomenon (Husserl, 1970/1936; Schutz, 1967). The output or narrative of a phenomenological study is a description of the essence of the experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1996). *Grounded theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) seeks to *develop theory from understandings* gained, through researcher interpretation of the meanings that actions and language (symbols) have for people, as they interact with one another within their context (Stern, 1994; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). A grounded theory is a set of categories that are related to one another to form a framework that explains the ‘main concern’ of the participants in relation to the research area, and shows how this concern is resolved and managed (Glaser, 1978; Hage, 1972).

The focus of *action research* is upon development of *solutions to practical problems* by actively implementing change and observing and assessing changes during the implementation process (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). *Historical research* is the interpretation and *narration of occurrences from past times*. The focus of this methodology is to develop an understanding of thoughts and actions of people involved in past events (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Finally, *discourse and narrative analysis* involve a number of processes that focus on the *analysis of communication* such as written or spoken language, conversation or stories (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). Discourse and narrative analysis methodologies have their origins in postmodernist philosophy, with strong constructionist epistemology. They emphasise idiosyncratic ‘variations’ in language use, disregarding the notion of an underlying reality or even a socially constructed reality (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). Discursive analysis holds that the central focus of study should be the constructive and flexible ways in which language is used (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Postmodernism adheres to an anti-theoretic stance and a rejection of ideas that knowledge development can arise from rational solutions and a structured and systematic approach (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Rosenau, 1992).

The aim of this study is to develop theory that advances understanding of the phenomenon of managerial capability in the Australian community pharmacy context. To accomplish this aim, the different ways actions and meanings are conceived and enacted by pharmacy managers is the central research focus. However, discovering the actions and meanings that constitute managerial capability is insufficient for this study unless theory that enables conceptualisation of the phenomenon as a whole is also developed. Of the range of qualitative traditions reviewed, grounded theory is considered as the most suitable methodology to achieve this purpose. The purpose of a theory is to provide a means of understanding “diverse and unrelated facts” in a structured and coherent way (Morse, 1994b, p. 47). As described by Corbin (2008, p. 55): “cohesiveness of the (grounded) theory occurs through the use of an overarching explanatory concept, one that stands above the rest. And that, taken together with the other concepts, explains the what, how, when, where and why of something” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

GENERATING OR DEVELOPING GROUNDED THEORY

Having considered the grounded theory methodology as the means to achieve the research purpose and aim, further careful consideration of style or approach to developing grounded theory is essential. This is because the grounded theory methodology, originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960’s (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), has evolved into more than one mode or method over recent decades (Locke, 1996). The two contrasting methods have evolved following the different espousals of the two author originators, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (McCann & Clark, 2003b).

The following published manuscript titled “*Generating or developing grounded theory: methods to understand health and illness*”, is included as a component of the thesis as it explains the similarities and differences between the two main modes of the grounded theory methodology. The manuscript begins by contrasting the important philosophical perspectives and the considerable consequences that these differing perspectives cause for research outcomes. But despite the differences, there are still strong similarities in the fundamental techniques of implementation, which are identified and described in the manuscript. Finally, a brief summary of criticisms of grounded theory is provided. A more generous discussion and analysis of grounded theory critique is offered in Appendix 4.

[A note to the reader: While the secondary part of the title of the manuscript, referring to “health and illness” appears to have low relevance for this thesis, the content is entirely consistent to the point of this chapter. When the manuscript was originally submitted to this journal it was simply titled “Generating or developing grounded theory” and came directly from the analysis of methodology connected to this thesis. The journal editor insisted that the title be expanded to include a health-related reference in deference to the journal’s mainly health researcher/practitioner readership.]

After comparing and contrasting the two modes of grounded theory, the selection of the more constructionist mode, following the thinking of Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) will be explained and justified.

Generating or developing grounded theory: methods to understand health and illness

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Abstract Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that aims to explain social phenomena, e.g. why particular motivations or patterns of behaviour occur, at a conceptual level. Developed in the 1960s by Glaser and Strauss, the methodology has been reinterpreted by Strauss and Corbin in more recent times, resulting in different schools of thought. Differences arise from different philosophical perspectives concerning knowledge (epistemology) and the nature of reality (ontology), demanding that researchers make clear theoretical choices at the commencement of their research when choosing this methodology. Compared to other qualitative methods it has ability to achieve understanding of, rather than simply describing, a social phenomenon. Achieving understanding however, requires theoretical sampling to choose interviewees that can contribute most to the research and understanding of the phenomenon, and constant comparison of interviews to evaluate the same event or process in different settings or situations. Sampling continues until conceptual saturation is reached, i.e. when no new concepts emerge from the data. Data anal-

ysis focusses on categorising data (finding the main elements of what is occurring and why), and describing those categories in terms of properties (conceptual characteristics that define the category and give meaning) and dimensions (the variations within properties which produce specificity and range). Ultimately a core category which theoretically explains how all other categories are linked together is developed from the data. While achieving theoretical abstraction in the core category, it should be logical and capture all of the variation within the data. Theory development requires understanding of the methodology not just working through a set of procedures. This article provides a basic overview, set in the literature surrounding grounded theory, for those wanting to increase their understanding and quality of research output.

Keywords Data collection · Grounded theory · Interviews as topic · Methods · Qualitative research · Research philosophy

Impacts on Practice

- Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that aims to explain social phenomena. Differences between the methods (or modes) within the methodology have arisen over time in response to evolving perspectives of how knowledge arises (ontology) and the nature of the knowledge produced (epistemology).
- Pharmacy practice research has a poor record of engaging or even referencing the original theories upon which grounded theory is based, in many cases delivering a ‘quick-fix’ and procedural approach, with poor theoretical rigour.

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Introduction

Grounded theory is a systematic methodology where the focus of study almost always encompasses human phenomena involving social process, social structure and social interactions [1]. The methodology belongs to a group of “naturalistic” methods of social research which contribute to understanding the nature of social life, especially within healthcare settings [2]. Its purpose is to develop a theory that conceptually explains human motivation or patterns of behaviour [3]. While grounded theory analytical techniques are being increasingly used to guide thematic analysis without producing theory, the focus of this paper is on the grounded theory methodology used for the purpose of producing ‘grounded theory’. A grounded theory is defined as a set of categories that are related to one another to form a framework that explains the ‘main concern’ of the participants in relation to the research area, and shows how this concern is resolved or managed [4, 5]. The methodology has been extensively used to gain new insights into how people deal with health related issues from their own perspectives, such as death and dying [6], chronic illness [7], addiction recovery [8], quality of care [9] and medication adherence [10, 11].

When people interact, they exhibit behaviours which are contextualised through their social roles. Actions are not seen as being made directly in response to the actions of others, but rather in response to the *meaning* which is attached to such actions [12]. ‘Symbolic interactionism’ [12] forms the basis of grounded theory epistemology¹ and is regarded as the most important source of inspiration for grounded theory [13, 14]. The interaction between people is viewed as symbolic because the interactive processes use the symbols of language, words and interpretation [15]. Using grounded theory, the researcher seeks to extract an understanding of the way meaning is created in social settings [15]. Theory is developed from understandings gained, through researcher interpretation, of the meanings that actions and language (symbols) have for people, as they interact with one another within their context [16, 17].

Grounded theory can be used to develop two types of theories: formal or substantive [18]. Formal theories are more general and have explanatory power across a range of situations, and are often developed at the end point of longitudinal research [19]. A substantive theory is developed from inquiry in a specific area, such as a particular type of organisation [19], profession, or group of patients, and is the most common type of theory derived from grounded theory [20].

A suitable research approach is guided by both the nature and purpose of the research, as well as the position

adopted by the researcher [21]. The purpose of this paper is to assist the researcher who is considering grounded theory methodology, to produce theory, for the first time. Grounded theory has a lot to offer but it comes with its own language and getting started requires significant reading. The aim of this paper is to provide a basic overview of the methods (or modes) which fall within the methodology known as grounded theory. While there is not space in this introductory article to unpack exemplars, the cited literature provides a rich resource of advice for the novice and experienced researcher alike.

Grounded theory: which method (mode)?

Sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss developed their grounded theory method in the 1960’s [18], concerning studies of awareness of dying patients in hospitals [6]. Today there is more than one mode or method within the grounded theory tradition. Different approaches have evolved and developed since the original version offered by Glaser and Strauss [22]. The differences between the methods are not trivial and are separated by contrasting philosophical perspectives and paradigms of inquiry [23]. A different approach has been developed and promoted by Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin [24, 25].

The Strauss and Corbin version, which is epistemologically distinct from the original or ‘classic’ Glaser and Strauss [18] version, is viewed as a maturation and branching of the grounded theory method [26]. The approaches have several common and differentiating elements [27]. The two versions have important differing philosophical perspectives [26], outlined in Table 1.

The research philosophy that underpins the classic approach implies that a ‘real’ reality exists but that this reality is not completely apprehensible [26]. This perspective assumes that the researcher can maintain a distance and thus objective independence from the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore the research approach should be scientific in the same way as the physical sciences [21]. This presumes that analytical induction² can be accomplished objectively, without researcher preconceptions, and that ideas and theory ‘emerge’ from the data [4, 28]. It is therefore recommended that the researcher should avoid reading literature from the immediate area of concern [18].

The research philosophy of the Strauss and Corbin approach assumes that reality cannot actually be known,

¹ Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge or knowing.

² Induction is a method of reasoning which uses observations (facts) to develop generalisations (or theory). It is the opposite reasoning process to deduction which moves from hypothesis (theory) to confirmation of a fact.

Table 1 Philosophical perspectives of two grounded theory methods

	Classic Glaser and Strauss [18] grounded theory method	Strauss and Corbin's [24, 25] grounded theory method
Ontology ^a	Realism: the social world is 'out there' and can be objectively measured [28]	Relativism: the social world is an experienced world and can only be interpreted and constructed
Epistemology	Positivist ^b	Less positivist—more social constructionist ^c
Methodological purpose	To reveal emergent theory about a substantive topic at the beginning of a research discovery process where the theory is then verified through measurements such as survey or experiment	To provisionally explain the main concern of a substantive topic, revealing how this concern can be understood, resolved or managed, where verification occurs throughout the course of the research

^a Ontology refers to the nature of reality or the nature of 'being'

^b Positivism is a perspective that views knowledge as 'positive' in that it can be discovered and verified by natural scientific procedure

^c Social constructionism is a perspective that views knowledge and truth as created by the human mind and not merely 'discovered' as if it were already there to be 'found'

but it can be interpreted [24]. Therefore, the methodological process seeks to develop an interpretation of reality, which is thus seen as relative [26, 27]. In contrast to the classic approach, the Strauss and Corbin approach recommends the researcher becoming familiar with the literature and sensitive to what is known about the research area and knowledge about the problem. Familiarity with the literature is recommended so as to undertake a more flexible pathway toward analysis, utilising insights from many sources [28, 29]. While the grounded theory methodology produces only one theory concerning a phenomenon, the social constructionist epistemology permits the proposing of a number of positions about the main concern. At the same time it embraces the contradictions and ambiguities (competing or opposing 'truths') that may exist in those positions [30]. The key differences between the Glaser and Strauss (classic) and Strauss and Corbin approaches are summarised in Table 2.

A key issue of difference between the methods centres on the question of the researcher's preconceptions [13, 28]. The classic version suggests that keeping knowledge and preconceptions low permits concepts and ideas to emerge from the data [4]. The Strauss and Corbin version clearly sees the researcher being actively involved in the method and should draw on his or her experiential knowledge for collecting and analysing data [31]. Knowledge gained from the literature is an important way to raise researcher theoretical sensitivity [24, 31, 32], however the purpose of such sensitivity must be directed toward an enhancement of analysis [29]. The literature should serve to raise the researcher's awareness of the useful findings and theories from previous studies, but also weaknesses, particularly in reported methodologies.

Another difference between the versions involves the emphasis of 'verification' of the grounded theory. According to Glaser, grounded theory is systematically generated and "should be seen in sequential relation" to the verification of research, for example, through experiment or survey, (explained in more detail below), with the

aim of "building up of scientific facts" [33] (p. 30). Strauss and Corbin suggest that verified substantive theory developed from the grounded theory method should produce a framework for action [24, 31]. They also suggest that verification resides within the constant comparison processes. In this case, verification occurs "throughout the course of a research project rather than assuming that verification is possible only through quantitative research" [31] (p. 274).

A further difference between the two methods centres on the apparent inflexibility of the research process recommended by Strauss and Corbin [13]. Although the Strauss and Corbin version is regarded as being more flexible than the classic version in the approach to the uncovering of the research problem, the accusation of inflexibility arises from the structured and rules-governed approach to data collection and analysis [27]. Charmaz [34] criticises the Strauss and Corbin research approach by claiming it restricts the ability of the analyst to represent the whole experience of the participants involved because of such fine grained procedures.

Somewhat in response to the criticisms outlined, Corbin has clarified her position in the latest version of the Strauss and Corbin methodology. Her reflections and clarifications are contained in the third edition of the *Basics of Qualitative Research* text, published by Corbin in 2008. Here, she reveals adjustments which respond to the rise of the social constructionist perspective, while seeking to preserve the procedures that deliver credible theory. (See Corbin and Strauss [29] pp. 1–17).

Implementation principles for the grounded theory methodology

Despite the different methods of grounded theory having distinctly different philosophical bases and purposes, they share the fundamental techniques described originally by Glaser and Strauss [18]. Key common fundamentals are (1)

Table 2 The main differences and outcomes between two recognised methods (modes) of grounded theory methodology

	Classic Glaser and Strauss [18] grounded theory mode	Strauss and Corbin's [24, 25] grounded theory mode
Research problem	Less flexible: emerges in the study [27]	More flexible: arises from personal experience; suggestions by others; literature; emerges in the study [27]
Researcher's role	Maintains distance and independence [28]	Acts as an active interrogator of data [28]
Focus in the field	Main emphasis on symbols, interactions and context; emphasis on socially constructed world of participants (micro) [27]	Emphasis is on structural, contextual, symbolic and interactional influences; emphasis on describing cultural scene (macro), and socially constructed world of participants (micro) [27]
Theory	Theory is <i>generated</i> directly from the data. The theory is then available as hypotheses for testing and verification through further research [26]	Emphasis is on theory <i>development</i> and verification of theory and hypotheses concerning a social process—developed through researcher [27]. (Note: the term 'verification' in each mode has a different meaning and means of application)
Literature review	Main review to support emerging theory [27]	Preliminary review to enhance theoretical sensitivity; Main review to support developing theory [27]
Grounded theory approach leads to	Experimental or survey research resulting in a verified grounded theory, or in some cases, the theory may have limited application as a provisional theory, when there is fit to a particular situation [26]	A theoretical understanding with direct practical application and/or problem management [26]

Adapted from comparisons by Annells [26], Easterby-Smith et al. [28] and McCann and Clark [27]

theoretical sampling; (2) data analysis driven by constant comparison; (3) the need for theoretical sensitivity, and (4) the identification of a core category. What follows is a brief description of each of these four fundamentals.

Sampling, theoretical sampling and saturation

While theoretical sampling processes should guide the majority of sampling choices, to commence a study, a purposive sampling process will likely be used to select the first few participants [35]. Purposive sampling refers to a deliberate selection of specific individuals who are likely to be able to provide information relevant to the aims and purpose of the study. After the first few interviews have been analysed, theoretical sampling strategies can then be employed.

Theoretical sampling is a sampling process guided by the developing theory [25, 36] and will guide the choice of participant, their situation and the themes of inquiry pursued by the researcher. Theoretical sampling is defined as "...the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges [18] (p. 45)." Theoretical sampling is continued until conceptual saturation is reached [25].

Saturation cannot be viewed simplistically as a casual judgement that nothing new is coming from the data.

Corbin and Strauss provide a quite specific definition of saturation designed for practical achievement: "...saturation is more than a matter of no new data. It also denotes the development of categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, including variation, and if theory building, the delineating of relationships between concepts" [29] (p. 143). Categories, their properties and dimensions are described in the next section.

Qualitative research which seeks to develop theoretical concepts to completion *cannot* prescribe beforehand how many interviews are required [17, 29]. Sample size is guided by issues such as the aim or purpose of the research; the perceived or real homogeneity of the participant group; what will be helpful in the concept development process; availability of resources to conduct the research, and most importantly, what will produce credible findings or theory [35].

It must be emphasised that it is not possible to predict sample size in advance. But given the limits of time and financial resources confining most researchers, the literature can help the novice with credible measurements of sample sizes from *past* grounded theory studies. For example, Guest et al. provide guidance concerning sample size and saturation [37]. Saunders' systematic review of the literature concerning grounded theory suggests that between 20 and 35 interviews could act as a reasonable guide [38–40]. Others have suggested between 20 and 50 will be required [18, 41]. These literature-based estimates

may assist researchers in the project resource planning stage, but it must be remembered that ‘theoretical saturation’ is the true regulator of sample size.

Data analysis and constant comparison

The ultimate grounded theory is ‘grounded’ in the collected data. The aim of the researcher initially is to identify the common themes and concepts which link the individuals through the data [42]. The aim of analysis, aided by experience, is to bring clarity to the diverse patterns of connectivity between concepts, contexts and processes, and how they move and interact over time. It is from discovery of these patterns of connectivity that the integration of theory becomes possible [15, 25, 29]. At the beginning, analysis commences with the process known as coding [29].

A code is an analyst-created abstract representation of an event [25], whose purpose is to establish a relationship with the data (e.g., interview transcript), and with the participant [43]. It is vital that the code is primarily linked to the data, and not to the preconceived ideas of the analyst. Analysis of multiple codes, and through constantly comparing codes with codes permits the analyst to capture conceptual patterns and themes in the data which can then be clustered under a meaningful categorical name [44], or ‘category’. It is the combination of coding with constant comparison of the data which provides the basis of category building [45]. Coding ultimately enables the analytic reintegration of the concepts to theory [46].

Initial abstraction of data into codes, known as open coding, and its later reintegration into more concentrated and abstracted codes known as axial coding, increasingly go hand in hand as the analysis proceeds with growing data [29]. Data can be coded in many ways depending on the analyst’s interpretation of the incident or event within the context in which the incident or event took place. The participants’ understanding of their world and their motivations for actions are also framed and influenced by their interpretation of context. The context is therefore a vital consideration in the analytical process [25, 29].

Strauss and Corbin describe open coding as a process where: “...the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena reflected in the data” [25] (p. 102). What the analyst looks for to identify the “discrete parts” are what Strauss refers to as “*indicators*” [32] (pp. 25–26). An indicator refers to a word, phrase or sentence, (or series of words, phrases or sentences), within the transcript, to which a conceptual label is applied which is meaningfully associated with the indicator [47]. But while coding an indicator allows for the application of a conceptual name, the essential constant

comparison process requires that the identified indicator(s) are then compared with other indicators that have been coded in the same way. This comparison looks for specific similarities and differences in the quality of the indicator.

As the concepts from the data are developed through the open coding process, the concepts are then continually compared with each other so as to group concepts into more abstract collectives or categories. Strauss and Corbin suggest that a category is a “classification of concepts” [24] (p. 61). Strauss defines a category as “any distinction (that) comes from dimensionalizing.” [32] (p. 21). It is generally accepted using the grounded theory method that categories should be developed in terms of their “properties” and “dimensions” [29] (pp. 159–165), which are constructed during the axial coding phase. Properties are defined by Strauss and Corbin as “characteristics of a category, the delineation of which defines and gives it meaning” [25] (p. 101), whereas dimensions are described as “variations within properties that give specificity and range to concepts (and categories)” [29] (p. 159).

The indicators described earlier are a fertile source for developing dimensions of properties, concepts and categories. Ultimately, the category name and meaning should capture the similarities among a set of concepts which comprise it, but also allow for differences between the comprising concepts which also give the category dimensionality. A study illustrating the ‘dimensionalizing’ of conceptual properties and categories is offered by Woods et al. [48].

Researcher sensitivity: theoretical sensitivity

Sensitivity is described by Corbin and Strauss as meaning “having insight, being tuned into, being able to pick up on relevant issues, events, and happenings in data.” [29] (p. 32). In practice, the analyst, regardless of background, will draw on their accumulated knowledge, so it is not a matter of whether existing knowledge is used, but how [49]. Sensitivity here, refers to the researcher being sensitive to how data are collected and what data are collected. The existence and development of ‘theoretical sensitivity’ within the researcher can also be used to ensure credibility of theoretical outputs and guard against theoretical bias [42]. Theoretical sensitivity is described by Glaser and Strauss as the ability of the researcher to have “sensitive insights” into the phenomenon being studied [18] (p. 252). Thus pre-existing and developing insights enable the researcher to think inductively and to develop theory from observations of the specifics [42].

But while the researcher’s experiential background may be able to see the data in an experienced way and develop informed pathways of analysis, this advantage must be

balanced against the same researcher-experience potentially causing a reading of data incorrectly [29]. This balance requires the sensitivities of the researcher be used to grow and test emerging concepts and theory, rather than reshape or constrain them [50]. Constraint can occur if the problem is too rigidly defined or conceived by the researcher at the outset. The researcher must cultivate a flexible approach which remains attuned to participants' descriptions, patterns of behaviour and problems. The researchers' pre-existing conceptions or ideas about the phenomenon may be confirmed or discarded.

Corbin and Strauss suggest three reminders to keep a suitable balance and appropriate use of sensitivity [29] (p. 33). The first suggests that the researcher continuously compare their knowledge and experience against the collected data, attending to careful reflection when making sense of the data. The second suggestion is to continuously render the data to concepts in terms of properties and dimensions of the event or phenomenon at hand. The properties and dimensions, become the working-concepts and form close connections to the data. They also allow a focus on the similarities and differences in events. The third suggestion is about the researcher remaining aware of priorities and is related to the first suggestion. As emphasised by Corbin and Strauss: "...it is not the researcher's perception of an event that matters. Rather, it is what participants are saying or doing that is important". In summary, researcher theoretical sensitivity precedes and accompanies the data collection process.

Identification of a theoretical core category

The first consideration in theoretical integration is to decide on the central category which integrates the existing identified categories, which in turn are defined by their properties and dimensions. The central category is also called the "core category" [29], and should be able to explain most of the variation in the data. The core category explains theoretically how all other categories are linked together. It is the analytical power of the core category that produces the foundation of theory for grounded theory. Axial coding and the integration of categories into the core category is described by Corbin and Strauss as critical in moving from descriptive story to theoretical explanation. Indeed, descriptive narrative which is put forward as 'theory' is recognised as one of the most significant pitfalls in the conduct of the grounded theory methodology [29, 50, 51]. While narrative describes the 'what' of a phenomenon, theoretical explanation goes to the heart of the 'how and why'.

Once the core category is developed, integration occurs through revising the story of the core category by utilising the already developed categories with their properties and

dimensions [29]. Corbin and Strauss suggest criteria for choosing a central or core category [29] (p. 105):

- It must be abstract; that is, all other major categories can be related to it and placed under it;
- It must appear frequently in the data. This means that within all, or almost all cases there are indicators pointing to that concept;
- It must be logical and consistent with the data. There should be no forcing of data.
- It should be sufficiently abstract so that it can be used to do research in other substantive areas, leading to the development of a more general theory.
- It should grow in depth and explanatory power as each of the other categories is related to it through statements of relationship (i.e., looking at how properties and dimension are interrelated across categories).

Through the use of tools of analysis suggested in this method, the researcher moves from an understanding of observed or narrated practice, to the establishment of theory. This is seen as a ground-up approach [15]. Ultimately, the integrative process should deliver a conceptual explanation of the core category as an underlying social process at an abstract level: the grounded theory [29].

Criticisms of grounded theory

The movement of the grounded theory method away from a positivism, toward social constructionism occurred because of criticism about the plausibility of objectivism in much of social science [52]. Both the data and how they are understood by the researcher are seen as human interpretations and thus cannot be accounted for in an objective sense [13]. Another criticism regarding grounded theory methods relates to the poor implementation of the grounded theory method by researchers who utilised the carefully explained instructions of the Strauss and Corbin version in an unconsidered way [42, 51].

It is suggested that many used the procedures as a "cookbook" recipe for conducting qualitative analysis [53]. It is claimed that researchers also bastardized the methods by adopting few of the essential methodological elements, or "altered them beyond recognition as grounded theory" [54] (p. 156). Further difficulties have also arisen when researchers undertake the method only in part [55], or produce a report of 'meanings' and call it theory, and/or report large tracts of narrative as findings that have not been analysed [50, 51]. These criticisms served to tarnish the reputation of grounded theory as a serious and rigorous method.

While each mode of the grounded theory method has its own recommended criteria for producing and evaluating

theoretical contributions [29] (pp. 302–307) [4, 33], both contend that the systematic approach to data analysis is a crucial basis for research rigour. The key outcome of a systematic approach is to be able to produce enough evidence to support the developed theory [56]. This places responsibility on the researcher to take seriously the philosophic presuppositions and precisely explained methods. The literature is rich with practical advice to keep the experienced researcher on track, and the novice appraised of what grounded theory methods require in their execution [1, 29, 42, 50–52, 56–59].

Conclusion

Research concerning people experiencing illness and health, requires an understanding that goes beyond the quantitative realm. Grounded theory can contribute to the “humanising” of empirical research concerning how we explore the lived experiences of people [2], because it places the patients’ stories in the foreground. This paper provides a basic overview of the qualitative research methods which fall within the methodology known as grounded theory.

Differences between the methods (or modes) has arisen over time in response to evolving perspectives of how knowledge arises (ontology) and the nature of the knowledge produced (epistemology). The modes have common elements, but there is a marked difference in how these elements are implemented, which goes to the heart of producing rigorous research outcomes. It has been noted elsewhere that pharmacy practice qualitative research has a poor record of engaging or even referencing the original theories upon which grounded theory is based, in many cases delivering a ‘quick-fix’ approach that fails to advance the discipline of pharmacy practice research [2].

It is therefore vital that researchers who use grounded theory are explicit about the particular approach they are using which underpins the rigour of the knowledge that researchers claim to produce. At the same time, it is wise to keep in mind that the methodology is still evolving [60] and that no one ‘owns’ any particular method [1], again emphasising the responsibility of researchers to completely understand and adequately justify their theoretical outputs. It is hoped that articles such as this can encourage discussions and the uptake of research which engages in qualifying human phenomena in health care.

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FOLLOWING THE STRAUSSIAN GROUNDED THEORY TRADITION

A comparison of the two modes of grounded theory methodology presents a clear choice for preferred method. Strauss's movement away from positivist epistemology toward social constructionism was largely driven by criticisms of the use of realist-objectivism (positivist epistemology) as a lens for analysis in social science (Charmaz, 2000). The limitations of the positivist approach in relation to this thesis were referred to in Chapter 1 and explained more fully in Chapter 2.

The most recent and revised version of the Strauss and Corbin approach to the grounded theory method, hereafter called the Corbin and Strauss (2008) version, is explicated in the third edition of 'Basics of Qualitative Research' (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In this revision, Corbin makes it clear that she is not "delineating a whole new method", but "modernising the method...dropping a lot of dogma, flexing some of the procedures..." (p. ix). Her opening reflections acknowledge the arrival of the postmodern era and validity of arguments and positions influenced by postmodern thinking.

In particular she acknowledges the proposition that analyst 'objectivity' is virtually impossible to achieve and that all data and its interpretation are relative. However, Corbin also makes it clear that she has not lost sight of the purpose of doing research which is to "*generate a professional body of empirical knowledge*" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. viii, italics original). To accomplish this, her methodological revision is concerned with "hold(ing) on to what is good about the past (version) while updating it to bring it more in line with the present" (p. 9). In doing so she proposes to rise to the challenge of Denzin (1994, p. 512), to "move interpretive methods more deeply into the regions of postmodern sensibility".

In particular Corbin, in keeping with Strauss's vision for research purpose and keeping faith with the pragmatism of Pragmatist philosophy, states the following beliefs:

...that though there are multiple interpretations that can be constructed from one set of data, generating concepts is a useful research endeavour. It is useful for two reasons. First, it increases understanding of persons in their everyday lives – their routines, habits, problems and issues – and how they handle and resolve these. Second, concepts provide a language that can be used for discussion and debate leading to the development of shared understandings and meanings. The

understandings can then be used to build a professional body of knowledge and enhance practice. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. ix).

Key clarifying issues raised in Corbin's personal reflections on the methodology, discussed in Corbin and Strauss (2008), are summarised in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 is offered as a discussion to explain the philosophical basis of grounded theory including the method's reliance on the notion of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). These theories are essential for the preservation of meaning in action, dynamism, emergence and temporality in the resultant grounded theory. An expanded range of philosophical assumptions that specifically underlie the Corbin and Strauss (2008) grounded theory methodology are expanded in Appendix 3. For the purposes of demonstrating more thorough scholarship required for this thesis, a deeper analysis of criticisms and suitable responses to them is offered next, with elaborations in Appendix 4.

CRITIQUES OF GROUNDED THEORY METHODS AND RESPONSES RELATING TO THIS THESIS

So far, grounded theory has been described as a method of qualitative inquiry through which the researcher develops theory utilising inductive analysis of collected data. The theory is developed via a series of iterative processes that begins with inductive theoretical analysis of early data, followed by further data collection directed towards checking, comparing and thus verifying the previous analysis. The purpose of grounded theory is to develop or extend theory, rather than to simply describe complex phenomena, or apply existing theories without empirical grounding of the theoretical development.

In this chapter, the branching and maturing of the original 'classic' version of the method established by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was explained. Crucial in this explanation is that while all variants of the methodology have a set of elements which are common and essential, the application of these elements differs in the versions or modes, depending on the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of the version. Those theorists who follow the Straussian tradition remain overtly connected to the philosophy of the Pragmatists. Others who follow the 'classic' tradition framed by Glaser seldom emphasise such a connection (Charmaz, 2008).

Critiques of grounded theory methodology centre on procedural arguments or epistemological concerns or a combination of both. An elaboration of the main criticisms as well as arguments about and between different modes is offered in

Appendix 4. Three main critiques, posed as questions, are described and addressed in Appendix 4:

1. Overt interrogation of the literature: forcing outcomes or sensitising analysis and verifying theory?
2. Meticulous systematic procedures: inflexible rigidity or clarifying elaboration?
3. Participants as knowledge sources: distant producers of facts or co-constructors of knowledge?

In responding to these critical concerns, the researcher has attempted to ensure that the ontological-epistemological basis of the Corbin and Strauss version is clearly explicated and compared with alternatives. Despite its positivist origins, the Corbin and Strauss (2008) version has taken a distinct constructionist turn in its epistemology. Original criticisms suggesting that the Strauss and Corbin version remained paradoxical (Charmaz, 2008) and was caught between conflicting epistemologies (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009) is probably fair. It is suggested (Charmaz, 2008) that the criticism of Strauss and Corbin's 1990 book as being technical and prescriptive, led to a more flexible rendition in 1994 (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The movement toward a more flexible and less prescriptive approach to the method is made clear in the Corbin and Strauss (2008) revision.

Corbin's revision (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), is recognised as being more clearly utilising relativist ontology. The perspective recognises multiple realities, endorses the engagement of analyst reflexivity, and rejects rigid application of technical procedures. The method is more clearly identifiable as a method based on the tenets of social constructionism (Charmaz, 2011).

This study, which sought to better understand the practice of managerial capability by Australian community pharmacy owner-managers, followed this lead by taking a social constructionist epistemological stance. The researcher is located within the study but during the research process consciously aimed to discern how participants' meanings and actions connected to larger social structures and interactions. While the theory which has been developed was constructed by the researcher, the researcher also paid careful attention to the method's techniques on offer, and used them as the method requires. Utilising the wisdom of Pragmatism and the perspective of symbolic interactionism, the researcher focused on development of actively interpreted findings that integrated context and time, rather than creating an objective report rendering social life as collage of neutral patterns.

Explicitly taking this approach throughout the research moved away from many of the criticisms which were based on the dominant grounded theory versions of past decades. Conducting research guided by Strauss and Corbin (1994; 1998) and as revised by Corbin and Strauss (2008) enabled the development of a Core category that is a robust Basic Social Process (Fagerhaugh, 1986), and as such addresses concerns about epistemology, methodology and method and results in a study that invites a judgement of excellent execution.

Key practical considerations which came from reviewing the criticisms, were that the processes of data collection, analysis and theory development must be made transparent. Also, theory developed must qualify as genuine theory rather than description, or a reporting of interpreted meanings. The detailed processes that constituted the data collection, analysis and theory development are explained in the next chapter. However before concluding, some reference needs to be made concerning the achievement of quality research using the grounded theory method.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

A grounded theory must be both credible and demonstrably ‘grounded’ in the data. Together these quality-requirements engender trust in the theoretical result. Credibility indicates the qualities of trustworthiness, believability and plausibility (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Credibility refers to ‘interpretive rigour’ and should address the trustworthiness of co-created theoretical constructions concerning human phenomena. Credibility needs to include convincing plausibility so that findings can be used to assist action taken by, or on behalf of research participants to meaningfully assist either themselves or their social context (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

The grounded theory method has several procedures embedded within it which promote the delivery of a credible result. For example, sampling was continued until the point of saturation, constant comparison was used rigorously throughout the analysis of data, and other data in the form of observations was collected in addition to interview data. The existence and development of theoretical sensitivity within the researcher was also used to ensure credibility and guard against bias (Schreiber, 2001).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) outline a set of criteria that relate to credibility of the descriptive findings and theory constructed through the research process. In this study these criteria have been used from the outset as a guide to ensure credibility of findings and theory. The criteria are directly addressed in the context of this thesis in Chapter 8.

The seven evaluative criteria to clarify research process credibility are suggested as a series of questions posed by Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 269), and are listed as follows:

Criterion 1: How was the original sample selected? On what grounds?

Criterion 2: What major categories emerged?

Criterion 3: What were some of the events, incidents, or actions (indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?

Criterion 4: On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? After the theoretical sampling was done, how representative of the data did the categories prove to be?

Criterion 5: What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (i.e., among categories), and on what grounds were they formulated and validated?

Criterion 6: Were there instances in which the hypotheses did not explain what was happening in the data?

Criterion 7: How and why was the Core category selected? On what grounds were the final analytical decisions made?

In addition to being credible, a grounded theory must also be demonstrably 'grounded' in all areas of theory construction. Strauss and Corbin (1998) have also suggested a criteria-set to assist in the evaluation of the empirical grounding of a study. As with insurance for 'credibility', in this study the criteria for establishing empirical grounding have been used from the outset to ensure that the theory is indeed grounded.

As with the credibility-criteria, the evaluative criteria for empirical grounding are directly addressed in the context of this thesis in Chapter 8. The eight evaluative criteria to clarify empirical grounding of the grounded theory are also posed as a series of questions by Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 270-272), and are listed as follows:

Criterion (i): Are concepts generated?

Criterion (ii): Are the concepts systematically related?

Criterion (iii): Do the categories have conceptual density?

Criterion (iv): Is variation built into the theory?

Criterion (v): Are the conditions (context) under which variation can be found built into the study and explained?

Criterion (vi): Has process been taken into account?

Criterion (vii): Do the theoretical findings seem significant?

Criterion (viii): Does (or will) the theory stand the test of time?

Utilising these two sets of criteria as useful guides during the research process provided confidence for the researcher and surety of quality for the reader. A closer view showing how several of these criteria are met, particularly those pertaining to the credibility of the research process is evident in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explained and argued the consideration of the qualitative methodology, grounded theory. The chapter has also explained the reasoning for the consideration of the social constructionist mode of grounded theory, as expounded originally and developed by Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994, 1998). Grounded theory does not rely *only* upon iterative interpretations of the collected data. While the coding and progressive analytical process *is* indeed iterative, involving cycles of data collection and “loops” of deductive and inductive analysis, the theory development requires an evolution of abductive conceptual thinking and theorising that may include insights and inspirations from existing theory, the literature, and analyst intuition (Strübing, 2007, p. 594-5). Grounded theory development also relies on the philosophical foundations that guide data interpretation into theory construction. (See Appendices 1 – 3).

This chapter has attempted to show the trail of philosophical considerations that moved from the relativist ontological perspective, to the explanation of Pragmatist philosophy and symbolic interactionism. These considerations underpin the Corbin and Strauss (2008) grounded theory method which was used to achieve the research aim of reconceptualising the phenomenon of managerial capability as a dynamic accomplishment in the given context. In particular, the philosophical stance and matching research method permit and encourage the inclusion of experience of context, dynamism, social relations, emergence and temporality in the development of resultant theory.

Criticisms of the grounded theory method have been thoughtfully considered. Many of the critical issues raised in the literature apply to the epistemologically positivist version of the grounded theory method. This study follows a social constructionist stance and the researcher has shown how epistemological consistency has been achieved from the outset. Criteria concerning the evaluation of grounded theory credibility and empirical grounding are illuminated as a pathway to the development of high quality theory. Pitfalls in applying the grounded theory method are

avoided through a commitment to the procedural rigour of the method which is applied with a reflective and reflexive attitude.

The next chapter describes the processes of data collection and initial analysis. In Chapter 4, the methodological processes of sampling, interviewing, data collection and storage, interview transcription and initial analysis are described as they occurred. The next chapter thus provides a closer description of the method rather than the more abstract rendering of the methodology so far described. The description then moves to an explanation of how the properties, dimensions and Sub-core categories were developed, and thence the Core category. The Core category represents the Basic Social Process upon which the grounded theory of managerial capability is based.

Chapter 4: The method - Data collection and analysis

Man lives in a world of meaning (Mead, 1926, p. 382).

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methods and procedures through which data for this study were collected, managed and analysed. The data collection and analysis is directed towards addressing the question: *How can we understand managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management?* The aim of the research is to reconceptualise the phenomenon of managerial capability as an ongoing accomplishment in the given context.

As discussed in Chapter 1, participants in this study are professional pharmacists who are owner-managers of one or more community pharmacies in Australia, and who are also experiencing unprecedented challenges in their business environment. The chapter commences with confirmation of appropriate human research ethical approval to conduct the study. The chapter then explains in considerable detail the research participant sampling design, and data collection procedures and processes. Following this is a thorough explanation of how the initial analytical processes were implemented, including details of how the steadily increasing volume of data and analytical memos was managed and tracked. Explanation of how initial analytical codes coalesced into higher level concepts (dimensions, properties and Sub-core categories) is provided. Several appendices to this chapter serve to provide finer detail and exemplars.

The chapter concludes with an explanatory section summarising how quality and “goodness” (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002) of the research were preserved. This explanation builds on the important issues concerning research rigour, covered in the previous chapters. Important issues include the clear articulation of ontological and epistemological positioning, clarification of the research aim and linkage to the literature, and the selection and explanation of the grounded theory methodology. A crucial requirement for qualitative research rigour, and particularly the grounded theory methodology, is transparent and meticulous explication of research processes. This chapter is directed toward cementing confidence in data collection and analysis procedures, justifying the trustworthiness of constructed theory.

ETHICAL APPROVAL AND INFORMED PARTICIPANT CONSENT

This research study concerns the exploration of a human phenomenon, managerial capability. To investigate this phenomenon the research method requires an interaction between the researcher and participants. Before commencing the research, due ethical consideration was given to the study and its methods to ensure that the desired research outcomes would be completely supported by the means to produce them. Broadly, consideration was given to how participants might or might not be motivated to participate, how the researcher should approach and interact with participants, and how the participatory engagement might affect the participant and the researcher, after participation. These considerations are not only vital as a means of producing good research outcomes, they are important so as to comply with international, national and institutional regulations which govern and oversee the ethical conduct of human research.

At the heart of ethical considerations of a research study involving people, are four ethical principles and a range of important and related procedures (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001). The principles are directed toward the preservation and management of autonomy for the participant, and beneficence, non-maleficence and justice as obligations for the researcher. To achieve adherence to these principles, a range of further considerations, processes and instruments needed to be thought through or designed.

Crucial considerations are those of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent for the participants. Confidentiality refers to commitments and procedures that are directed toward the confidential control of the gathered data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Central to this concern is the non-publication and non-circulation of any information that either might harm the participant, or trespass their own expectation that the information was given confidentially. Anonymity refers to keeping both participants and their organisations anonymous, should any data arising from them be utilised in explaining research processes or findings (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Keeping participant identity anonymous also requires rigorous personal discipline on the part of the researcher, so as to not reveal participant identities in unguarded conversations during the research.

A key instrument that brings together the practical intent of ethical principles and considerations is the 'informed consent' documentation which received appropriate ethics committee approval prior to research commencement. Informed consent means

that both the research aims and methods are revealed to the participant, in language which is suitable for their comprehension, before they participate (Liamputtong, 2010). The informed consent paperwork contained two parts. The first part contained information describing the aims and purpose of the study, the investigatory team names and full contact details, explanation of what will be required of the participant and an assessment of risks and benefits. It also contained information regarding how confidentiality and anonymity is preserved and managed. The second part of the informed consent paperwork contains a detachable consent form which summarised the main matters explained in the first part, along with a place for the participant to sign and provide a date, if they wished to proceed. The informed consent paperwork can be examined in Appendix 5.

The principles and other issues described so far are the main matters which needed to be addressed in the formal research ethics approval sought for this study from the sponsoring institution, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. Ethics approval was sought from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on March 24, 2011. After consideration by Human expedited review-1, provisional ethical clearance was received on March 26, 2011 under the Human Research Ethics Committee code: GU Ref No: AIS/05/11/HREC. On April 8th 2011, notification of completed approval was received authorising data collection immediately. Research data-gathering commenced after approval was received.

DATA COLLECTION

DATA TYPES

Qualitative research generally, and the grounded theory method particularly, allow for many sources of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Data collection using more than one method was undertaken to maximise the richness of the data gathered. Richness in data has been described as “anything above the normal” (Weick, 2007, p. 14). Richness refers to the capacity of the data to enable the analyst to get beyond simple accounts of the phenomenon under study.

In this study the key data collection mechanisms consisted of interviews and their textual transcriptions and observation of interviewees. While the primary data source was from the series of interviews, the other data collected in the form of observations are summarised in Table 5. Using different strategies to collect data enabled the capture of as much variety and variation of the phenomenon under study as possible, within the study context.

Table 5: Types of data collected, and collection method for this study.

Data Type	Data Characteristic	How Collected
Verbal Account	What the participants say – actual words.	Interview – audio recording and transcription to word-document.
Observation – description of behaviour	What participants are seen or heard doing or saying within or outside interview.	Observation notes, research memos before and after interviews.
Observation – description of business setting and appearance	What the business setting or people look like, for example, building, pharmacy fixtures, pharmacy layout, dress standards, objects and artefacts.	Observation notes, research memos before and after interviews.
Observation – visual record	What is actually seen	Photographs taken on site or available from industry press from time to time.
Observation – document, industry press articles, advertising material	Piece of writing belonging or pertaining to the pharmacy business or setting.	Documents given to researcher by participant, advertising material available in the public domain, press articles.
Observation – reflection – personal researcher narrative	Reconstruction of experience that aids understanding.	Memo construction – as per grounded theory method.

INITIAL SAMPLING AND THEORETICAL SAMPLING

An overview of grounded theory sampling, theoretical sampling and conceptual saturation was given in Chapter 3, within the manuscript titled “*Generating or developing grounded theory*”. In this study, Australian community pharmacy owner-managers are the population of interest. While theoretical sampling processes guided the majority of the sampling choices, to commence the study, a purposive sampling process was used to select the first few participants (Patton, 2002).

At the outset, the researcher was seeking to interview pharmacist owner-managers who had a recognised business-practice history of deftly navigating their pharmacy business interests through challenging and changing business contexts over time. Since there is no accepted definition or description of what a capable pharmacy

manager is, or is not, underscoring the justification for this study, the criteria to approach the first five 'capable pharmacy manager' participants for this study were:

- Being an owner-manager of one or more Australian community pharmacies;
- Having a prominent reputation and recognition within the community pharmacy industry as being a highly effective manager over a minimum of 10 years.

To establish the second of these criteria, the views of important industry participants were sought. Discussions were held with:

- Leaders of national pharmacy industry peak bodies;
- Senior representatives of a specialist national accounting firm concerned with the management accounting and financial wellbeing of many pharmacies across Australia, and
- Pharmacy practitioner peers of the researcher.

Together, these criteria fostered recommendations of around twenty possible participants, suggested by the individuals and organisations consulted. Information concerning the prolonged financial viability and perceived superior managerial performance of certain pharmacy managers was gained from the specialist accounting firm. However, no financial data of any kind was sought or received from the accounting firm concerning those clients, nor was information of this kind needed. Both the researcher and the professional chartered accountants were aware of the vital need for confidentiality that bed-rockes the professional accountant-client relationship. No information of a confidential or private nature was sought from any of the others consulted, nor received from them.

It was the researcher's experience that many of the participant recommendations offered by those consulted were not equivocal, but enthusiastic, once they understood the nature of the study. Many of the names which arose in discussions were common to several of those consulted. Several managers had very strong reputations as being outstanding managers over a number of years. Once the names of the recommended potential participants were gathered, the researcher then selected the first prospective participant to contact. Notification of who the researcher approached was not fed back to those consulted in the purposive participant-search process, so as to preserve anonymity of the participant approached and subsequently selected.

After the first five participants were interviewed and the interview transcripts analysed along with observations, the sampling strategy moved from purposive sampling to theoretical sampling, which is the central sampling strategy for the

grounded theory method, regardless of mode (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Theoretical sampling is a sampling process guided by the developing theory (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and guides the choice of participant, their situation and the themes of inquiry pursued by the researcher. In this study, the sixth and subsequent participants were chosen taking account of the selection criteria mentioned above, but also on the basis of emerging concepts relevant to the study phenomenon. For example, the concepts “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting” became prominent theoretical concepts early in the research, so selection of new participants also took into account any history of the potential participants that reflected strong learning behaviours.

During the study, participants of different genders and from a variety of geographical locations were also sought. It is important to point out that this strategy was not undertaken to generate sample representativeness as in quantitative research. Different Australian locations were visited and interviews with both male and female participants were undertaken to try to maximise the richness of, and variation within the data. Theoretical imperatives remained the most important guide for theoretical sampling. Geography and gender were permitted to guide the sample selection as secondary considerations.

Seeking opportunities to maximise variation, for example as a result of different contextual forces relating to location, or gender, is considered to be consistent with what Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 201) call “relational and variational sampling”. Relational and variational sampling is theoretical sampling directed toward seeking out incidents that demonstrate variations within, and relationships between, the properties and dimensions of a concept or category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Relational and variational sampling must be guided by theoretical leads and not geographical or human characteristics *per se*. However, being able to include a variety of contexts through different locations, as well as a mix of genders as secondary issues, is regarded as being consistent with the thorough grounded theory data collection method. The complete list of the 25 participants, named under their allocated pseudonyms to protect anonymity, is shown in Appendix 6.

THE INTERVIEWS

Interviews and interviewing: an overview

Interviews can be undertaken with different design arrangements and implementation styles (Kvale, 2007). Interviews can be more or less formally organised

and structured when the interview is undertaken (Alvesson, 2011). Formal interviews are pre-planned and scheduled in formal consultation between researcher and participant. Informal interviews take advantage of unscheduled connections between parties, such as conversations during down-time at industry gatherings and other informal discussions. Structured interviews use a pre-planned questioning framework, with set questions asked in every interview from which the researcher does not deviate. This more rigid process is designed to elicit uniformity in answers that can be quantified (Swanson, 1986). Interviews that are unstructured resemble a free conversation on a broad theme, where the participant is permitted to take the lead and develop themes as they see fit, and the researcher must remain ready for unexpected turns (Alvesson, 2011).

Far more common in qualitative research are what could be called loosely-structured or semi-structured interviews. Such interviews have some questions which are prepared and asked covering a variety of themes and directions, but encouraging relatively free, flexible responses from participants. In this study, formally arranged but semi-structured interviews were designed and implemented. The semi-structure was thoughtfully changed as the interview numbers mounted, permitting the researcher to interrogate developing conceptual leads which arose from earlier data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The approach used within the semi-structure of the interview attempted to understand the themes of the “lived daily world from the subjects’ own perspectives” (Kvale, 2007, p. 10), so as to encourage meaningful descriptions of the participants’ lived world. This approach is important in that it is consistent with the method’s constructionist epistemology. Kvale (2007, p. 10) calls this interview style a “semi-structured life-world interview”. The concept of ‘life-world’ (Husserl, 1970/1936) considers that the human world is an experienced world and never a world in itself (Sandberg & Dall’Alba, 2009). A semi-structured life-world interview has a loose sequence of themes to be covered, as well as a flexible framework of questions that prompt the researcher to keep generally directed (Kvale, 2007).

The research participants chosen for interviews in this study can be described as ‘elites’ (Kvale, 2007) or people who are regarded by their community of practice as experts in the relevant area of concern, in this case, managing their community pharmacies. Careful thought was given to the possible influence of a ‘power asymmetry’ (Kvale, 2007) between the researcher and the participants chosen throughout the research. One of the advantages of the researcher’s experience in the

same industry and profession as the participants was that power-asymmetry did not appear to be an influential issue in any of the interviews. The industry-experience, expertise and sensitivity of the researcher enabled the free use of technical and industry-specific language, as well as reference to industry and profession specific events, perceived industry trajectories and management challenges. These circumstances served to create a more relaxed conversational exchange.

Conducting the interviews

When a suitable participant was identified, the researcher contacted the prospective participant by email. The email communicate generally contained a professional introduction explaining the identity of the researcher and the sponsoring institution and the reason why the communicate was being sent. A brief explanation of the research study, its aim and purpose were included in the email, along with an invitation to participate. The participant information sheet and informed consent document was offered as an attachment in the email. The email concluded with an invitation for the prospective participant to reply either by telephone or email as to whether they would consider participating in the research.

Upon receiving an affirmative response from a participant, the researcher telephoned the participant at a time suggested as convenient by the participant, and a discussion was held, further explaining the research study and why the researcher was seeking their involvement. Further inquiry was invited from the potential participant during this call. If the participant agreed to proceed, the researcher then engaged in discussion about dates, times and locations that would be suitable to the participant to engage in the interview. All but one potential participant agreed to proceed with participation in an interview after the email and follow-up telephone call.

Appointment time, interview duration and location are important considerations when arranging a research interview appointment (Swanson, 1986). These issues need to be primarily guided by the participant's requirement for convenience, comfort and confidentiality. Giving deference to participants on these matters had the aim of ensuring that the participants felt relaxed and comfortable from the start of the research process. This deference also transparently demonstrated a participatory spirit in the establishment of the interview 'atmospherics' so that a flexible and relaxed conversational-style interview could proceed.

During the course of this study, interviews took place in participants' pharmacy businesses, for example in a back office, at central administration offices, in quiet

corners of coffee shops near their pharmacy, or in participant homes. All of these locations were the choices of the participants. A more fine-grained description of the precise procedures that were followed in organising and participating in the first interview with 'Adam' is given as an example in Appendix 7.

In this study, there were four themes that loosely framed the interview conversation. These themes were to explore and garner descriptions of:

1. what the managers perceived as the most relevant business-environment influences driving change;
2. what the managers perceived as the most important implications of these influences;
3. how the managers approached the management required for responding to these implications; and
4. how managerial thought and action was undertaken by the managers who delivered these responses.

The original initial interview guide used by the researcher can be examined in Appendix 8.

While the sequence appears to be structured logically, the sequence served only as a reminder for the researcher, allowing openness for the participant to move freely in directions that suited their thoughts during the conversation. Given the exploratory imperative of the research, the researcher was also ready to move in new and surprising directions as responses in the dialogue flowed. This made rigid question-design unwise, particularly in relation to second questions which cannot really be specified in advance.

The theoretical sensitivity of the researcher provided opportunities for on-the-spot judgement concerning which direction to move next, within the conversation themes (Swanson, 1986). Most interviews were completed in the estimated 60 to 90 minutes, as predicted in the information sheet provided to participants prior to the interview meeting. A more detailed description of how the interviews were flexibly managed is given in Appendix 9.

The focus of questions changed as the completed interviews and analysis mounted (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; McCann & Clark, 2003c). During the course of the study, the interview guide was adjusted several times, to better follow emerging theoretical concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Early on, some lines of questioning were removed as they did not inform the study. For example, questions concerning management training of student pharmacists were deleted early on after realising such exploration was beyond the main concern for this study. Questions were also altered as

a result of developing theoretical categories. For example, questions were developed regarding the use of pharmacy small-business awards as both a clear goal for staff, and as a means of creating a disciplined management quality structure.

Observations made before, during and after each interview were recorded in very brief notes in the researcher's notebooks. Notation during interview conversations was kept to a minimum so as not to disrupt the communication flow. Notes were then expanded into reflective memos as soon as possible after the completion of the interview. An example of a post-interview memo is provided in Appendix 10. This memo was constructed shortly after the first interview with the participant given the pseudonym 'Adam'.

Bringing 'sensitivity' to the interviews

Prior to undertaking the first interview, a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the phenomena under investigation had been developed, through interrogation of a large and diverse body of literature related to relevant phenomena, such as individual competence and capability (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kvale, 2007; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As discussed in Chapter 2, knowledge of the literature served to highlight important facts, theories and insights about the phenomena and how this knowledge is rendered and understood. Reviewing the literature served to crystallise the researcher's understanding of how the phenomenon of managerial capability is both understood and not understood.

During the interviews it became apparent to the researcher that the researcher's background and experience in the industry served to help the participants remain relaxed and engaged. Evidence of this was apparent with participants commencing descriptions with an acknowledgement of the researcher's probable knowledge of one industry issue or another. Recognising this was the case, the participants often enthusiastically engaged in descriptions of the complexities of particular and specialised issues pertinent to them, seemingly without feeling the need to explain the background or to simplify their descriptions. It is reasonable to conclude that the researcher's sensitivity to their situation served to enhance the authenticity of the interviews overall.

The concept and practice of theoretical sensitivity in using the grounded theory method was generally discussed in Chapter 3, within the manuscript titled "*Generating or developing grounded theory*" (p. 49). By the commencement of the interviews, the researcher held significant, albeit provisional understandings of both the industry context and theoretical ideas emanating from the literature. While these sensitivities are

of importance particularly in the analytical process, researcher sensitivities also play a role in the interview interactions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The data collection process within the interviews was sometimes guided by analytical thoughts, hunches and insights that occurred to the researcher during the interview (Cook & Brown, 1999). As pointed out by Cook and Brown (1999, p. 393):

As everyone has experienced, a conversation's back-and-forth not only dynamically affords the exchange of knowledge, it can also afford the generation of new knowledge, since each remark can yield new meaning as it is resituated in the evolving context of the conversation.

At the same time, the researcher remained conscious and aware of the four suggestions made by Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 33) as to how to keep a balance between the researcher's potentially insightful thoughts and the possibility of fixing or forcing ideas into the interview through its analysis while in conversation. The suggestions were outlined in Chapter 3.

Audio recording, transcription and secure storage of collected data

Every interview was recorded using a small Panasonic® digital recorder after participant consent was given in writing. After the interview, the files were transcribed verbatim to a Microsoft Word® file and double spaced for analysis. The researcher carried out the audio transcription of the first ten of 25 interviews, which provided a thorough opportunity to deeply interrogate the data through immersion in the detail. The interview audio recordings beyond the tenth interview were transcribed by a professional transcription service with suitable confidentiality guarantees.

Security of all collected data was a crucial consideration for the researcher throughout the study. The researcher followed the recommended guidelines contained within the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research and Griffith University's Best Practice Guidelines for Researchers: Managing Research Data and Primary Materials. All collected hard-copy data are kept under secure 'lock and key' conditions and strict password control has been maintained for all electronic files. Only pseudonyms have been used in conference and journal publications where direct quotes have been used.

DATA ANALYSIS

An overview of the analytical processes involved in the grounded theory method was provided in Chapter 3, within the manuscript "*Generating or developing grounded*

theory". Analysis of each interview began with the transcription of the interview into a word-document. Careful attention was paid to pauses, silences and voice tones that may be important during the later reflections of the analytical process. These conversational elements were recorded within the transcribed document (with bracketed notes) as they occurred in the dialogue.

The completed transcription was then formatted with an eight centimetre left-hand border, and an insertion of print-visible consecutive line numbering by the Microsoft Word® program. The spacing of the document made reading easier and created room for interpretive notes to be written in margins when reviewed. After reading the entire transcript, the researcher then listened to the whole interview again from the digital audio file in conjunction with reading the complete text, prior to coding. Margin notes were written as they came to mind. The line numbering prepared the transcription for the manual coding process which was undertaken next.

GROUNDING THEORY ANALYTICAL STRATEGIES

Overview of data analysis processes

The aim of analysis is to construct meaningful conceptual patterns from raw data (interview transcripts and observations), then plausibly raise the patterns conceptually through to a central category or "core category" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The Core category (grounded theory) should be able to explain most of the variation in the data. The entire analytical process requires the analyst to construct meanings that are directly grounded in the collected data. Contriving meanings and concepts from other unrelated ideas, for example ideas seated in the analyst's mind, is to be constantly avoided.

Utilising the initial and developing analytical strategies described in Chapter 3, transcript data was first conceptually dis-integrated and analysed via the open coding process. Then re-integration was achieved using the axial coding process. Axial coding re-integrates the data by bringing the more finely fractured open codes into more concentrated meaningful higher level concepts.

The aim of the axial coding process is to bring forth interpreted conceptual 'dimensions' that are in turn analytically coalesced into conceptual 'properties'. It is generally accepted using the grounded theory method that categories should be developed in terms of their "properties" and "dimensions" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 159-165), which are constructed during the axial coding phase. Properties are defined by Strauss and Corbin as "characteristics of a category, the delineation of which defines and gives it meaning" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101), whereas dimensions are

described as “variations within properties that give specificity and range to concepts [and categories]” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 159). A simplified representation of the grounded theory analytical process for this study is shown in Figure 2.

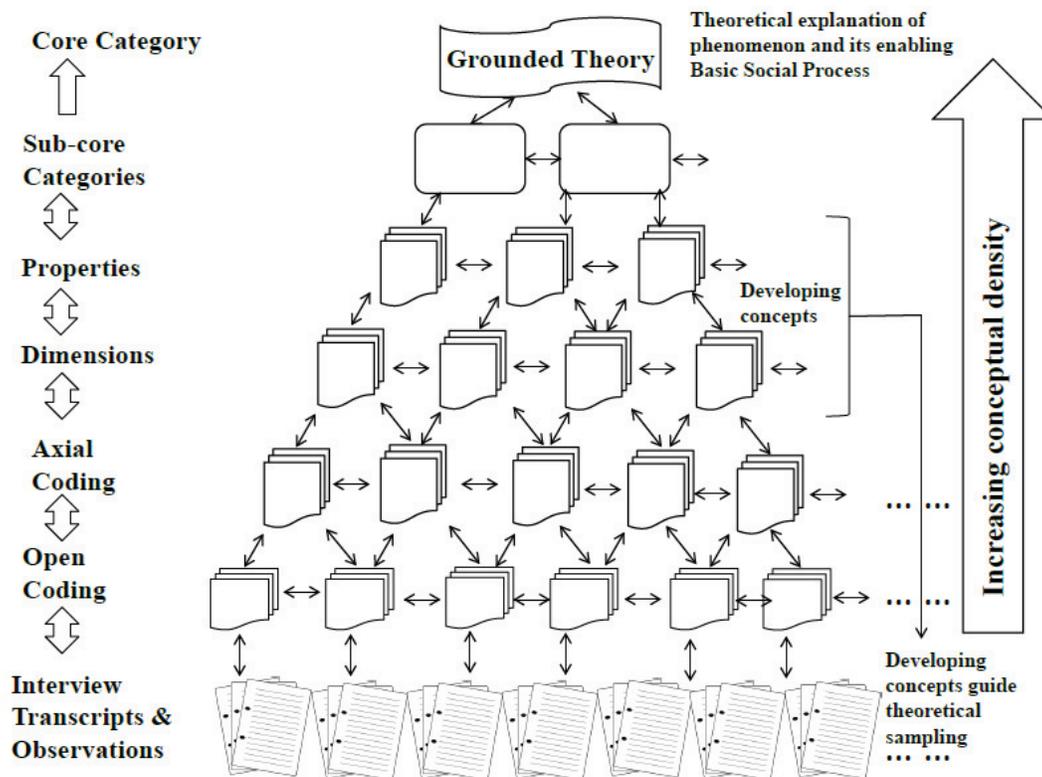


Figure 2: A simplified illustration of the main coding processes for this study.

Implementation of open coding and constant comparison

The illustration in Figure 2 is regarded as simplified because in reality the coding processes are more ‘messy’ than the seemingly clear and ordered path indicated in the figure. The coding processes are iterative and somewhat circular and seldom straightforward. In the open coding phase, incidents were compared and the data were analysed for meanings and patterns with the aim of developing and naming emerging concepts. Incidents were identified by interrogating the transcribed text line-by-line. Incidents may be given more than one name because different thoughts arise in the analysis process and encourage thoughts about different meanings.

Over the course of the research, through comparison of incidents within and between interviews, the variety of coding names given to similar incidents was reduced as the data volume grew. As the data grew from different participant sources, and the analysis continued, concepts were related to one another by using the “constant

comparison” strategy (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 73), allowing the researcher to detect patterns in the data (Liamputtong, 2010).

The purpose of constant comparison is to assist in developing common names for the categories, and to refine the researcher’s understanding of the meanings of the data (Locke, 2001). Detecting differences and similarities is important in the constant comparison process. Code names sometimes reflect the actual words used by the participant, or they may have been developed by the researcher (McCann & Clark, 2003a). *In vivo* codes, or code names that use the actual words of participants, can preserve a closer connection to the meaning of the data (McCann & Clark, 2003a). Codes developed by the researcher sometimes had a connection to concepts that arose from the literature, or that came to mind because of a relatively obvious meaning (McCann & Clark, 2003a).

As the data were gathered and analysed, the processes of induction and deduction were applied in interplay by the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). From this interplay, the content and direction of the questioning process changed in subsequent interviews. Deductions made from the data as well as inductive inferences relating to the data were fed back to inform the data collection process. The empirical process under scrutiny (how pharmacists manage capably) were then linked to progressively evolving theory through an iterative moving “series of loops” involving continued theoretical sampling, data collection (interviews), and progressive deductive and inductive analytical thinking (Strübing, 2007, p. 594). The key to analytical and theoretical progression was not primarily the iterative process *per se*, but more the general abductive attitude of the analyst(s) through the process.

Thus the research analysis process began as a cyclical and iterative process, where data were collected and analysed to advance theory, which then informed and changed the direction for further data collection (McCann & Clark, 2003b). As the process continues, abductive reasoning may be informed by insights and inspirations from existing theory, the literature and analyst intuition (Strübing, 2007). For example, as the interview numbers grew, questioning moved to focus more on how and why the managers acted in responding to a range of perceived implications of industry changes. As will be shown in Chapter 6, dense and diverse data delivered many insights into ‘what managers actually do’ in relation to their perceptions of business context.

Stepping up with Axial coding and continued theoretical sampling

Along with constant comparison and open coding, the analysis slowly took the more complex turn to axial coding. The researcher interrogated and compared the codes with a purpose of developing more concentrated and abstracted codes, than in open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Axial coding, which was undertaken increasingly together with open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), was conducted by systematically relating concepts to form properties and dimensions. The properties and dimensions then coalesced to form Sub-core categories. This permitted a deeper exploration of the Sub-core categories and their definition (Liamputtong, 2010). Chapters 5, 6 and 7 illustrate how the properties and their dimensions were analytically linked to develop the three Sub-core categories in this study. Theoretical sampling continued until no further meaningful codes arose from the data. As an essential tool for keeping track of ever increasing concepts and theoretical ideas the researcher created many formal and informal ‘memos’ as both an analytical data source and *aide memoire*, which are described next.

Memos and memo-ing

Notes were made by the researcher throughout the data collection process, for example, before and after interviews and visits to the workplaces of participants, and increasingly throughout literature interrogation. More than just note-taking to serve memory, these became written reflections and were completed in the spirit of the grounded-theory method and represent ‘memos’ (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Memos in the grounded theory method are described as written records of a particular type. They may also contain diagrams that form a part of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Beyond the practical function as reminder, the creation of memos is regarded as an analytical tactic that provides the researcher with “an ongoing, developmental dialogue between his role as discoverer and as social analyst” (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 9). Memos are tools used dynamically that assist with the interplay that occurs between data collection and analysis.

Given the intentions of the researcher to develop theory, the researcher was sensitive to recording in writing, ideas, hunches, mental models or even revelations which came to mind from each interview (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Silverman, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These personal reflections were a vital supporting process for

both the method and the analysis. Reflective memos were written up into research notebooks as soon as possible after the interview (Silverman, 2011). An illustration of a diagram-memo is shown in Figure 3.

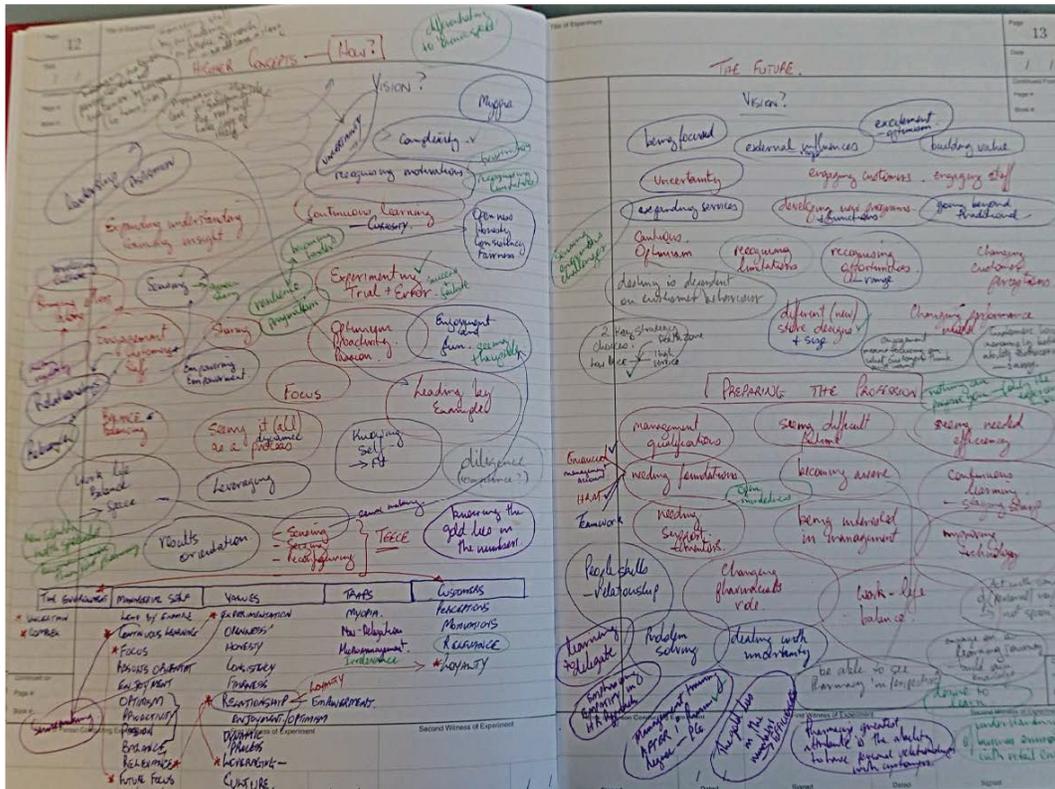


Figure 3: An illustration of a diagram-memo created during analysis and used for theoretical development.

Integration to develop the Core category

The first consideration in integration was to decide on the Core category which integrates the existing identified Sub-core categories, which in turn are defined by their properties and dimensions, (see Figure 2). The Core category “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” was developed and represents the grounded theory of this study. The Core category explains theoretically how all other categories are linked together and is explained in Chapter 8.

It is the analytical power of the Core category that produces the foundation of theory for grounded theory. Axial coding and the integration of the Sub-core categories into the Core category is described by Corbin and Strauss (2008) as critical in moving from descriptive story to theoretical explanation: “In theory building it is the word ‘explanatory’ that makes the difference” (p. 106). Once the Core category was

developed, integration of the other concepts and categories occurred through “retelling the story around that Core category using the other categories and concepts derived during the research” (p. 107).

BRINGING CONTEXT AND DYNAMIC PROCESS INTO THE ANALYSIS

Coding is clearly a disciplined interpretive process. Data can be coded in ways that depend on the analyst’s interpretation of the incident or event within the context in which the incident or event took place. The participants’ understanding of their worlds and their motivations for actions are also framed and influenced by their own interpretation of context. The context is therefore a vital consideration in the analytical process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Context establishes sets of conditions in which situations, challenges or conundrums arise, to which participants respond with action, interaction, thought and emotion. Their responses then bring about consequences and over some time period, the consequences themselves may shape and form the emerging context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Thus there is relationship between structure (context) and action/interaction (process) and time, and the making of context (Hildebrand, 2007).

Process, is understood to mean ongoing action/interaction/emotion, which unfolds through time. It is directed toward achieving a perceived goal or management of a problem (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Two analytical tools have been developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) to aid the analysts in integrating context into the analytical and coding process. These tools are the ‘coding paradigm’ and the ‘conditional/consequential matrix’. They are designed to assist the analyst in capturing the social process perspective, which is the relationship between structure (context), action/interaction/emotion (processes) and time, within the data. The first of these tools, the coding paradigm, is discussed next. (Note: the term ‘coding paradigm’ is not to be confused with the term ‘research paradigm’. While both are ‘perspectives’, or ways to think, the former refers to an analytical perspective while the latter refers to a philosophical perspective.)

The coding paradigm

This social process perspective is founded on Pragmatist philosophical principles and symbolic interactionism, and was discussed in Chapter 3. People (participants) perceive events around them (conditions or context), which then brings about their actions and social interactions including the experiencing of emotions

(consequences). The consequences then shape the emerging experienced context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). ‘The paradigm’ is provided as an analytical tool in the form of a perspective that elicits a set of questions that can be applied to the data to assist the analyst to develop relationships between context and the consequential processes of action/interaction and emotion (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The basic components of the paradigm as a framework for analysis, as described in Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 89) are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: ‘The paradigm’ analytical tool (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998) as described by Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 89).

Coding Paradigm Component	Analytical Use
1. There are conditions	Looking for contextual conditions allows a conceptual way to group answers to questions about why, where, how, and what happens. It focuses the analysts attention on what follows from the revelation of a circumstance of condition that frames and motivates responses.
2. There are actions/interactions and emotions	Looking for actions, interactions and emotions may identify them as responses to the conditions.
3. There are consequences	Looking for outcomes of actions/interactions or of emotional responses to events may answer questions about what happened as a result of the actions/interactions and emotions.

Utilising this analytical tool provides a way to see linkages between context and process and is based on an understanding that context is not static but “updated and transformed” (Hildebrand, 2007, p. 540), making the relationship between context and interaction (process) inseparable. The paradigm analytical tool is only that, a tool, and is not to be used as a directive for coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Names that are given by the analyst to concepts and categories do not have to be given so as to reflect the paradigm components, rather, the paradigm is intended to aid the analyst’s understanding of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This enables a better understanding of ‘what’s going on here?’, ‘what does it mean?’, ‘why is it happening?’ (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The analyst can overlay their understanding of whether the codes look like conditions, processes or consequences as part of the analysis process, in

considering process relationships. An illustration showing how the coding paradigm was used in analysing data is demonstrated in Appendix 11.

The illustration in Appendix 11 shows how the paradigm provides pathways to help identify and relate structure (context) to processes (actions/interactions/emotions). This relationship may then illuminate how the processes might recycle around to then shape the ongoing perceived emerging context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In this study, using the paradigm served to sensitise the researcher to questions whose answers were pursued in subsequent sampling (Hildebrand, 2007). Crucially, it emphasised the importance of both the macro and micro conditions in the analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), as shown in the extract of Adam's interview. The conditions emphasised the shaping of actions/interactions and then the shaping of consequences.

But while this type of analysis provided potentially very useful insights in examining the life-world of one participant, Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 90) point out that the coding paradigm does not:

- address the many possible theoretical sampling choices that a researcher must make during the research processes, or where to look for contextual factors;
- explain the varied, dynamic and complex ways in which conditions, actions/interactions and consequences can co-exist and impact on each other;
- account for the different perceptions, constructions and standpoints of the various participants; or
- put all the pieces together to present an overall picture of what is going on.

To address these shortfalls and to capture the complexity of human phenomena taking place within the life-worlds of many participants, at a range of contextual scales, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest the use of another tool of analysis, called the conditional/consequential matrix, (hereafter referred to as 'the matrix'), which is explained next.

The matrix

Similar to the coding paradigm, the matrix is recommended as a means by which analysis is enriched through viewing ranges of conditions and consequences within which the events reported by participants are situated. Different to the coding paradigm tool, the matrix is a tool to analyse from one to many reported events occurring through time and helps the analyst relate events and incidents to contexts at different scales. A representation of the matrix, reproduced from the text by Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 94) is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 has been redacted for copyright reasons. Please refer to original reference source.

Figure 4: The conditional/consequential matrix (Corbin and Strauss 2008, p. 94)

The matrix is designed to assist the analyst to examine the connections and interplay between the conditions which could be regarded as micro, or those close to the individual, and more macro conditions. Macro conditions such as national, social, legislative or competitive influences are more distant from the individual. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The arrows represented on the matrix diagram shown in Figure 4, are meant to show how the interplay between different levels of contextual conditions develops through levels one to seven. The interplays eventually influence the actions/interactions enacted by the participant at level eight. Then, the actions/interactions taken by the participant may in-turn create influences back through the contextual layers to create further conditions that are experienced subsequently by the participant (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Hildebrand, 2007).

The diagram and arrows do *not* imply that the relationships between conditions, actions/interactions and consequences are in any way linear, and consequences may arise in completely unpredictable ways (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The significance of

the matrix for the process of grounded theory research is explained by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 161) as follows:

1. It helps you to be theoretically sensitive to the range of conditions that might bear upon the phenomenon under study;
2. It enables you to be theoretically sensitive to the range of potential consequences that results from the action/interaction;
3. It assists you to systematically relate conditions, actions/interaction, and the consequences to a phenomenon.

Charmaz (2006, p. 118) suggested that the central purpose of the matrix is “to help researchers to think beyond micro social structures and immediate interactions to larger social conditions and consequences.” The matrix also helps accentuate what Strauss (1993, p. 56) calls “trajectory” of the phenomenon, which is explained as being shaped during a time period (Hildebrand, 2007). During this time period there is the “potentiality for consequences of interaction to become in their turn, conditions that affect further interaction, which then produces further consequences” (Strauss 1993, p. 56). An illustration of the use of the matrix in data analysis to link conditions, actions/interactions/emotions, and consequences is given in Appendix 11.

The illustration of the use of the matrix given in Appendix 12 shows how the researcher became theoretically sensitive to the conditions that brought about the intentions for future action, as well as to the range of potential consequences that resulted from their “Experiencing changing customer perceptions”. In this way the researcher was able to systematically relate conditions, with experience (actions/interaction/emotions), and the consequences. Emergent trajectory or directionality is thus revealed.

The analysis in Appendix 12 also demonstrates how context and time are again brought directly into the analysis. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, when context and time are included through the methodology, method and analysis, the researcher is able to preserve something of the meaningful totality of manager-immersion in the managers’ practices, and their experience of their unique context within a temporal flow (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011).

The matrix as a tool was repeatedly used throughout each whole transcript and across all interview transcripts. The sensitised analytical thoughts, ideas and questions that the matrix brings forth feed into the grounded theory method processes such as constant comparison of concepts, property and category development and the process of theoretical sampling. The segments of data analysis discussed in Appendices 11 and 12

demonstrate the early emerging contextual issues that became relevant to further analysis and the development of a substantive theory of managerial capability.

Using gerunds to accentuate dynamism

A further decision the researcher took in naming all concepts was to follow the advice of Glaser (1978) in using gerunds in developing code names. Doing so allows conceptual labelling in terms of process (Langley, 1999). The gerund is a non-finite verb that can function as a noun, and can name the action of the verb. For example the noun ‘experiment’ in the form of a gerund is ‘experimenting’, or the noun ‘change’ becomes ‘changing’ (Charmaz, 2006).

The use of gerunds alters the imagery in answering the question ‘what’s going on here?’, and moves away from the mostly taken for granted and dominant process of logical abstraction, which has a focus on nouns and adjectives. Nouns and adjectives prompt conceptualising of phenomena in terms of entities and attributes (Chia, 1995), and tends to abstract time and contextual dynamism away from the process under examination.

Gerunds highlight the activity and constituents of practices and are described as “the means of doing in which organizing is constituted” (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009, p. 82). Using gerunds to accentuate process in the data enables the analyst to develop a deeper theoretical sensitivity when examining the data and moves analytical thinking away from static topics and toward enacted processes (Charmaz, 2006). Focusing on actions raises the visibility of connected sequences that include context and time.

‘DIMENSIONALISING’ PROPERTIES TO FORM SUB-CORE CATEGORIES

The explanation of analytical processes so far has discussed the overall coding process which was accompanied by constant comparison, and how tools were used to bring context, dynamic process, directionality and time into the development of increasingly dense concepts. The discussion of analysis now revisits the process of concept building, that is, the development of dimensions to form properties. Properties formed the theoretical building blocks that were linked to develop the three Sub-core categories, (see Figure 3). It is the Sub-core categories that were eventually coalesced and argued as the foundation of the Core category and grounded theory. To ensure transparency of analytical processes, an abbreviated explanation of how one of the three Sub-core categories was developed now follows, beginning with an illustration of how constant comparison acts as a tool to collect indicators to build concepts.

Constant comparison: an illustration

An example of how concept labels were applied is demonstrated from an extract of the interview with Adam, the first participant. The researcher was following up with a probing question exploring a comment that Adam had made about evolving a more structured approach to management. The first part of Adam's response was as follows: *"So, over the last 15 years I've been, I guess, learning non-stop about management and I certainly have an interest in it now as well and through ongoing processes of learning..."*

In considering this segment in the open coding process, the researcher focused on the indicators of *"learning non-stop"* and *"ongoing processes of learning"*, to arrive at a provisional concept *"Learning continuously"*. Thus the provisional concept acts as a symbol attached to the two referent indicators (LaRossa, 2005). But while coding indicators allows for the application of a conceptual name, the essential constant comparison process requires that the identified indicator(s) are then compared with other indicators that have been coded in the same way. This comparison looks for specific similarities and differences in the quality of the indicator. Similarities can be located to progress more complex analysis.

Later in the interview, the researcher inquired of Adam how he learned on an ongoing basis. Part of Adam's response was as follows:

...Um, I think it's just continually searching for answers to things. We made reference before to some of the material I read and, actively reading a lot of stuff outside of that. I made reference to pharmacy journals [but] I do a lot of other things as well. I've attended numerous leadership training courses over the years and read several books in that area as well.

In this passage the researcher focused on a second set of indicators such as *"continually searching for answers to things"* and *"material I read"*, *"reading a lot of stuff"*, *"attended numerous leadership training courses"* and *"read several books"* et cetera. Guided by the analytical processes described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the first indicators referred to earlier, *"learning non-stop"* and *"ongoing processes of learning"*, were then compared with this second set of indicators. The second set of indicators helped the researcher to think about the first indicators and connections to the provisional concept *"Learning continuously"*.

After analytical consideration, the researcher decided that the indicators were similar and each was classified as an indicator of the concept *"Learning continually"*.

(This concept is fully explained in Chapter 7). If one or more of the indicators had shown a distinct difference to the other indicators, the different indicator(s) would then have been coded with a different provisional conceptual label.

As coding continued through Adam's interview, and then through subsequent interviews with participants, concept labels grew, as did the enriching indicators that served to more richly explain the nature of each concept. Ultimately, data collection ends only when no new enriching concept indicators can be induced from the data. This point is referred to as theoretical saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Deciding on levels of abstraction

One of the challenging analytical balancing processes is to decide on the level of abstraction of the concept label, which encapsulates the variety of indicators. If the conceptual label is of insufficient abstraction, perhaps just a restatement or paraphrase of the data, then too few observations will cluster under that conceptual label. As suggested originally by Glaser and Strauss (1967), a conceptual label must occupy a higher level of abstraction than the incidents (or indicators) it is intended to classify. If the conceptual label is too abstract, then too many incidents will cluster under it and the concept will lose its explanatory specificity (Martin & Turner, 1986). For example, single-word conceptual labels such as 'managing' or 'learning' could well sweep up most of the incidents contained in the interviews of this study, and then explain little.

As open coding delivered more and more codes, constant comparison was continually employed to group concepts. Groupings became increasingly abstracted during the analysis. The higher the conceptual grouping, for example the Sub-core categories in this thesis, the more variation is encompassed. As explained in Chapter 3, the grounded theory method seeks to develop (Sub-core) categories through explanatory "properties" and "dimensions" (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 159-165; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 69-72; 1998, p. 116-119). Properties characterise a Sub-core category and dimensions characterise the variation within a property.

Ultimately, the Sub-core category name and meaning should capture the similarities among a set of concepts (properties and their dimensions), which comprise it. Differences between the comprising properties and dimensions give the category dimensionality. An illustration from this study of the development of the Sub-core category "Inquiring", derived from the properties "Learning continuously" and "Experimenting", and their dimensions is described next. (Chapter 7 is devoted to a full explanation of the Sub-core category "Inquiring").

Development of a Sub-core category: an illustration

Considering the development of the property “Learning continuously” first, the property refers specifically to the personal learning practices of the managers. The researcher used this property name provisionally during the coding of the first interview with Adam. Subsequent participants regularly grounded their interview responses within descriptions of their previous and ongoing learning experiences. Using open coding, the transcript texts were opened up and codes relating to “Learning continuously”, sourced from many participants, were recorded and then interpreted into meaningful collectives. These collectives became the different dimensions of the property “Learning continuously” and are illustrated in Figure 5.

In a similar way, the open coding process revealed that participants were also engaged in various forms of experimentation or trial and error methods to try to improve business efficiency and customer service methods. With the provisional property name “Experimenting” recorded in the first interview with Adam, the concept meaning of “Experimenting” included participant descriptions of imitation, improvisation, and trial and error learning which are all regarded as learning types (Miner, Bassoff, & Moorman, 2001). As analysis of subsequent interviews continued, the open coding process revealed a range of codes relating to “Experimenting” that were also meaningfully grouped into dimensions for this property. These are also illustrated in Figure 5.

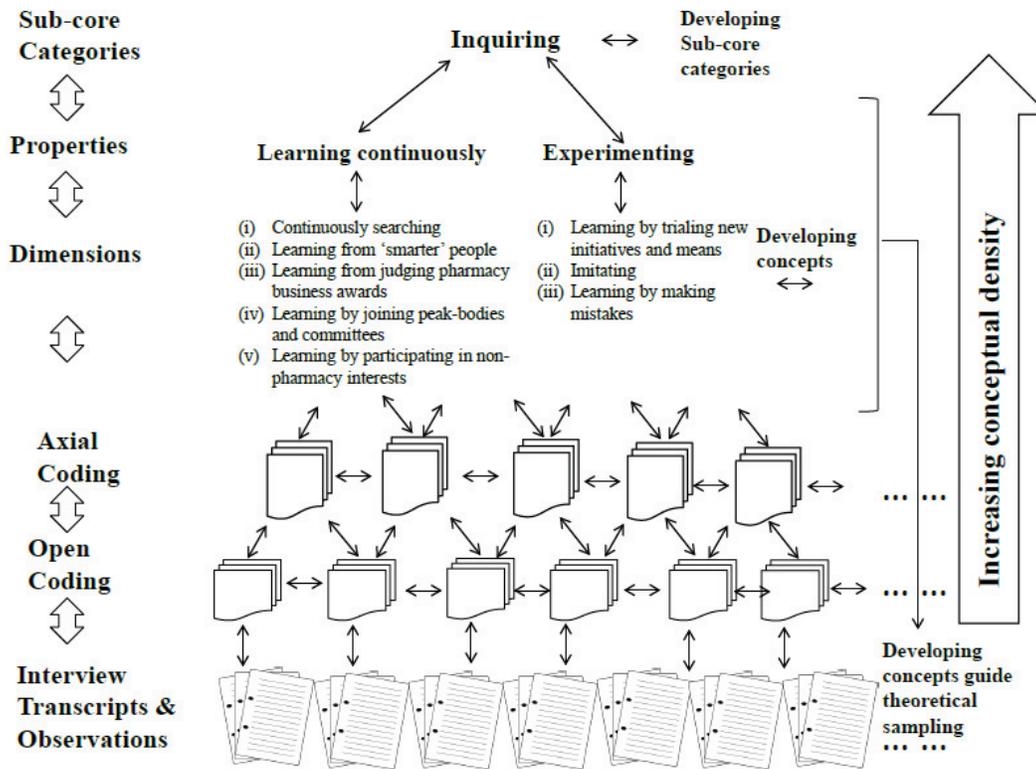


Figure 5: An illustration of the dimensionalising of conceptual properties to develop a Sub-core category.

The above descriptions illustrate how two properties were developed. These properties were subsequently analytically linked to develop the Sub-core category “Inquiring”. Once the properties were developed, the properties were also compared with each other. To develop a higher level Sub-core category “Inquiring”, that integrates the two properties, the researcher returned to the literature as a powerful source for theoretical development and labelling (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher wrote memos describing the meaning of the Sub-core category name, as informed by the properties and their dimensions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This analysis revealed the diverse but also consistent ways that the managers engaged in refreshing and renewing their knowledge, their world view and sense of meaning in their day to day work-life. More poignantly the analysis demonstrated a continuity of personal learning and a future focus. Details of this argument are provided in Chapter 7.

FROM SUB-CORE CATEGORIES TO A SUBSTANTIVE GROUNDED THEORY

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the process of identification of a theoretical Core category, within the manuscript “*Generating or developing grounded theory*”. In this study, three Sub-core categories were developed on the way to achieving theoretical saturation from the theoretical sampling process. They are titled:

- “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”
- “Re-orienting meaningfully” and
- “Inquiring”.

Each of these is explained fully in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively. The three Sub-core categories have been integrated in the development of the Core category titled “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”, which is argued in Chapter 8.

The Core category explains theoretically how all Sub-core categories are linked together. Put another way, the Sub-core categories empower the Core category. It is the explanatory power of the Core category that produces the substantive grounded theory. The grounded theory represents a large set of ordered concepts that are related together as a reconceptualised framework. The explained framework, provides an answer to the research question: “*How can we understand managerial capability in relation to effective community pharmacy management?*”

DATA MANAGEMENT

Early in the data collection and analysis phases of this study it became clear that an effective system was needed to keep track of the growing volume of transcripts and reconstructed data. Beyond efficiency considerations was the vital matter of development of recording systems that preserved analytical transparency for this study, thus delivering acceptable research rigour. The researcher investigated several methods of electronic recording of data and analytical products, and eventually settled on using a database system developed by Fisher (2007).

Fisher, who conducted a research study using a grounded theory method, used the Microsoft Access® database system because of its flexibility, ease of storage and retrieval and its ability to support Object Linking and Embedding (OLE). OLE allows the embedding of Microsoft Word® and Excel® documents into a constructed database in Access®. Following the lead of Fisher (2007), the researcher constructed a Microsoft Access® database in which both Word® and Excel® documents were embedded as the research progressed.

An illustrated description of the data recording, management and retrieval system is provided in Appendix 13. This description shows how the development of Sub-core categories, from their properties and the dimensions can be tracked back to the sources of data (by transcript line number), that the researcher used in his analytical development. This is an important consideration in delivering rigorous research outcomes. Preservation of research rigour and quality for this study are discussed next.

PRESERVING RESEARCH RIGOUR AND QUALITY

The criteria used to ensure that the findings developed from a qualitative study are credible and trustworthy, need to be made clear from the start. In discussing her thoughts about quality of theory development in grounded theory, Corbin, in Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 301), prefers to avoid the use of the terms ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ when discussing the quality of qualitative research. She suggested that these terms better apply to quantitative research methods, and prefers to use the term ‘credibility’, a term also suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

At the end of Chapter 3, an overview of the suggested criteria for evaluating a grounded theory study was given. The overview addressed the principle of ‘credibility’ for grounded theory and listed the seven evaluative criteria used to clarify research process credibility as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 269). Each criterion is addressed for this study in Chapter 8.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) also suggest criteria for judging credibility. The first relates to the provision of sufficient description, or thick-description (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b), so that the reader can make judgements for themselves. The second relates to meticulous reporting of how the data were gathered and analysed. This calls for detailed and transparent revelation of the research process, so the reader can follow the researcher’s trail, without assumptions being required. The third criterion relates to the requirement for the researcher to specify the kinds of data that were used to develop interpretations. Each of these considerations is now addressed.

Credibility through thick description

For constructionist research the narrative which gives life to the theoretical findings is the main product of the research (Langley, 1999). The aim of the narrative has been described as giving a “vicarious experience” for the reader through its richness and complexity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 359). To achieve this challenging outcome requires sufficient density in what is narrated. Thus “thick description” is said to be

needed where the narrative integrates context, meanings and interpreted action together, without excessive reduction of the data (Langley, 1999). Mere statement of facts independent of motivations and context is to be avoided (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004).

In this study Chapters 5, 6 and 7 discuss the findings from the research in considerable detail by using the voices of participants through theoretically grouped selected quotes. The narrative supporting the growing theoretical propositions within the chapters includes variety and richness through the constructed properties and dimensions and linkages between them. This strategy serves to increase conceptual density and demonstrate authenticity of the findings (Langley, 1999).

The theoretical sensitivity of the researcher described earlier has assisted the process of writing thickly descriptive findings. The prior industry understanding and the ability of the researcher to offer an empathetic understanding of the participants' points of view allowed for an uncovering of subtle meanings given by participants to experiences and perceptions. This has improved the ability to be clear in portraying plausible interpretations from the grounded data. Sensitivity was also tempered by keeping the interpretive process primarily focussed on the understandings of participants and using *in vivo* codes.

Credibility through meticulous and transparent research processes

In this study, by following the recommendations of the grounded theory method, considerable effort has been expended in data collection and recording, and the analysis process to deliver dependable findings. The process began in Chapters 2 and 3 with clear ontological and epistemological positioning of the research, the research methodology and method, and consequent implications. This chapter in particular has been directed toward describing procedures of data collection and analysis to build trust in the completed research. Strategies such as gathering different forms of data, theoretical sampling, collecting data to achieve theoretical saturation, illustrations of analysis and explaining how data analysis was managed address the criteria of transparency of research process.

Credibility through data-diversity and 'triangulation'

An advantage of designing diversity into the data collection is that it raises the overall quality of the data by producing triangulation (McCann & Clark, 2003c). In cultural research using a constructionist theoretical perspective, triangulation has a different meaning to that implied in positivistic or quantitative studies (Silverman,

2011). Studies using a positivistic viewpoint look for ways in which different data forms and collection approaches can converge to a point so as to be able to draw a more true, or valid conclusion (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006).

Constructionist studies on the other hand, can look at triangulation “as an assembly of reminders about the situated character of action” (Silverman, 2011, p. 370). In this study interview data are combined with data from different sources and the sensitive insights from the literature so as to make better sense of what appears to be happening. Triangulation seen from this perspective is therefore not used as a tool to obtain ‘truth’, rather it “...is best understood as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness and depth” to the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a, p. 5).

Interviews, observations and the literature constituted three different data collection methods. Collecting data from different regions in Australia accounted for a variety of data collection sites, and participants of different gender provided variety in the sources of data. The literature also served as a data source linking existing research and theory with emerging concepts and acting as a type of verification (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 274).

Observations contribute to the richness of the data overall and serve to confirm the credibility of what is said in the interview (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Liamputtong, 2010). When interviews were undertaken within the participant’s pharmacy, observations frequently provided a demonstration of congruence with the interview content. For example, more than one participant cited participation in small-business competitions as a way in which they learned more disciplined managerial techniques and used the competition framework to influence particular staff behaviours. Observation of framed competition awards yielded clear evidence of participation in these awards and added credibility to the interview content. Photographs of the pharmacy interiors and press clippings also served to confirm the authenticity of interview talk.

Credibility, trustworthiness and “goodness” in research findings

Credibility in this study is delivered through rigorously conducted and transparent research procedures that have produced dependable theoretical findings. Credibility affords trust for the reader in the resultant substantive theory and the implications suggested as arising from the theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This study has been guided by tenets that deliver “goodness” in well conducted qualitative studies (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002, p. 449; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The essence of goodness is

specified by Arminio and Hultgren (2002, p. 450) through six required qualities. These are as follows:

- Providing clarity of philosophical stance and epistemology;
- The grounding of logic and criteria in the methodology;
- Clear description of procedures and techniques used to gather data;
- The clear positioning of the researcher in relation to the participants;
- The clear description of analytical processes that are congruent with the methodology; and
- Effort to show what the findings mean for the lives of others.

The researcher asserts that this thesis delivers adequately upon all of these qualities. In the forthcoming chapters the final two qualities of the six listed above will be further demonstrated as the findings are delivered through the construction of three Sub-core categories (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), and through the elaboration of the substantive theory and its implications (Chapters 8 and 9).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explained in considerable detail how data collection, management and analysis were rigorously implemented in this study. The chapter commenced with demonstrated assurance that ethical considerations were both managed and approved. The explanations have included several illustrations showing how the researcher approached the range of data collection and analytical processes. Several appendices to the chapter offer a fine-grained explanation of particular processes. The aim of this chapter was to articulate the detailed systematic implementation of the grounded theory method in this study enabling reasonable assertion of credibility. The explanations ensure transparency of the research process which is required to underpin confidence and trust in the purported theoretical findings. The chapter concluded with an explanation of the ways in which credibility and therefore research quality, “goodness” and trustworthiness have been ensured from the outset of the study.

The next chapter explains the construction of the first of three Sub-core categories: “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”, utilising the analytical techniques explained in this chapter. The ‘voices’ of the managers will show how they are experiencing change and unpredictability. The chapter brings forth their main perceptual concerns or conditions that are shaping their managerial practice and trajectory, as well as the flowing consequences.

Chapter 5: Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity

We are; we live; we think on the fringe, in the probable fed by the unexpected...
(Serres, 1982, p. 127).

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the construction of the first of three Sub-core categories, identified in the previous chapter. The three Sub-core categories together, will be integrated in Chapter 8 to form the Core category. Constructed from the interview evidence, the first Sub-core category titled: “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”, reveals how the participants’ uncertain and complex worlds are experienced.

Building an understanding of how managers were experiencing business context is vital for understanding how and why their managerial capability is accomplished. From the literature review in Chapter 2, it is understood that capability conceptually includes the ability of individuals to enact appropriate and consistent performances in dealing with unfamiliar problems within unfamiliar contexts, over time (Cairns & Stephenson, 2009; Teece et al., 1997). It is from within and through this context that their managerial actions are enacted.

The chapter commences with an overview of the properties and the dimensions that are linked together to form and express the Sub-core category: “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”. Then each property is illuminated in-turn through each of the property dimensions. Each dimension is constructed (grounded) through the ‘voices’ of the managers in their revelations of experience.

The discussion then synthesises theoretical proposals that together build an understanding of how managers experience their context in complete entwinement. Their experience is of an emergent world-in-motion through time where apparent circumstances, emotions and anticipations mix and flow. Their experience is of emergent uncertainty and change. Complexity is realised when the properties and dimensions are considered as a whole. The chapter constructs an understanding of how managers experience their worlds within which they act. Their emergent actions and practices, that is, ‘what managers do’ in relation to their experiences is explained in the next chapter, Chapter 6.

***EXPERIENCING UNCERTAINTY, CHANGE AND COMPLEXITY: PROPERTIES
AND DIMENSIONS***

The first Sub-core category is constructed through its (categorical) properties and their dimensions, which are summarised in Table 7. These properties and their dimensions are explained in detail in the forthcoming pages, grounded in the voices of the participants.

Table 7: The properties and dimensions of Sub-core category 1: “Experiencing uncertainty, change & complexity”.

Properties (Categories)	Property Description	Dimensional Range
1. Experiencing uncertainty	Range of doubts and uncertainties about how to respond to changes and threats	Large scale (general) ↔ Small scale (specific) (i) Being uncertain as to where the industry is heading (large scale) (ii) Being uncertain about strategic intent of competitors (medium scale) (iii) Being uncertain about own strategic direction (small scale)
2. Experiencing effects of decreasing gross margins	Range of direct and indirect dynamic changes resulting in reduction of historic profit performance	Regulatory changes ↔ Competitive pressure (i) Experiencing profit reduction from PBS regulation changes (ii) Experiencing competitive pressure on margins from discounters (including supermarkets) (iii) Feeling the ‘squeeze’: Working harder for the same results
3. Experiencing changing customer perceptions	Range of perceived evolving customer sentiments concerning the choice of pharmacy as a place to purchase goods and services	Low consumer confidence (price consciousness) ↔ Changing perception of pharmacy (i) Experiencing low consumer economic confidence (price consciousness) (ii) Experiencing customers with high information but low knowledge
4. Experiencing changes in employee attitudes to work	Range of perceived emerging challenges regarding finding and holding staff who are suitable for more intensive service roles	Poor worker quality ↔ Inappropriate attitudes of ‘entitlement’ (i) Experiencing poor worker quality (ii) Experiencing increasingly inadequate human relational skills (iii) Experiencing inappropriate attitudes of ‘entitlement’

PROPERTY 1: EXPERIENCING UNCERTAINTY

Dimensional range: Large scale (general) ↔ Small scale (specific)

Property description: Range of doubts and uncertainties about how to respond to changes and threats.

The property “Experiencing uncertainty” is described through its dimensions – ranging from the small scale through to large scale. They are complex and interacting uncertainties that together provide a feel for the ‘unknown-ness’ of the participants’ current emergent context.

(i) *Being uncertain as to where the industry is heading (large scale)*

All managers expressed their constant experience and feelings of uncertainty about how to read and respond to their apparent business environment situation and changes. This has created difficulty in forming a clear vision of where the community pharmacy industry is heading, and consequently the ability of participants to be sure of their own strategic direction. Movement and change of competitive forces has also complicated their strategic uncertainty.

A fundamental uncertainty centred on possible continuing changes to government regulation governing achievable profit margins through the national Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS – see Glossary). Over 60% of total revenue for Australian community pharmacies arises from prescription dispensing, the majority of which is subsidised through the PBS (KordaMentha, 2014). Recent major prescription pricing reform within the PBS (Department of Health and Aging, 2010a, 2010b) has been driven by policy-makers’ desire for estimated savings for the Federal Government of between \$3.6 billion and \$5.8 billion by 2018 (PWC, 2010).

While inevitable, these regulatory changes are causing a fundamental shift in the Australian community pharmacy business model. The scale of the change was assessed by participant Ian who said “*I think, what we’re facing, is a bigger threat than what I’ve seen in my 30 odd years in pharmacy.*” It is commonly understood by participants that government regulation, and how it changes, is a strong influence on future business prospects. As summed up by participant Ben:

...you’ve got the regulatory framework that we operate within, so that governs a huge part of where we actually go and sort of, how we evolve, but certainly I don’t think anyone can conclusively say where we’ll be 10, 20, or 30 years down the track.

This kind of uncertainty and unpredictability was summarised by Noel who said “*I mean the wildcard is the federal government...*”.

Several participants cited the threat of evolving changes to how pharmacies are owned by pharmacists as a source of concern and uncertainty for their own strategic direction and the profession as a whole. While State and Territory legislation restricts pharmacy ownership to pharmacists, also limiting the number of pharmacies that a pharmacist can own, creative pharmacist-partnership structures have been rapidly formed in recent years which apparently breach the spirit of such State-based restrictions (Hattingh, 2011). For example, one partnership-group holds over 260 community pharmacies across the nation (Chemist Warehouse Discount Chemist, 2014). Such large structures appear to be able to gain greater access to capital and are perceived to be more able to bear the commercial and competitive pressures of the current and emerging environment (Woods, 2009). But there is a downside seen by some participants.

Jeremy’s concern was both for his own operation and also for the future of the profession when he said “*On a grand scale...I mean what I hope doesn’t happen is that the only people that can survive are those who have the resources to ride it out. That’s the real danger to me.*” He continued “*...But it also is reducing the [ownership] options for young pharmacists and independently minded people. No one has a monopoly on all the good ideas.*” Here, Jeremy is referring to younger pharmacists being prevented from entering pharmacy ownership due to capital-raising limitations. His concern is that their new and fresh ideas may also be prevented from circulating as the future unfolds. Frederick was more forthright when he said “*I think that the ownership and manipulation of the ownership structures around the country will probably be the death-knell of community pharmacy as we know it now, and the profession has only got itself to blame for that.*”

Overall, managers expressed their constant experience and feelings of uncertainty about how to read and respond to perceived industry changes. Edward, while acknowledging that he was prepared to make decisions about specific issues said: “*...it’s sort of ... you know, you have your doubts about it [referring to making choices regarding strategy]. That’s almost every day, pretty much.*” Such views reveal uncertainties and doubts, from personal to the profession as a whole, as to where it’s all heading.

(ii) *Being uncertain about strategic intent of competitors (medium scale)*

In addition to the ownership structures of competitors creating uncertainty, the rise and rise of the discount pharmacy business model is seen to be reshaping the national community pharmacy context (Singleton & Nissen, 2013). Two concerning uncertainties arose from the participant interviews. The first relates to the continuing evolution of the discounters' business model toward paid professional pharmacy services. An explanation of this concern is given by Robert:

...they [the discounters] are already showing signs of changing their model. There are already significant changes in the way they are approaching professional services, and that's based on the fact that 50% of their [emphasis] profits, up until two years ago, came from the dispensary and that's being eroded. So they need to change their business model, just as we need to change ours to protect profitability.

The implication in Robert's statement regarding choosing a future strategic direction is that there is no option safe from strong competition.

But even those participants whose own business model was clearly characterised as 'discounter' shared concerns about other discounter-competitors moving into their marketing space. Gerald, who runs five large discount-focused pharmacies, reflected on another local partnership group who seemed to be growing into a substantial force. Reflecting on his future, Gerald said *"I think I've read it out there, that being a discount operator, all by itself, is not... is becoming less and less a point of difference..."*.

The second concerning uncertainty centred on how the use of the internet will affect both how business is done and how customers will embrace it. Ian, a highly experienced pharmacist owner stated *"I think we're all under-estimating what the internet is going to do to retail."* His concerns centre on both profitability and loyalty erosion, demonstrated by his comments: *"[as a customer] If I were going to buy a Berocca®, I'd rather go buy it online and probably buy four or five that ship at the cheapest price I can buy it at, and have it delivered to the door",* and *"...loyalty is not as it used to be. Everybody is price conscious. People, even though they might not admit it, are very price conscious."*

Other participants saw the interaction between how customers use their hand-held digital devices and the online store as an unpredictable threat. A typical remark made by Ben was:

...you've also got the explosion of [phone] applications as well which has obviously changed the way consumers' shop, as well as their habits. So certainly if we look at an online store certainly I think that is a threat to the traditional bricks and mortar store.

The examples of evolving competitor business models and the rising influence of the internet make the competitive environment not completely knowable and quite fluid. As summed up in a remark by Ian “*There's competition everywhere and if you've seen the sales on the internet, it's exponential.*”

(iii) *Being uncertain about own strategic direction (small scale)*

Considering the dimensions of this property so far, it is not surprising that the participants struggled with putting into words a clear view of their own strategic future direction, and expressed a range of complex issues that complicated a clear line of thinking and decision making. Several participants described, or alluded to, the difficult choice between two paths, well expressed by Charles:

What's difficult is changing a perception of what people think of your business. And the difficulty for pharmacy is, either taking the high road or the low road, whether you want to be that fully professional service, [with] customer service [and an] intimate environment...but can that model still have value, or...the discounter path? And most of us in fairness are caught in the middle.

Edward expressed something similar but declares his uncertainty as to whether he can sustain the high service path he has already chosen:

...you know I think now more than ever, there's two sides of the fence; you're either a deep discounter or you're more of a specialist provider. There's really not much room for someone who's a jack of all...who's somewhere in between. It's too hard. You know, I still think that it's...I sort of am a bit uncertain about whether going down this track [high service provider] is appropriate in a high rent environment.

As will be described in the next chapter, most participants are moving on a path of delivering professional services and focusing on stronger customer relationships. However, doubts arose as to whether this change in direction was sustainable. For example, participants expressed concern about whether consumers would accept paying for professional services at all, given that most services in the past have been free. Charles was typical in his expression of doubts, saying:

I really don't know whether pharmacy or pharmacists can really be successful in a fee for service arena. I really don't know... professional services otherwise have been government funded, and people do get confused. That's not user-pays. I haven't seen fee for service really work...the reality is I don't see fee for service realistically playing a huge part in our profits in the next five years. I'd like there to be, but I can't see it.

Ian shared a similar doubt in saying *"I'm just not sure the customer who's got information from pharmacy for free forever is going to value paying for a service that they sometimes got for free."* Harold also provided a related perspective of doubt concerning the development of professional services in saying *"I think any [emphasised] pharmacist can develop a service. That's not the hard part. The hard part is how to make it commercially palatable for the patient, in volume."*

Others cited the difficult decisions that needed to be made in readying pharmacy premises to be suitable for a focus of delivering professional services. For example, Adam pointed out:

...if we are going to talk about pharmacy increasing its professional roles and things like that, we're going to need to see pharmacies being fitted out differently to how they are now. The current community pharmacy structure really limits opportunities to actively engage consumers in professional services... It's one of those things [like] the chicken and the egg. What do we do first? Do we jump in head-first and redesign our pharmacies so they can do all this? ... Or are we going to say we are going to get the return [first]?

In addition to these uncertainties about moving strategically toward professional services, another uncertainty was clearly expressed concerning whether current pharmacist-staff have the necessary communication skills and abilities for delivering professional services. The issue was clearly articulated by Harold:

...pharmacists are extremely good, in my opinion, at receiving a prescription, which is being handed a problem, and then solving it. What we're not good at doing is the steps before that, which is identifying that a problem exists, or educating the patient that there is a solution that they may not even know about.

David expressed similar concerns when he said:

The characteristics [of delivering professional services] would be having the pharmacist talk to the patient. That's the fundamental thing. And it requires the professional skill level to do that. Now the assumption in the profession is that

all pharmacists are capable of doing that. I don't know, at all, whether the pharmacists I employ, are capable of doing that.

Uncertainty about whether to choose delivery of professional services as a suitable strategic direction arises from perceptions of unsustainable future profitability, poor acceptance by customers and unsuitable professional communication skills. Given that participants are also aware of the likely growth of competition in this market area (discussed within the previous dimension), the scale of uncertainty is further revealed. However, a more immediate and tangible change and threat to business stability is revealed by participants in the next property to be discussed: “Experiencing decreasing gross margins”.

PROPERTY 2: EXPERIENCING EFFECTS OF DECREASING GROSS MARGINS

Dimensional range: Regulatory changes ↔ Competitive pressure

Property description: Range of direct and indirect dynamic changes resulting in reduction of historic profit performance.

(i) *Experiencing profit reduction from PBS regulation changes*

The environmental issues to which participants were referring included the regulatory pressures driving down achievable gross profit margins for prescription dispensing. All participants cited recent and ongoing regulatory reforms of the Australian PBS (Department of Health and Aging, 2008; Sweeny, 2013) as causing major reductions in current and future prescription profitability. This regulatory change is highly significant for Australian community pharmacy because approximately 60% of national community pharmacy revenue is derived from prescription dispensing. Of this proportion, the majority is receipted through the national PBS (KordaMentha, 2014). The PBS remuneration scheme for pharmacies includes fixed profit margins for prescription dispensing, based upon a periodically fixed PBS-medicine cost-price.

Reforms to the PBS were initiated in 2007, and expanded in 2010. They have been designed to progressively reduce the procurement price of PBS-listed prescription medicines with a consequence of lowering the achievable gross profit from dispensing PBS prescriptions. The effects are predicted to unfold well beyond 2018 (Centre for Strategic Economic Studies, 2009; Sweeny, 2013).

The main mechanism used to achieve this cost-price lowering process is the requirement for PBS medicine manufacturers to disclose to the government the whole

range of ‘real’ PBS-medicine cost-prices charged to pharmacies by all competing manufacturers. The government then progressively applies a ‘weighted average’ calculation for each set of medicine prices disclosed (for each individual medicine), which has the effect of lowering the new calculated cost-price toward a progressively lower ‘weighted average’. The new weighted average (cost) price from manufacturer to pharmacy then becomes the new scheduled cost-price for the medicine on the PBS, upon which pharmacy remuneration for dispensing is based. Pharmacists often refer to this whole process as “price disclosure”. For a more in depth explanation of Australian PBS reforms, see the paper by Singleton and Nissen (2013).

When asked about the biggest influences on their business, managers expressed their understanding that such a price lowering process was inevitable. A typical statement was made by Ben: *“It’s something that’s always going to be inevitable...the continual claw-back of government spending.”* However the impact of PBS reforms is being felt currently. Ben quickly went on to say: *“Certainly we have noticed that internally, the profitability of our dispensary continues to decline, and I think that’s reflected across all, all businesses.”* Similar statements were heard from Quintin: *“...obviously price disclosure is probably the biggest issue for us at the moment”*, and from Sara: *“...[from] PBS reform[s], we’re losing money in our dispensaries, [so] we’ve got to get it from somewhere else”*. These comments show how participants are grappling with the emerging reality of a shifting profit base.

Several participants also expressed grave concerns about the scale of the PBS price reductions and consequent revenue deflation. For example, Edward generalised by stating: *“I think some of the modelling shows about 15% drop in your average pharmacy’s turnover. So that’s a fairly solid whack. Just like that.”* Harold gave a more specific example concerning the medicine simvastatin, a cholesterol-lowering drug with very high PBS use: *“Simvastatin for example, you know, very big molecule of the past, you know dropping 55% in terms of what you get paid, is a big drop.”*

Because the PBS reforms are designed to continue to substantially reduce the cost-price of PBS medicines unceasingly over time (i.e. well over a decade beyond 2007), most participants were also concerned about the unpredictability of how the continuing price drops would affect their businesses in the near to medium future. As expressed by Jeremy:

...well obviously we’re all struggling with this stuff about reduced margin, you know, the percentage on the [reduced] buying price. It gives you a lower margin price. And what does that mean? I don’t know. I don’t think even [the president

of the Pharmacy Guild] *knows what that means, I don't think any of us really know.*

Overall, the statements recounted within this dimension: “Experiencing profit reduction from PBS regulation changes”, sensitise the analyst to one major set of conditions that will bear upon the developing understanding of managerial capability constructed in later chapters. This dimension reflects not only the current experienced conditions of dropping profit margins but also an anxiety concerning how the continuing effect of the conditions might play out in time. The ‘unknown-ness’ expressed within this dimension resonates with the dimensions of the first property “Experiencing uncertainty”. The next dimension also reflects substantial downward pressure on achievable business profits, but this time from competition.

(ii) *Experiencing competitive pressure on margins from discounters (including supermarkets)*

The rise of competition in the form of the pharmacy price-discounters was regarded by all participants as the most visible direct threat, forming another dimension of the property “Experiencing decreasing gross margins”. The following extract from Adam’s interview reflects a viewpoint of most participants:

I'd say quite clearly at the moment the biggest issue, and I would use the word threat, to maintaining profitability and maximising returns in the pharmacy would be the ongoing discounting that's occurring in the industry. So we have extreme pressure on margins.

The significance of price competition appears to be important regardless of the pharmacy business model. David, who owns and manages a large highly focused ‘discount’ pharmacy, identified (other) ‘discounter’ price competition as a key influence. In responding to a question asking him to identify the most substantial influences that are operating presently (on his business), and the trajectory into the next few years, David listed three key factors: PBS reforms, price competition from “discounters” and increasing labour costs. His comments regarding “discounters” are as follows: “... *the price competition that is coming from other discounters means that front-of-shop prices have to be competitive*”. And later: “*People [pharmacy owners] have to reduce their margin. They won't be able to sit at 32–34% gross [margin]. They'll be under 30[%].*”

Edward expressed the clear tension that the “*discount chemists*” have created in the pharmacy business environment:

...during the last, you know...what, ten to fifteen years, you know the whole traditional pharmacy model has been challenged. You would argue it wasn't really a model, it was just existing. You know it's just the way it's always been done. And all of a sudden you have the discount chemists come in and pretty much turned it on its head, and [they] say well, we're just going to do what you do any way, but at a cheaper price.

Charles was more specific about how the “big-box discounters” were affecting his approach to business:

...[the] big-box [pharmacy] discounter models, are able to produce a retailing concept that screams value to the customer, and that makes other competitors, my pharmacy amongst others, [to] have to be very tight on their pricing in the front of shop, but also be wary of prescription pricing.

In identifying the discount pharmacy model as creating a major impact in the competitive landscape, most participants also pointed toward the discount department stores and especially supermarkets as being highly aggressive in their approach to price competition against pharmacy. As Mark pointed out: *“Australia's duopoly of Coles and Woolworths, they are very much going hard at pharmacy, you know, their stores are starting to look like pharmacies in there.”*

Gerald related his specific experiences with nearby supermarket operators:

...we've got a Coles and a Woolworths [nearby], they are definitely going out of their way to compete with pharmacy but also compete with [my pharmacy] and it's not unusual for us to have people in our stores under the guise of customers [who are] price checking and doing a whole lot of activities, looking at how we're planogramming stock, how we are merchandising things and all that type of thing. So that's definitely a constant threat. (Planogramming: see Glossary).

Sara was blunt in her assessment of the competitive risk posed by supermarket brands: *“They're relentless, price discounting until everyone falls over. They would lose money to kill pharmacy. Everybody in pharmacy.”*

Harold also spoke of the aggressiveness of the supermarkets near one of his stores and gave a specific example of how his business is being shaped by such pressure:

...what Coles and Woolworths do has a big impact. Baby was one classic example. At my discount pharmacy, our baby department used to do a hell of a lot of nappies, as a loss-leader. But now it's almost impossible to compete against the supermarket. [...] we have seen a big shift in the last three years...in

terms of the way customers are buying their product. And it's simply because the supermarkets have ratcheted down the price on nappies. [...] that's been a big difference and it's really shaping the way that business is going.

The intense pressure being brought to bear on the participants' pharmacies through price competition from both pharmacy competitors and supermarkets is also amplified by the rising use of the internet. Most managers see internet use by customers as both a threat and an opportunity. Ian, for example, sees the threat from the rise of the online store much more than just another change to contend with. Ian sees the potential of the internet to be the greatest force among several unprecedented interacting forces such as the rise of the discounter business model, PBS reforms and supermarket competition. In response to a query as to what he thought were the key influences on his businesses, he responded comprehensively:

What's affecting the sales is the discounters...which is driving prices down. There's the supermarkets that are being extremely aggressive in pharmacy lines. There's the pseudo discounters which I've mentioned we're a part of, and [...] bigger than all of those combined, is the internet. So we have...what I see in going forward is the biggest threat in my 35 years of community pharmacy on retail prices and we have a huge threat on cost price of ethicals [referring to PBS reforms]. Squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze.

Ian's response brings the issues of this property together in his own experiences of a dynamic cluster of interacting influences, unfolding all at once. He describes them dramatically as the "biggest threat" in his 35 years in community pharmacy. But the final four words of his response give an indication of the emotions he is feeling in relation to the dynamic environment he has described: "Squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze". The sentiment implied by these words resonates with the statements of other participants which are described in the final dimension of this property, which is discussed next.

(iii) *Feeling the 'squeeze': Working harder for the same results*

This dimension arose more frequently than any other as participants described how they felt about the present and ongoing outcomes of their managerial efforts. The pressure that participants were experiencing is reflected in Adam's remark:

So we have extreme pressure on margins. So we're now at the situation, for the first time that I can recall in my managerial career where we're actually

working harder, in a sense having a higher output, but not getting the same return. Or maybe getting the same return but working much harder.

Mark said much the same but more starkly: “...we're working as hard as we have for the same, which questions why would you do that. Well, if you don't do it, well, you're going to die. You might as well just sell up.”

Even those participants whose businesses were growing rapidly were able to uncover the “awful” effect of changes to previously bankable profit levels. As described by Sara:

My stores are growing, significantly growing. I mean, last week we did more than 30% on [compared to same period] last year, you know, it's big growth. So the PBS reform for me is disguised but if I look at the figures, yeah, I did 1,000 more scripts and I made \$1,200 less [in] money, you know. So, yeah, it's awful but my growth hides it a little bit.

These sentiments demonstrate something of the underlying feeling of urgency and anticipation that infuses the context within which the participants are managing. As will be discussed later, the expressed feelings of ‘squeeze’ and the consequent atmosphere of urgency that such feelings create, shape the direction that seems available for what-happens-next. But the participants also described yet further challenges when relating their experience of uncertainty and change. Participants revealed concerns about how their customers’ perceptions seem to be changing in different ways that are not aligned with their current (and past) pharmacy business offering. These concerns are captured within the next property “Experiencing changing customer perceptions”, and the subsidiary dimensions which describe it.

PROPERTY 3: EXPERIENCING CHANGING CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS

Dimensional range: Low consumer confidence (price consciousness) ↔ Changing perception of pharmacy

Property description: Range of perceived evolving customer sentiments concerning the choice of pharmacy as a place to purchase goods and services.

The adverse business environment trends described earlier were seen as more easy to comprehend, and therefore predictable to the participants than their major concern about ‘changing customer perceptions’. This concept reflects managers’ experiences that many customers are demonstrating a preference for a greater variety of outlets other than pharmacy, to satisfy their health-related wants and needs. Central to

this perception is that low prices should be a feature of the customers' purchasing experience. The participants indicated that these perception changes seem to be caused by a combination of low and variable consumer (economic) confidence resulting in elevated sensitivity about product prices, and change in how consumers enact their power in seeking what they want.

(i) *Experiencing low consumer economic confidence (price consciousness)*

The first of two dimensions filling out this property reflect participant comments about what one manager called “*soft retail conditions*” (Vincent). When responding to an inquiry about what he thought were the biggest business environment influences that gave him concern, Vincent responded:

...at the moment, soft retail conditions. I think everyone is cautious, so I think everyone is cautious in what they're spending. They're saving a little bit more and I think that retail has come under pressure over the last three to five years and it's been relatively flat.

Ben's response to the same question provoked a similar answer:

...obviously it [the industry] can only flourish when you've got a consumer who has a need for that product or service or is willing to pay for that product or service... definitely I think it's the consumers' finances.

Measurements of Australian consumer confidence (also known as consumer sentiment), over recent years, appear to align with participant concerns. For example, the Westpac-Melbourne Institute Consumer Sentiment Index for Australia surveyed people on their feelings about their individual financial situation, and the overall economy's situation in the present and in the future. Over the period between 2012 to 2016 their monthly index revealed that consumer optimists exceeded consumer pessimists in only 20 of the 60 months in this period (Tradingeconomics.com, 2016).

While Harold's comments referred to the long-lingering effects of the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2007-8 as the reason why customers were not “throwing money around”, his contribution links what could be called ‘low consumer confidence’ with the emerging marketing strategies of the pharmacy discounter business model, and the apparent change in consumer behaviour. He said:

So I see customers at the moment, with a combination of the GFC and the amount of discounting that's going on in pharmacy...now they believe that you can always get a better price, somewhere else. If you shop harder, you'll get a cheaper price. So we...what we have traditionally offered [is] a price matching

policy, you know, we'll match any price that's out there, but some... for our high volume customers we're seeing them sort of looking for a bit more because you know, the price match system requires them to put in a little bit of effort, and obviously they think if they just went somewhere else they get those products at a cheaper price anyway.

Most managers made similar comments about their perceptions of how customers' attitudes to their pharmacy businesses were changing. Two explanations set out below capture typical participant experiences. For example, Adam explained how he experienced changing customer perceptions:

And I would say to some extent perhaps we were a little bit slow off the mark maybe too, in recognising just how significant the impact would be on the Australian public's perception of pharmacy and the movement towards discounters...more frequently than ever in the past [customers] ask the initial question before they walk in and even ask "do you price match"? So, it becomes more of a commodity driven service, or business rather than a service business, which historically it has been. Price wasn't the major differential. So that's something that's clearly obvious in behaviour of a lot of customers today, when they approach the pharmacy. Others will bring in advertisements or respond to what might have been printed in the most recent magazines or papers, whatever it might be, requesting products at sometimes, you know, quite...quite cheap prices. So that's obvious to us as well. So for us that has necessitated a change to practice, so we certainly would be monitoring those as best we can when people make that remark and we'd be reviewing prices.

Charles also clearly articulated his new concerns about changing customer perceptions about his businesses:

... but what I see as a bigger issue as well, is not just the margin squeeze, but the perception of the customer. So, although we've been able to maintain the margin, it's the perception of the customer [that we have to understand] to try and continue to build growth. The customer perceives your business as maybe not being of value because of supermarket, online, Chemists Warehouse, other retailers...that's the biggest challenge I find. So I find... prices are easy to change. I can change prices at the click of a button. I can put a catalogue out... it takes a bit of work but in the greater scheme of things isn't that difficult. What's difficult is changing a perception of what people think of your business.

The participants explain clearly that the rapidly changing pharmacy business environment is delivering a greater proportion of customers who are more demanding and discriminatory over product price. Yet, participants also spoke about the growth of experiences where customers are becoming more demanding and insistent about their own versions of appropriate pharmaceutical care. Their demands seem based on their own research, mostly sourced from the internet, discussed in the next dimension within this property.

(ii) *Experiencing customers with high information but low knowledge*

It is known that consumers have been empowered over the past two decades by access to the internet and the enormous choice of available information contained on the world-wide-web (Crumlish, 2004; Kucuk & Krishnamurthy, 2007; Urban, 2004). Health related information is among the most frequently searched topics on the internet (McMullen, 2006). Shift in the approach of patients from more passive recipients to active consumers (McMullen, 2006) can be both confronting and daunting (Simonet, 2015). The shift in expectation of, and approaches to pharmacists by many customers requires pharmacists to consider changes to their response, as summarised by Noel:

Well I think the mystique [of professional expertise] has been taken out of what's going on, because you can go and Google anything you like, even if you can't do it your daughter will do it, or your son-in-law, or your nephew, or your grandson will do it, and you can read all you want about anything you like. So having...getting the information is one thing and then it's knowing exactly what to do with that information. I think what we're... the consumer has changed so we need to tap into the new consumer.

Peter expressed similar challenges:

...people assume that Dr. Google is going to suddenly rectify everything. What we found is that we have to disambiguate a lot of the data they are getting from the internet or from other people or from other sources within the allied health sphere and so hence I think pharmacy probably needs to situate itself as a navigator of health. [...] we are seeing a more informed consumer per se but they are more confused.

Customers being confused and on the wrong track in relation to their health care, caused by misleading or even completely incorrect information sourced from the internet, is a further complicating concern for the evolving relationships between consumers and their pharmacists. Robert recounted a typical encounter where a

customer said, “I read on the internet that my cancer will be cured if I just take almond kernels, so I’m going to stop taking my medication.” Noel also shared an example of an internet-misinformed customer, and the need for pharmacists to be aware of all information sources:

...there's this guy that I know who's probably in his 80s, well into his 70s [who is] having two beetroot every morning and it's “helping with me circulation”, or whatever, and I'm thinking, oh, ok...so he doesn't have a reason for [his information], other than he went on the internet. But what am I trying to say, [is] we need to be across all the channels, it doesn't necessarily...it's not going to be one channel or the other.

As evidenced here, participants are experiencing divergent views from their increasingly empowered customers regarding approaches to therapy. These narratives of change highlight a rising tension between the sanctioned role of the pharmacist and those of the increasingly powerful and reflexive consumer (Hibbert, Bissell, & Ward, 2002; McCaw, McGlade, & McElnay, 2007). It seems that the effects and experiences described earlier concerning the increasing price consciousness of customers, supports and interacts with growing customer beliefs in their own knowledge and ability to find their own way in health care.

The two dimensions discussed within this property “Experiencing changing customer perceptions” show how participants are experiencing change in how customers ‘see’ and approach pharmacy and pharmacists. The participants’ expectations are changing. Customers are seemingly shifting from being passive recipients to more active and empowered consumers. In all, it is reasonable to interpret that participants perceive a widening relationship ‘gap’ between themselves and their customers. In addition to this shift within the all-important customer base, participants also raised their changing experiences and interactions with another crucial group: actual and potential staff members. This is reported in the next property: “Experiencing changes in employee attitudes to work”.

PROPERTY 4: EXPERIENCING CHANGES IN EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES TO WORK

Dimensional range: Poor worker quality ↔ Inappropriate attitudes of ‘entitlement’

Property description: Range of perceived emerging challenges regarding finding and holding staff who are suitable for more intensive service roles.

In many interviews, participants particularly mentioned how they were experiencing challenges with existing or potential staff (via the recruitment and selection process). Generally participants referred to staff who seemed to be bringing different expectations and attitudes to the workplace, which were perplexing and troublesome for the managers. The discussion-threads reported below need to be understood in the context of a perceived industry wide oversupply of pharmacists (but not in all regions). Some reports predicted that as many as 4,000 pharmacists would be surplus to national job requirement needs by 2015 (O'Donoghue, 2012).

The apparent oversupply is mostly sheeted back to statistics which show that Australia has a higher number of university pharmacy schools per capita than the UK, USA, Canada or throughout Europe (Moffat, 2014). But while some managers acknowledged having greater numbers of applicants for advertised positions, participant comments revealed concerns about staff and their ability to do what was needed to meet emerging business environments. The managers' experiences regarding changes in employee attitudes to work are reported through three dimensions of this property: i) Experiencing poor worker quality; ii) Experiencing increasingly inadequate customer relational skills and iii) Experiencing inappropriate attitudes of 'entitlement'. These dimensions are reported next.

(i) *Experiencing poor worker quality*

Many managers were either explicit, or inferred that finding good quality staff was becoming an increasing challenge. Charles was specific about what he saw was his challenge in recruiting suitable staff:

...staff, is an issue in the respect that trying to source quality staff, that are motivated to join you on the path and vision that you want to take the business on, not just have the store clean and smile. It's about a full offer, and I think that for the most part we're doing pretty well in that area, but it is a constant challenge.

Several managers spoke of their experience that poor worker attitude and commitment was evident from the early stages of career. In referring to the employment of pharmacist interns (see Glossary) and early career pharmacists, Edward commented:

...some of the people, you know they are just there to get their 48 weeks [of intern training], their meal ticket, and then off they go. They aren't really going to be beneficial towards the business, so whether it's an intern, a first year out

pharmacist, or whatever, they've got to be able to contribute to the business in a, in a positive way...

Frederick also referred to concerns with the quality of new pharmacists arriving into the employment pool. He said:

We still struggle to get good quality pharmacists. I think the oversupply has decreased the calibre of the pharmacists coming through, as a...absolutely, [I] can see that there's a big decline in the calibre of students and pre-reg's and the younger pharmacists. It's quite concerning.

Karen was another manager who showed concern about the changing quality of emerging pharmacist professionals with her comment: “...we're selective about whom we employ and I bring up the issue of the trainee. We've had numerous placements every year... We pulled back as a result of some real crappy attitudes.”

The points being made here about quality-challenges in sourcing and keeping staff do not so much reflect an existing and static challenge, but a changing and increasing challenge. The researcher, in trying to better understand what the main human quality or ‘calibre’ issues were, found they centred mostly on poor or inadequate human relational skills. This is reported as the next dimension in this property.

(ii) *Experiencing increasingly inadequate human relational skills*

Some participants gave quite specific examples through which they justify their perceptions about staff performance quality. The first relates to the apparent changing social skills and abilities of staff arising from the employment pool, particularly new entrants to the profession. The second relates to apparent increasing needs for high-level interpersonal and relational performance skills from staff to meet new business directions.

When asked to elaborate about what she meant by her label of “*real crappy attitudes*”, Karen gave an example of her experience as follows:

We have tea breaks, and one particular lady, she'd go off and have a tea break on her own. All the other staff would say whatever her name was, “do you want to have a cup a tea?” “Yeah, sure” [was the response]. She'd be happy to accept someone else's cup of tea but she never offered anyone else. There's a social dysfunctionality there... [also] she'd come in and you'd say hello, how was your weekend, and she'd say well, good, blah, blah, blah, and then she wouldn't say “what did you do”? Well, what does that mean? I don't want to be here, you don't care? I don't know what it means.

Karen made the point that such behaviour was outside the close-knit and unified intra-staff culture that has been the norm in her business from the beginning. She specified the consequence of what she regards as poor social behaviour: *“And if they're not fitting in socially, if they're not interacting, if they're not getting along with the other staff, one, they're not happy, [two], the other staff aren't happy, and [so] we don't want them here.”*

Tom also related a specific example of what he meant when he said that his biggest managerial challenge was to: *“...get enough pharmacists and get those that are prepared to talk to people and actually want to provide advice and concern with them.”* In describing a range of staff performance experiences, he specifically related an example to justify his concerns: *“...we've had people (pharmacists) who have actually started dispensing with us and kept their mobile phone beside them, and answered the mobile phone while they're actually dispensing in front of a patient.”* To Tom, such staff behaviour was both perplexing and unacceptable, explaining that this behaviour was at odds with his long held belief regarding the centrality of the patient/customer.

Other managers did not so much refer to their increasing experience of poor basic social skills within staff, as they did to changing pharmacy work practices that increasingly need high-level interpersonal and relational skills. Several managers expressed doubts about the capacities of their current staff to meet the new needs of patients in the changing business environment. For example, referring to his growing business in treating sleep apnoea in his practice, Edward clearly expressed his concerns in describing this challenge:

... your average Joe Blow pharmacy assistant can't do it. You need to have some sort of level of empathy, good communication skills, and not be afraid to touch people, [laughing] dare I say it... which we [pharmacists] don't do, because we usually just stand behind the counter, you know, that's what we do. There's got to be at least a couple of yards between us. But [now] you've got to not be afraid to, you know, have them in here, dishing out their life story...and this and that, and all their medical history, and there are, you know, obese diabetics, people with all sorts of cardiovascular issues, so yeah, it takes a bit of time to develop that and you know, there's quite a number of staff here that wouldn't be able to do that.

A similar sentiment regarding inadequate communication skills of staff members was offered by David and reported earlier in this chapter.

Within this dimension, two interacting ‘shifts’ appear to be apparent to the participant employers: the first is a perceived change in the social norms of emerging employees, many of whom appear to be poorly suited to the necessary customer service roles; the second is an acknowledged change in the necessary work-tasks within pharmacy that require more developed social and relational skills with patients. The experiences revealed in this dimension interact with, and are related to those experiences already reported in the previously described properties, particularly “Experiencing uncertainty” and “Experiencing changing customer perceptions”.

Some managers were not content to describe their experiences of increasingly inadequate human relational skills without further explanation. Several managers sought to explain their experiences in terms of their perceptions of growing inappropriate attitudes of ‘entitlement’ among new, and young prospective employees. This perceived change is described as an increasing business pressure, and is discussed as the final dimension of this property.

(iii) *Experiencing inappropriate attitudes of ‘entitlement’*

When speaking with Frederick about what he thought were the biggest influences affecting his businesses, he said that issues around “*the changing workforce*” rated among the top three. The following striking example was offered:

...now with gen-Y and everything moving through, you do have a different staffing environment to be managing. Well, particularly with pharmacists, we have pharmacists now who will interview us, before they’ll decide to do an internship with us. [Laughs]. Or we’ll have pharmacists say, “I’ll only work these days and these hours”, and they’re very reluctant to do sort of, the overtime, so you know when I went through, we all started doing 50 hours or 55 hours a week, and now the younger pharmacists, you know, even 38 [hours] is sometime pushing the...you know they really only want to...it’s for lifestyle and... so yeah, they certainly put more pressure back on the businesses.

Sara, when asked the same question about ‘biggest influences’, cited “*staff related*” issues as number one. When asked to elaborate on what she meant by this, she responded:

At the moment, through employing people, I’m influenced by age and experience. I used to, seven [to] eight years ago, I used to employ younger people that would have no experience...because they are easily influenced, I can grow them, I can brainwash them, they don’t know any other model of

pharmacy... [But now]... I find the generation coming through of kids, like the younger kids, frustrating and so I'm now...frustrating in the way that they want everything now, they want a pay rise, they've been working six months they want to be the boss, "I can do a better job than you." They just want everything now. And so I'm now looking to...I'm reversing my ideas about who I employ. Experience doesn't scare me anymore but I now am more confident in telling the person what they're walking into first.

In referring to the same idea of apparent generational change within the emerging staff population, Karen also made mention of her altered staff recruiting and selection habits: *"I think that's a generational thing or this whole mentality shift, so we've been really picky."*

The reference to 'generation-Y' refers to people born between 1980 and 2000, that is, between the ages of 17 and 37 in the year 2017 (Laird, Harvey, & Lancaster, 2015). 'Entitlement' has been described as "a stable tendency toward highly favorable self-perceptions and a tendency to feel deserving of high levels of praise and reward, regardless of actual performance levels" (Harvey & Harris, 2010, p. 1640). It is not the intent here to analyse or review the theories attempting to connect this generation with certain patterned behaviour and attitudes. The literature is developing in this space (Barnes, 2009; Harvey & Harris, 2010; Naumann, Minsky, & Sturman, 2002). However, it is important to point out that there is mounting evidence that 'gen-Y's' are indeed bringing quite different expectations to the workplace, than has been experienced through earlier generations (Barnes, 2009; Benson & Brown, 2011). The experiences of participants, reflected in the reported quotes, underscore this. In all, the dimensions of this property seem symptomatic of a perceived widening gap between some workers and their employer and the customers, in both commitment and relation.

The conceptual properties interpreted from the interview texts reveal the perceived main concerns of the participants about the emerging and changing context. By "dimensionalizing" properties, (Strauss, 1987) clarity is provided through specification of dimensions, which are grounded in the interview data. Since managerial capability implies managing effectively in the present, but within unknown or emerging contexts and with new problems (Davis & Hase, 1999), the analysis which follows articulates both what and how participants experience the unknown and emerging contexts and new problems.

DISCUSSION: UNDERSTANDING EMERGENT MANAGERIAL CONTEXT

This chapter seeks to build understanding of the dynamically complex context as experienced by the participants. While the described findings, ‘break apart’ the context into described properties and their dimensions, such fracturing must not imply that these descriptive elements are separate ‘things’ or interacting systems. Rather, they must be understood as aspects of an intertwined and dynamic whole. The properties and dimensions are distinguished as a device for descriptive and analytical purposes (Simpson, 2009), to gain a closer understanding of ‘what’s going on here?’ from participants’ perspectives (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Participants’ understandings of their worlds and their motivations for actions are influenced by their interpretation of, and trans-actions within context. Context is therefore a vital consideration in the analytical process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). To this end, the first diagrammatic representation of the Sub-core category is shown in Figure 6 (p. 114). Figure 6 is constructed as an open-ended circle representing the theoretical ‘experienced world’ of the manager. While their experience is in the present moment, their world of ‘experiencing’ is not stationary, but dynamic and in continuous unfolding movement through time. The recursive design in the figure, marked with the notation “[A]”, represents dynamism and movement. The open end of the circle on the right hand side, represents openness to the future and the recursive two-way arrows represent continuous anticipation of what is to come. This representation will be developed further through Chapters 6 and 7.

In the following discussion, three analytical perspectives are emphasised regarding managers’ experience of context. The first perspective considers the holistic and entwined experience of context. The second views that context is experienced-in-motion, in unfolding time. The third perspective illuminates the presence and role of emotions as consequential to the experiencing of context, but also as a formative part of that emerging context. These perspectives frame the departure point for the following chapter.

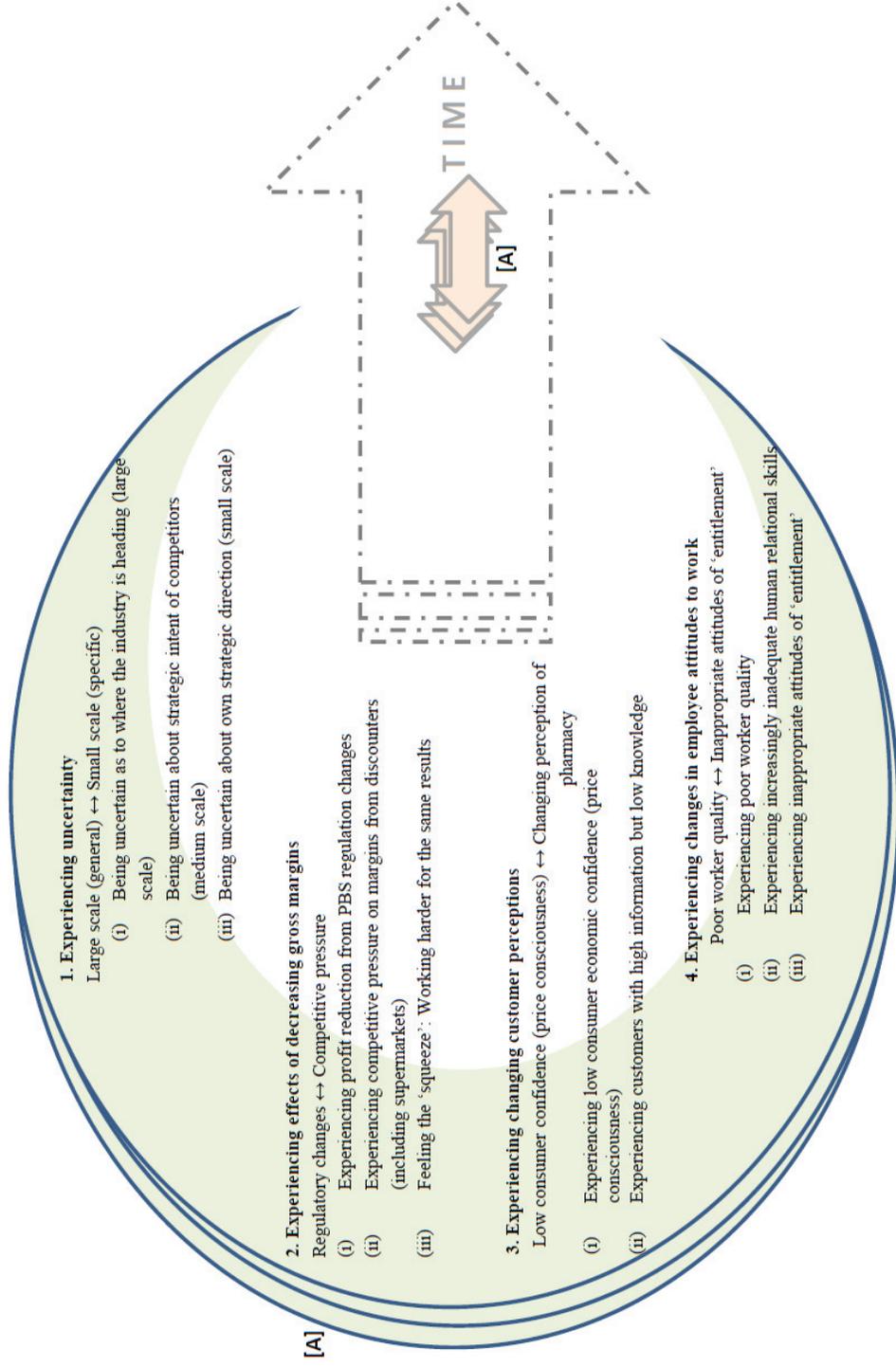


Figure 6: Representation of the properties and dimensions constituting the **Sub-core category 1: Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity.**

Entwinement of context: the experienced world

The properties and their dimensions reflect managerial experiences of deep concern about change within crucial domains of their business lives. These include customer perceptions, staff performance, business profitability and the equivocality and unknown-ness of the directions and intentions of their competitors, the industry and therefore themselves. In experiencing such uncertainty, change and complexity, the managers are not dealing with discrete episodic encounters with environmental factors but are experiencing a ceaseless flow of co-occurring events (Cooper, 2005). There is complete entwinement of the dimensions and therefore the properties, bringing forth an ‘experienced world’ in which participants are immersed.

For example, participant’s experience of changing customer perceptions about the value of pharmacy from both product-price and pharmaceutical-expertise perspectives (the dimensions of Property 3), are deeply entwined with participants’ experience of competitor pressure and feeling the “squeeze” of “Working harder for the same” (dimensions of Property 2). This entwinement is further entwined with participants’ experiences of disconcertion about changes to employee attitudes to work (the dimensions of Property 4). The entwinement is still further entwined with participants’ experience of uncertainty (the dimensions of Property 1). Entwinement is not a variable feature of context, but *is* the emergent experience of participants and is continuous and ongoing through time. The context described here is thus the emergent ‘experienced world’ of participants (Sandberg & Targama, 2007; Schembri & Sandberg, 2011).

Experienced world as emergent in time

When coding the data relating to context, the researcher followed the advice of Glaser (1978) in using gerunds in developing code names, which allows conceptual labelling in terms of process (Langley, 1999). All of the properties proposed in this Sub-core category reflect an interpretation of what participants are ‘experience-ing’. This invokes thinking in terms of a “language of movement” (Chia, 1995, p. 594). Focusing on “movement” raises the visibility of an emergent context within time, rather than context described in terms of atemporal entities and attributes. Emergence is a temporal concept in that past, present and future is assumed in its meaning and takes into account that the unexpected often occurs.

The properties and their dimensions described here articulate the emergence of a stream of realisations, circumstances, events and actions through time. Such an interpretation of context situates the participant at an emergent moment of the present where “backward and forward views meet” (Weick, 2003, p. 468). The memory of the interpreted past and unfolding anticipation of a projected future is situated in each emergent present moment (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). In this study, the properties and dimensions of the Sub-core category “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity” are described through gerunds such as “experiencing”, “being uncertain” and “feeling”, all of which develop an analytical ‘feel’ and imagery of movement. Through this perspective the temporal aspect is revealed and establishes the departure point for understanding actions discussed in the next chapter.

The uncertainty and complexity that the participants are experiencing is viewed within the context of the dynamic changes around them. Together, these perceived changes reveal the ‘temporal flow’ of their experienced organisational life, or more correctly, new ‘flows’ (experiences) that have disrupted the ‘flows’ of previous experience. It is the use of gerunds in the titling of the properties and dimensions that aids analytical imagery of flow, and provides an answer for the generalised exploratory question ‘what’s going on here?’. As will be argued in subsequent chapters, context viewed this way presents “the particulars that make knowledge actionable” (Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & Van de Ven, 2013, p. 4).

In particular, the unfolding context described dynamically in time, reveals the temporal-emotional aspects such as directionality (Bourdieu, 1990), anticipation, uncertainty and urgency (Nicolini, 2009b) enabling preservation of such experiences in analysis and eventual theorising. These aspects are developed further in Chapters 6 and 7, and are crucial for the development of theory in this study.

Experienced world as a world of emotions

An influential shaper of how people ‘go on’ when dealing with emergent circumstances is their emotional state (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel, 2001). Citing Dewey (1929), Corbin (2008, p.6-8) states:

To conceive of emotion as distinguishable from action, as entities accompanying action, is to reify those aspects of action. For us, there is no dualism. One can’t separate emotion from action; they are a part of the same flow of events, one leading into the other (Dewey, 1929).

Emotions should not be regarded as necessarily irrational, but can be quite practical in contributing to judgements as to what to do next (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel, 2001). Learning and emotions are inseparably integrated, and both are dynamic processes that are highly influential in considering continuously emergent questions such as ‘what does this mean?’ and ‘what should I do?’ (Fineman, 1997).

Emotions are located within a holistic understanding of experience, and different emotions are indicative of different levels of tension between expectations and unfolding circumstances (Simpson & Marshall, 2010). That is, an obstacle or disruption to the expected flow of circumstances occurs and is experienced as “felt difficulties” (Simpson & Marshall, 2010, p. 357), causing an emergent anxiety. This emergent anxiety produces a fertile environment for inquiring social-actions that seek a pathway to resolve the feelings of disruption (Fineman, 1997). Emotions and learning can thus be viewed as mutually constructing dynamic processes involving the emergent flow of context in time, “felt difficulties”, social inquiring processes, and learning.

Practitioners, as participants in and contributors to their own worlds, make sense of their world as it emerges which can “occur amidst intense emotional experience” (Weick et al., 2005, p. 418). The emotional worlds of participants in this study are expressed through their talk of “uncertainty”; “doubt”; feeling “caught in the middle”, “threat”, “extreme pressure”, the “squeeze” et cetera. These various expressions of participant interpretation deliver a more direct and integrated understanding of their experience as “felt difficulties” and disruptions to the usual flow of experience. Indeed, the emotional content implied by the data establishes an understanding of the tension that is a large part of their experienced context. It is within this context of tension, uncertainty and suspense that knowing how to ‘go on’ arises (Shotter, 1996). The context for action becomes more explicit.

The unfolding context with its tensions establishes the ‘moments’ from which all judgements, decisions, and actions are taken. How and why participants respond-in-action to their perceived context is explained in the next two chapters, however the departure point for the descriptions of action in the next chapter is to see emotions as inseparable from action. A key concern for the researcher was to determine how environmental context affects identified social processes (Benoliel, 1996). The main stories of the social processes are described in the next two chapters, culminating in the central social process (Core category), described as the grounded theory in Chapter 8.

CONCLUSION

Consistent with the ontology and epistemology for this study, the perspective of the participant's life-world underpins the research philosophy and exploratory approach. The concept of life-world considers that the human world is an experienced world and never a world in itself, and human beings live and act within this understanding or lived experience, and never outside it (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 1353-4; Sandberg & Targama, 2007, p. 28). As such, the context which participants experience is not an external contingently linked set of variables, but rather a complex but meaningful unfolding totality (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Weick, 2003).

In this chapter, four properties explained through their dimensions, give a close description of the managers' experienced worlds. Concerns about dropping financial viability were mixed with concerns about the declining loyalty of customers and declining confidence that their staff are able to perform as desired. These concerns, arising from the main domains of business practice nest within an overall sense of uncertainty about how to respond to competitors, the direction of the industry and therefore their own business future. It is within this totality that participants perceive events around them (conditions or context).

This experience, which is constantly in motion, including the experiencing of emotions, then shapes their actions and social interactions. Actions, social relations immersed in emotion then shapes the emerging experience of context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Rather than simply 'experiencing' the emerging context, participants are themselves immersed as a dynamic part of their contextual whole (Hildebrand, 2007). It is from this understanding of managers experiencing and self-shaping their emergent context that the next Sub-core category "Re-orienting meaningfully" was developed. The second of the three Sub-core categories, "Re-orienting meaningfully" reports what managers are doing, given the context they are experiencing.

Chapter 6: Re-orienting meaningfully

“Turbulence is the only way to get altitude – to get lift. Without turbulence the sky is just a big blue hole. Without turbulence, you sink.” (Corrigan, 2010).

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter saw the construction of the first of three Sub-core categories revealing how the uncertain, changing and complex worlds within which participants are entwined, are experienced. The context has been described through the participants’ stories as an experienced world of emergent circumstances infused with both explicit and implied feelings of tension, uncertainty, suspense and anticipation. This experienced and emergent world forms the departure point through which the next Sub-core category has been constructed.

The second Sub-core category, “Re-orienting meaningfully” interprets what the managers *are actually doing*, given the contextual experiences they are having. The focus remains on the outcomes however the data and analysis illuminate the patterned human and social processes ‘going-on’. Together these patterns show how and why “Re-orienting meaningfully” arises through experiencing emergent contexts. “Re-orienting meaningfully” is exhibited as a nexus of both diverging and converging social processes resulting in emergence of new actions and transformation of existing processes, that is, “creative action” (Simpson 2009, p. 1322).

As in the previous chapter, the properties and dimensions, constructed from the interview data, are reported in detail through the voices of participants. The discussion which follows synthesises important theoretical proposals which develop an understanding of how patterned managerial practices and social processes deliver creative action in relation to the emerging and experienced context. These findings are developed further through the third and final Sub-core category “Inquiring” discussed in Chapter 7. The Sub-core category “Inquiring” shows the patterned actions revealing how managers learn.

RE-ORIENTING MEANINGFULLY: PROPERTIES AND DIMENSIONS

The properties and their dimensions fulfilling this Sub-core category “Re-orienting meaningfully”, are summarised in Table 8. The reader is reminded that the properties and dimensions are distinguished separately only as a device for descriptive

and analytical purposes. Each of the four properties is constructed through its range of dimensions. Next, each of property is discussed in turn.

Table 8: The properties and dimensions of Sub-core category 2: “Re-orienting meaningfully”.

Properties (Categories)	Property Description	Dimensional Range
1. Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental symbols	Range of managerial responses to perceived environmental symbols	Reconsidering relevance ↔ Re-balancing risks (i) Confronting the need for customer-relevance (ii) Altering product ranges and categories (iii) Managing pricing (iv) Increasing the opportunity for service based experiences (v) Pursuing operational efficiencies and re-balancing risks
2. Engaging customers	Range of managerial actions centred on engaging customers in meaningful and ongoing relationships	Reaching out to customers ↔ Reaching out to community (i) Bringing pharmacists to the fore (ii) Reaching toward the individual customer’s ‘world’ (iii) Seeing customers as defensive advocates (iv) Investing and participating within the local community
3. Engaging staff	Range of managerial actions centred on developing unity of staff understanding and business direction	Regular dialogue ↔ Staff empowerment (i) Engaging staff through dialogue (ii) Creating unity (iii) Employing for ‘fit’ (iv) Empowering and trusting staff
4. Acting to satisfy personal meaning	Range of underlying personal influences that guide and limit how managers enact their pharmacy business evolution	Helping people ↔ Giving back (i) Helping people (ii) Relating with people (iii) Not being about the money (iv) Giving back

PROPERTY 1: INTERPRETING AND RESPONDING TO PERCEIVED ENVIRONMENTAL SYMBOLS

Reconsidering relevance ↔ Re-balancing risks

Property description: Range of managerial responses to perceived environmental symbols.

(i) Confronting the need for customer-relevance

In responding to questions about what managers thought were implications of their experienced environment, all managers either explicitly or implicitly referred to their need to re-address the issue of the relevance of their business to customers. Some participants were forthright in their explanation of concerns, for example Charles who stated:

The implications are a question of relevance. To put it simply, does the customer feel that they need to come to my pharmacy business, to fulfil their healthcare needs? Will they get their prescription online? For their over the counter needs, can they go to a health food store or a supermarket? Do they just not want to take their medicines? Is there value to even being compliant [with taking their medicines]? Relevance is the first point.

The questions posed within Charles' response show he is aware that customer relevance is an issue. More importantly, he is experiencing threat and uncertainty about losing relevance in the perceptions of his customers, in a range of different ways. Later, he was more specific about how he confronts the threat of becoming irrelevant in daily practice. Through a clarifying question about his practice to engage customers at a more personal and deeper level, he responded:

Relating and engagement. [Pause]. Because not only the online purchasing influence is a threat, but online sources of information. The number of times I have gone to offer a CMI [Consumer Medicine Information] and the patient has said, "Oh it's OK, I'll look it up on the net."...Now I've had to stop it right there and say, 'no...no, no, no, it's [for me] the click of a button. I'll get the CMI. It's the official updated information.'...In that moment the customer is saying: "Yeah look, you know your stuff but I can find what I need to know". And as soon as they can start finding what they need to know themselves, then what is the purpose of the pharmacist? If we can't control the information of medicines and medicines management, then that's a danger for relevance.

In talking about environmental implications, Edward named customer relevance, including doctors, as his primary concern: "...the number one issue is relevance to the customer. That's number one." Edward also described an example of how the issue of 'relevance' only matters from the customer's perspective, making the achievement of customer relevance challenging. Edward explained that one of his newer business developments was in treating patients with obstructive sleep apnoea (see Glossary). The

treatment involves a home-based intervention using equipment to produce continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP). This had been successful when compared with a quit-smoking service he tried. Edward related:

...like with CPAP, you know, where you do home sleep studies... so we actually get referrals from GP's to do a specialist service sort of thing... and we tried to do a similar sort of thing with the smoking...quit smoking program, but the customer just didn't perceive the value in that. Now they felt, well, spending, you know, twenty bucks on a packet of cigarettes or whatever it costs is not a big deal, they didn't sort of see it as the... as something that was affecting their health, their finances, their family and all the rest of it. Whereas, for whatever reason, sleep apnoea, because it has a day to day immediate effect, and we can sort of demonstrate to people how they can significantly improve and they can therefore then spend their money to significantly improve their health outcomes, and... I don't know, it's just grabbed... it's grabbed the consumer's attention significantly more than what the [quit] smoking did [...] but the main thing I would say is to grab the customer's attention and be relevant to the customer and [that] they perceive some value in that service.

Edward has highlighted that health care 'rationality' does not always translate into powerful motivation for customers. Customers have their own contexts and lived-experience and each individual customer will take action based on what they perceive to be worthwhile in their life, and its perceived meaning (Wilson & Sperber, 2004). This meaning in the eyes of each customer is only at best opaque to the service provider (Schembri & Sandberg, 2011).

Others spoke of the importance of customer relevance less directly including what directions *not* to pursue. This revealed what they perceived to be a better direction to achieve customer relevance. Jeremy in summing up his general views on environmental implications said:

Well when you sell people cheap stuff and it's an item of commerce, nothing to do with medicine, it's pretty difficult to then send the message that we're the place you should come for health advice. You gotta make up your mind.

Jeremy is suggesting that moving away from common items of commerce, toward medicines and healthcare is a better choice for achieving customer relevance in the current environment.

The chosen excerpts show managers' perceptions of the importance of customer relevance, through their interpretation of the emergent environment. It is important to

see that these relevance-realizations are dynamic and emergent realizations. They can be considered way-points in a journey. As effectively put by Vincent: *“So the way we look at it is that we can’t stay static because if we stay static, that’s the day we become irrelevant to our customer.”*

The concept of relevance is innately relational, meaning that relevance is an outcome of some interaction-in-time between an individual and some ‘thing’/situation/language/occurrence (symbols) that the individual interprets (Wilson & Sperber, 2004). It is clear that it is far more challenging for a service-provider to determine what is relevant for someone else (for example, a customer), than it is for the service provider to determine what is relevant for themselves. Interpretation of what is customer-relevant is more in the eyes of the customer than the service-provider, even though both the customer and service-provider are involved.

This dimension, “Confronting the need for customer-relevance” shows how the issue/problem of customer relevance has come to notice from the ‘breakdown’ experiences described in the previous chapter. In particular, the descriptions of the dimensions of Property 3 in the Sub-core category: “Experiencing changing customer perceptions” (discussed in the previous chapter), reveals how the managers were experiencing dissonance or “felt difficulties” (Simpson & Marshall, 2010, p. 357). Such breakdowns represent a departure from previous experience, bring into view the relational whole of the participants’ practice of servicing customers (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011), translating into deliberations concerning ‘relevance’. According to Dreyfus (1995, p. 65): “Only when absorbed, ongoing activity is interrupted is there room for such theoretical reflections”, (cited by Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011, p. 344).

The action expressed in the dimension “Confronting the need for customer relevance” is action that has arisen from such reflections. The remaining dimensions within this property are further actions which constitute this property. The next dimension concerns how participants are creating a continuous process of evolution of their product categories in an attempt to remain relevant to their customers in their current competitive environment.

(ii) *Altering product ranges and categories*

The previous chapter described a range of changes affecting business profitability through competition, such as those described within the property “Experiencing effects of decreasing gross margins”. All managers identified in different ways how changes were requiring them to continuously reconsider retail business

performance, by reviewing which stock categories to keep and which to abandon. This is summarised by Adam in the following:

...the whole idea of managing the business efficiently becomes critical. Historically, most pharmacies have done pretty well sometimes despite not having managers that were necessarily so actively involved in reviewing all the different aspects of their business. I think there's less and less room for that going forward. Underperforming areas, categories, or even strategies that may have once held more weight, will now need to be abandoned going forward.

All participants spoke of changes to their product categories as a result of supermarket competition. Edward, for example, spoke of what he has “knocked out” and new categories he has purchased:

...we've knocked out things like Max Factor®, Clairins®, fragrances, giftware, a lot of baby lines, hair colours, all that sort of stuff that's more general grocery or stuff that's been, you know, [where] we can't really add much to the customers' shopping experience. So we're got a lot more involved in sleep apnoea, weight loss, medical certificates... things like Homeped® shoes, you know where there's a definite point of difference...

Changing stock categories represented more than replacing abandoned stock categories with alternatives. Managers spoke of the highly focused attention that they applied to generate ‘space’ by de-stocking. While discussing changes he had made in his store, Jeremy shared the following regarding carrying less inventory and applying more focus:

If you came in here 2 years ago, you would see more gondolas, you won't see the space here, [indicating a vacant area]. [...] I've just done a stock-take, and it is probably the most accurate stock-take we've done for years, but it's probably 30 grand less than I ever had before. I've got less stock than I've had for many years, but it is focused.

Vincent related how his attention to the changing needs of customers is something his staff team do continuously throughout the whole year:

Everything changes. So we will eliminate probably five to ten percent of the products that we keep this year in favour of new things that actually come in. So it's a constant evolution in stuff and I think that's been one of the reasons why we've been able to continue to grow.

Laetitia also spoke of the slow and continuous inventory renewal process: *“It’s slow. Slowly over the last five years...so it works two ways. It means development on this side [referring to dispensary], and it means changing the retail environment, as well.”*

As discussed in Chapter 5, the apparently rapacious competitive characteristic of the supermarkets is matched by the pervasive price-competition of the ‘discount pharmacy’ business model which has become common throughout the nation. The competition from both supermarkets and pharmacy discounters has also meant that managers have responded to ensure their pricing policies deliver reasonable and acceptable prices over time, from the viewpoint of the customer. These actions were revealed within the next dimension “Managing pricing”.

(iii) Managing pricing

The Australian community pharmacy business environment has been described as ‘hyper-competitive’ (Singleton & Nissen, 2013). All participants in this study acknowledged the effects of price-discounting and the apparent rise in the price consciousness of their customers. Participants raised the necessity, and considerable workload, of managing pricing in the current environment, as exemplified by Harold:

...you spend a hell of a lot more time on pricing, and on price checking and on procedures for that than we had to ten years ago. So we do have procedures and systems for checking what our price is and what our competitors’ prices are and to updating that on a monthly basis to make sure we’re still in the right ballpark. But that’s a lot more intense than it ever used to be.

The consistent theme asserted by the participants as to how they managed their product-pricing centred on the idea of setting prices at acceptable levels, relative to their competitors. As explained by Adam:

...we aren’t directly trying to change our model of pharmacy in any way to...to, fight fire with fire. We’re not really trying to take the discounters on. We see ourselves differentiated from that model but there’s certainly a...a certain gap which can’t be too wide as far as price differential is concerned, to lose our customers. [...] As a crude rough criteria we’d say that more than anything outside 20% from a discount price is looking expensive. So we would strike...I guess our striking distance would be within 20%, sometimes closer and very rarely would we extend that boundary for fear of being perceived as being too expensive.

Harold also closely manages his pricing actions so as to stay close enough to his competitors, however he justifies being “*more expensive than the cheapest*” by trying to provide a superior service:

And we're very careful with our pricing to be within, you know, five to ten per cent, is our goal. We want to be more expensive than the cheapest, but we don't want to be too much more so that we are not upsetting our customers, in that way. And we think we can provide service that justifies that premium.

The notion that service “*justifies a premium*” was a consistent understanding regarding pricing management among participants. Peter related how his businesses were achieving the right balance in his market by delivering a more personal service:

We're within the market. We're not expensive. We're not cheap. We're not a discounter by any stretch. We're actually growing quite strongly. I think that's because people want that one-on-one relationship. [...] They want to be recognised and they want to know that you actually know who they are and that you can take what you know of them and make it meaningful in their context. So we try very hard to do that.

Ulrick explained how the service of convenience, for particular customers justifies charging slightly higher prices than the surrounding market:

...if you're in a shopping centre environment and you have a mother pushing a pram, she's going to come to you. You can't rip her off by more than five bucks. [...] You've always got to be competitive. You can charge one or two dollars more than a discounter and she'll pay that one to two dollars extra, (rather) than to get in her car, put the pram in the car, drive to a discount brand, park her car, open the door, grab the pram out, put the baby in, [to] go save two dollars. So I think as much as we can't really match discounters with our higher overheads, we've still got to be competitive but in a smart way.

The dialogue shows “Managing prices” requires active awareness of multiple dimensions of concern that relate to maintenance or improvement of how customers perceive the pharmacy business in relation to other choices. These include maintaining a certain pricing ‘gap’ in relation to competitors, the provision of some level of service that may justify that gap and understanding the life-situation of individual customer types that can inform the setting of acceptable prices.

(iv) *Increasing the opportunity for service-based experiences*

The dimension “Increasing opportunity for service-based experiences” (with customers) was described by all participants within their experience of the emerging environment. Reference to services includes relational re-orientations ranging from simply being more available to customers at a personal/professional level, to offers of more formalised professional pharmacy services. What was common across this range was that participants were seeking to increase the opportunity for service relationship with customers through processes of doing something beneficial for and with customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Managers were approaching this through increasing relational opportunities and experiential outcomes from the customers’ viewpoint (Schembri, 2006).

Managers clearly expressed their intention to increase their focus on customer service activity as a strategic choice. Oliver began his explanation from a global and national strategic perspective:

We know that the governments all around the world and the Australian government is no different, they're looking more and more to have (professional) services, and they want to pay for services, so that opens up the door, and once that door opens it's possible that there'll be [more] services and providing of services that we haven't [yet] contemplated. And I think that's something that you're seeing the start of. But that will accelerate...

In explaining his movement toward increased service provision, Peter said:

So, from my point of view, I think in terms of moving forward, there will be a two tiered market. One will be the [professional] service provision side and where pharmacists will actually become the navigators of people's health and the other side will be pure [product] supply.

Edward also explained his reasoning in terms of strategic path choice:

I've learned the hard way, but I've sort of realised that going down just a price only track is really not a sustainable way of going. You know you've either got to be the biggest and the best in that discounting role, or the second best. But you know, if you are going to occupy some sort of middle ground where you're sitting on the fence and trying to be a jack of all trades, well, that's not going to work. So, we've gone down much more service orientated, health orientated model...

Ben expressed his reasoning for moving into a closer service orientation with customers from a strategic viewpoint. In responding to dropping PBS prescription margins, he said: “...[we’ve] *looked at ways that we can actually diversify our income stream, leveraged off the dispensary. So additional [professional] services is definitely what we are looking to capitalise on, be it government funded or otherwise.*”

Managers not running a discount pharmacy business model might indeed be expected to take a more service-intensive path as a means of market differentiation. But managers who do operate very large and intensive discount-pharmacy business models also cited professional service development as a crucial aspect in the current business environment. Gerald, who owns and operates five large discount pharmacies admitted:

...it will always come back to what else separates you from the rest of the crowd. So you cannot get away from [professional] services. And I’m very aware of that...very, very aware of that...and you know, we believe that if we can get that service element right that we’ll probably be OK, everything else being equal.

Vincent, also operates several large discount-focused pharmacies, has a dedicated professional-services management team: “...we’ve got a *professional services division [...]* which actually continually works on professional programs that we can roll out across the stores.” Vincent explained how he is trying to increase customer relationship intensity through mobile phone applications that remind individual patients about timely prescription repeat renewal and other advice. Vincent also explained development of new staff key performance indicators that measure proxies of ‘customer engagement’. Similar descriptions were given by Sara, the owner of three large pharmacies operated as deep discount businesses.

Other participants, while moving with certainty toward methods to implement more services-based experiences, suggested that the approach toward services needed to be gradual and with clear success-measures. Charles described that his focus was on “*promoting the awareness*” of professional services at this stage of his business development, by emphasising that services “*uptake alone, is not the [right] measure of success.*” He said:

The measure of success is... does the customer feel as though, whether it’s gestural tokenism or otherwise, feel that you are caring about them, and engaged with them? They might be really appreciative that you think that they should have a cholesterol screening in your pharmacy, and you’ve gone through risk assessments and what-not. [While] they don’t want to participate in it, they’re genuinely appreciative that you’ve offered it. So, that might be the

success. But the problem is that's very difficult to measure, so you can only measure that against maintenance of customers. So I think what we do well is promoting awareness of services, and promoting being that...I'm here, the pharmacist, I'm here, I'm available, I'm here to serve you. This is what I do.

The re-orientation toward increasing customer service opportunities was emphasised by all participants. This is developed further later in this chapter in the second property in this Sub-core category titled “Engaging customers”. The statements offered support this current dimension and indicate that managers are increasing service provision and their reasoning for this action. As with the other dimensions of action constituting this first property, the motivation for moving to increase service opportunities appears enmeshed with their experience of the evolving business environment discussed in the last chapter.

A quote by Gerald sums up the views of most managers in this study: “...*only a fool would think that they could dispense their way to a long term future.*” And then in the form of a parody, Gerald mimicked an example of what is no longer acceptable: “*That's right...help yourself, someone will be down the front to take your money'... We won't survive if that is our attitude.*”

The final dimension of the property “Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental symbols” concerns managerial actions directed toward improving operational efficiency and re-balancing risks. This dimension is discussed next.

(v) *Pursuing operational efficiencies and re-balancing risks*

The final dimension describes how participants were implementing a range of actions to improve operational productivity and to adjust their business and financial risk profiles. The most prominent action that managers were undertaking was creating some form of administrative head-office. The purpose of this reorganisation was to take advantage of economies of scale through the centralisation of administrative tasks for those who own and operate multiple pharmacies. Frederick demonstrates what advantages become available:

...we have a central head office, and I think it's quite common now, for groups to do that. So all of our, you know, our accounts get opened... I just get emailed the totally filled in credit application forms... I just have to sign it in fact. They do the pays, HR...they do accounts receivable, payable... so a lot of that administrative...you know, the really basic tasks are all done by our head office, and there's economies of scale now.

By speaking of the unmanageable challenge over the past few years Frederick emphasised the positive impact of this new approach:

I've also recognised that I can't do everything. That's probably been the hardest thing over the last 3 or 4 years, is you know, I want to be the accredited pharmacist. I want to be the pharmacist that everyone sees when they walk in. I want to have a pharmacy that's managed so well that there's no, you know, cracks that people can fall through or...or you know, being proactive and work on the business rather than in the business, and... I want to be it all, and that's been very challenging, over the last 4 years. How do I still maintain that good customer rapport, get all of the management tasks done? So [referring to the new administrative arrangements] it's a matter of balance...

Twelve participants in this study ran a central administrative office and all explained similar efficiencies as well as improvements to the managerial information systems. Harold explained the vital importance of his recently built and centrally run “back-end systems”:

...all of our computers are connected, so from any site you can look at the other sites. Checking pricing and deals and training systems, advertising systems... we then also pull data out of our point of sale machine in an automatic way, so we can do reporting very quickly and easily. And the same applies for the book-keeping. The book-keepers are set up so that they can pull data out of all of the stores very quickly and easily. [...] at the end of every month then, the book-keepers get things like stock on hand figures from the pharmacies, and we do an end-of-month complete P & L's [Profit and Loss Statements] for every month and compare it to budget, so we know very confidently when a shop is going in a right direction versus leaving it to the end of the financial year to find that out.

The interviews highlighted a well-defined efficiency focus, such as Vincent who employs seven “department heads”, each of whom has a defined departmental responsibility such as marketing, professional services, head office et cetera. In explaining why he has this structure he said:

...we let our department heads run relatively autonomously. They all report in to me, but every quarter they have got to deliver one to three initiatives which will improve productivity, and when I mean productivity I mean either 1), to increase sales, 2), to reduce costs or 3), to make an existing process more efficient. So at any one time, we've got 10 or 12. So each year we'll have 40 or so initiatives

that actually have a direct impact on the profitability of the stores or the head office.

Other managers spoke of smaller scale but continuous efforts to gain operational efficiencies. David was working on greater dispensing efficiencies after installing robotic dispensing technology into his branches, and Robert had just completed substantial refinements to his stores' point-of-sale inventory management system. What links all participants in their actions to improve productivity through operational efficiency is that they have become aware that emerging environmental changes affect achievable profit margins. These issues require much tighter management knowledge and control. Robert summarised this commonality saying: *"From now on you must control and understand and have access to your [performance] data."*

A further perspective within this dimension is the action by managers to re-balance their financial risk status. While overall optimism about the future was common, participants revealed cautiousness about the heightened business risks being experienced. Managers explained different strategies which can be seen as risk re-balancing. Several participants spoke of reducing their financial liabilities so as to strengthen their balance sheets, in response to perceived riskier trading environments. Referring to his perception of the emerging business environment, Peter said: *"So I guess from my perspective, we are structuring ourselves to be ready for those changes, making sure that our pharmacies have strong balance sheets...that we are not overly in debt, that we're able to respond as required."*

Karen held a similar view:

We've certainly focused on paying off some of our loan, which isn't small [...] In two years' time stuff is likely to change, and you don't know exactly where it's going to be financially, so if we can reduce some of that debt, we want to do that so that we are not hard up.

Other managers talked of re-balancing their risk exposure by diversifying their business investment portfolio. Harold, Oliver, Peter, Quintin and Ulrick all discussed how they had diversified their overall business investments into other business ventures as a means of re-balancing financial risks within the pharmacy industry. Harold talked of his investments into other health related businesses which consult to the private health insurance industry. Oliver described how he has developed businesses in the information technology domain. Peter has similarly been a driver in a technology innovation enterprise. Quintin has branched out into other retail activities involving literature and hospitality and Ulrick has begun to invest in property.

This dimension demonstrates participants' connection with their experience of uncertainty, change and complexity. When the dimensions of this property are considered holistically, the consequences for managers "Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental symbols" can be seen through the dynamism of the dimensions, these being: confronting the need for customer-relevance; altering product ranges and categories; managing pricing; increasing the opportunity for service-based experiences and pursuing operational efficiencies and re-balancing risks.

This perspective presents a rich and direct description of what managers are doing, within the environment they are experiencing. This is the first of four interpreted properties, showing how the managers are "Re-orienting meaningfully". The second property titled "Engaging customers" illuminates *how* managers approach their customer relationships.

PROPERTY 2: ENGAGING CUSTOMERS

Reaching out to customers ↔ Reaching out to community

Property description: Range of managerial actions centred on engaging customers in meaningful and ongoing relationships.

'Engagement' is described in academic literature as a psychological (Schaufeli, 2013, p. 20) and/or a behavioural (van Doorn et al., 2010) construct, implying everyday connotations of "involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, absorption, focused effort, zeal, dedication and energy". Schaufeli (2013, p. 20) also cites the Merriam-Webster dictionary description of the state of being engaged as "...(an) emotional involvement and commitment" and as "being in gear".

In this property, the concept "Engaging customers" refers to the range of participant-described actions expressed as dimensions, which centre on increasing and deepening cyclical and reciprocal processes of interaction with customers that have a meaning beyond simple financial transactions. Rather than describing a list of processes like individual cogs in a machine, the interpretive intent in presenting this property is to show how a range of interdependent and identifiable dynamic processes give meaning to managers' enactment of "Engaging customers". In their reported acts of making sense of 'what to do' in their continuing relationships with customers, a rich, contextually-dependent and holistic understanding of "Engaging customers" is illuminated. The first dimension describes the importance of the profession and placing this expertise as a first point of contact for the customer.

(i) *Bringing pharmacists to the fore*

In discussing the implications arising from the perceived business environment, several pharmacists recounted both the recruitment of more pharmacists and the alteration of the roles that their pharmacists performed through direct contact with the customer. Referring to the “*current (increased) supply of good pharmacists available*”, Adam explained his reasoning for taking on more pharmacists:

...there's the qualitative benefit of just having a pharmacist available and we know that one of the strong drivers for customers to our stores is the very fact that pharmacists are not just available when asked, but are actually present when they walk into the store. In other words, at the counter, ready to talk, deal with them, rather than being too busy.

Mark's response resonates with that of Adam's:

You have to be doing something different and so where we're positioning ourselves is [so that] you [the customer] can actually speak to a pharmacist. You know, we've now probably got triple the amount of pharmacists on the floor that I had before [...] Only pharmacists serve customers.

Karen explained how bringing more pharmacists to the fore was accompanied with physical alterations to the dispensary counter and waiting area: “*For us, we need to have a pharmacist on the floor. We've redesigned our counters.*” After physically demonstrating the changes in the store, Karen went on to explain:

...[this] puts a pharmacist on the floor all the time, and we have on average, two to three pharmacists at any one time. So we are able to do that, and we want the pharmacist on the floor because they interact with the customers differently to the staff in addition to which you're there, and can trigger those other things. A pharmacist in the back can't do that.

In rationalising the changes he has made regarding a greater consultation role for pharmacists in his pharmacy, Noel explained:

So we're moving to that European model which I used to think was crap because when I go to Europe and see not very much [inventory] on display and not much self-service, I now realise that it's all about consultation. [From a customers' viewpoint] 'I've got a sore bottom', 'I've got diarrhoea', 'I've got this', 'I'm smoking' or whatever...

This dimension relates closely with the dimension “Increasing the opportunity for service-based experiences” discussed as dimension (iv) within Property 1 (p. 127).

The descriptions explaining the previous dimension, “Increasing the opportunity for service-based experiences”, illustrates something of *what* managers are doing to increase customer service experiences. The current dimension explains more of *how* managers are going about re-orienting toward greater service intensity.

This intensity is more than service opportunity. It brings pharmacists to the fore in an interactive way with the customer through consultations and dialogue. The next dimension delves deeper into what it is that participants are trying to achieve through greater pharmacist engagement. That is, “Reaching toward the individual customer’s world”.

(ii) *Reaching toward the individual customer’s ‘world’*

The first property discussed in this chapter is titled “Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental symbols”. When discussing the dimensions that explain this property, two dimensions either implied or explicitly described how participants both sought and enacted closer relations with customers. The two dimensions were “Confronting the need for customer-relevance” and “Increasing the opportunity for service based experiences”, (p. 121 & 127 respectively). These dimensions demonstrated how managers were becoming conscious of a need to be more relevant to their customers by increasing relational opportunities and improving experiential outcomes for them.

Becoming more relevant to customers and improving experiential outcomes for customers is challenging, because the meaning of relevance of relational experiential encounters is interpreted from the customers’ viewpoint (Schembri & Sandberg, 2011). Customers perceive, experience and interpret value, that is, the meaning to them of the products and services on offer, from their own life-world perspective. As asserted by Flint (2006, p. 356) “Value is viewed not as residing in a product or service offering, but in customers’ use of the product or service, in other words, the use experience. As such, marketers at best create the *potential* for value”, (italics in original). As shown below, participants appear to understand the necessity to create this potential by “Reaching toward the individual customer’s world”, which is the second dimension of the property “Engaging customers”.

“Reaching toward the individual customer’s world” includes a conscious recognition that building personal relationships with customers is key, even for those owners of focused price-discount pharmacies. David, the owner of several very large capital-city discount-pharmacies was asked what he thought was the greatest attribute

pharmacy has to succeed in the current environment. He responded: *“I think it’s the personal relationship with customers.”* Frederick, the owner of several large regional pharmacies, when asked about his approach in the emerging environment said:

...the number one thing is...I mean we all bandy-around the term ‘customer service’ and I think that that’s one aspect, but I think it’s the relationship that you have with your customers that’s probably more important. So it’s about having staff who are empathetic, who are sincere, honest and caring, more so than having someone who’s a freak in customer service and can sell ice to Eskimos, that is a cold nosed bitch. I mean that’s not going to work.

Frederick’s quote describes the necessity of relationships and reveals some of the specific qualities of relationships that he is building, which are centred on being sincere, empathetic and caring. Frederick expanded this with:

...what I’m instilling in my staff, it’s about caring and it’s about going the extra mile for a customer [...] I think it’s just that it’s more on the emotive side of the relationship you have with customers, and I think that [includes] education as well... I think [that’s] when customers perceive that they’ve been helped or assisted.

In describing their specific personalised approaches to customer relationships and seeking to become more relevant in their customers lives, several managers explained what they meant, by highlighting what they were trying to avoid. For example, Charles highlighted what he sees as the inappropriate automated procedural approach, which in his view is all too common in pharmacy:

The majority of our working life is a process. [In the following sentences, Charles speaks with a metronome like style and emphasises each of the following steps with an audible tap on the table with his finger.] *I take the prescription, I enter the name, I enter the drug, I enter the strength, I enter the directions, I press the button, I put the label on, I scan it, I give it out. And when I counsel, I check this, I check that, I check that, I check...and it’s a process.* [Charles finishes this last sentence still tapping on the table to emphasise the rhythm of it all.] *And we sort of forget that...we kind of lose sight of...we get wound up in the process, but not the engagement, because you can do the process to a tee, but if the customer doesn’t feel it’s relevant to them...*

Ben also explained his preferred approach to customer service and relationships through criticism of naïve but common approaches that he experiences in his practice:

...we've dealt with a lot of pre-reg's [referring to pharmacist interns – see Glossary], over the years... what I've always found is they always want to come out and regurgitate information, or they just want to inform the customer for the sake of saying it. Whether the customer takes it on board or not, whether the customer understands it, or they actually do something with that information... often [it] is irrelevant [...] So for me it's breaking that down and going, what do you want the customer to understand? Why is it important that they understand it? And how do you actually approach it? I think they're just fundamentals [...] Because there's always too much an emphasis placed on... you need to know this, and you need to know this, and you need to know this, and, this is relevant, this is relevant, this is relevant...but how does that translate for the customer? Because I've seen it many a time when a pharmacist or pre-reg or whoever it may be is just telling...mentioning things to the customer for the sake of mentioning it to the customer. The customer a), doesn't care, b), doesn't understand why, c), doesn't know what to do with it...but as a pharmacist you fulfil your professional and legal obligation by saying it.

These statements demonstrate that participants are seeking to avoid highly procedural approaches centred on professional compliance. Instead, they seek to engage the individual patient's needs in the customer's own life-world. In effect, they are articulating what they think 'relevance' is *not*, from a customer's viewpoint, and that such approaches need to be avoided.

A further perspective showing how participants were seeking to "Reach toward the individual customer's world" takes into account the individual patient's life-world circumstances and customers' right to autonomy. When Harold was asked what he meant by caring for customers, he said:

...[to] provide them with the best possible health that they can have, is the way I would articulate it. [...] maximising their health, you know, if I'm 90 [years old] well there's only so much I can expect from life, but I want to have the best I can possibly have. [...] And that's what I want to be able to provide them. And the other thing that I'm very aware of is some people choose, because of... [making a parody-quote of an imaginary customer] "Oh no... I prefer my chocolate"... [Laughs]... so there's only so much [a customer is willing to do]... "I'm happy to do a bit more exercise though... I'll do that trade off", or, "There's no way I'm going to exercise but I'll give up chocolate." So we all make choices about

our health, our life and our health, so we've got to fit the service we provide to the patient within their requirements, and what they want.

Several managers explained that their approach with customers was to build individualised and personal relationships that went beyond the customer's relationship with the pharmacy as a service centre. Frederick without hesitation said:

A relationship. If you've got a relationship and an ongoing relationship with someone, the first thing that they think of when they've got to get their script is... "Oh, I'll go and see Fred". They don't think of, "Oh, I've got to stop at a pharmacy". So if you've got a close relationship with your customers and whether that's one of the pharmacy assistants who work there, the pharmacist, the owner [or] whoever, if there's a relationship there, they'll think of the person and...you know it's a natural instinct to go to that person for the prescription. They probably don't even realise that they're passing two pharmacies on the way to get the script.

Charles, in talking about how many of his customers seek out either himself or other specific pharmacists and staff at his pharmacy, summarised his description of what was being achieved: *"That becomes a concept of the customer knowing the pharmacists, not the pharmacy."* Ulrick spoke of his own customer relationship approach, centred on building qualified friendships with individual customers, particular to their individual circumstances and life-world experience. He said:

...it's being friends with them. At the same level, you've got to be cautious that they are your customers as well so you can't go over that threshold of, you know, like you would with your mate at a pub on Friday night. So it's just a friend, helping out. [...] You've got to build that friendship, whether they're psychotic or mentally ill or stressed-out from home, or homeless. You've got to have that same attitude to all your customers. Build a friendship, help them.

Karen described a similar personalised customer relationship approach:

It's about service and it's about getting the customer to enjoy their time here. And it's about the staff enjoying their time with the customer. So people come back for that. They come back because you say, "Hi Brownie, how are you?" You know, and he's been here for 30 years and...or a new person comes in and they [staff] chat to them, "Oh, where have you moved to?" And you have that engagement.

While most managers described the specialised quality of closer individual relationships that they sought with their customers, the descriptions are not meant to

imply that such customer-focused styles allows customers to have complete and unconditional freedom to obtain whatever they want. Managers emphasised the necessity of exercising professional oversight and application of professional responsibility, that is to say, ‘care’.

Managers described how customers’ health and well-being was at the foundation of their intent to relate. Several managers expressed that their method of close engagement and care for customers was founded on a professional desire to move patients from what they *want* to what they *need*. For example, in explaining the essence of his approach to closer customer relationships, Xavier said he was emphasising: “*the value of health instead of the value of the product.*” Edward explained it similarly: “...[to] *look at a complete health solution rather than just product at a price.*” Peter’s description of what purpose he was trying to achieve through closer customer relationships began with his eschewing a focus on “*basket size and basket volume*”. This refers to the retail business metric which seeks to lift the average number of products that each customer purchases per visit. Peter explained:

...we base it around what is best for the client, what is best for the patient rather than a certain basket size or sale volume. To be frank, what happens is that the staff, if they're pressurised to up-sell for the sake of up-selling, they don't engage because they don't believe it. Whereas if they are solution-selling on the basis that this will make me [the customer] feel better, there will be palliation of symptoms along with hopefully resolution because the cold is over in ten days, but they need supportive action around that. Or, in some cases, no action at all [is needed]. We also are very keen not to necessarily go down the drug route. We will find non-medical solutions. They may have stuff at home that they can utilise. We try and do that sort of thing. But what that does is build a lot of loyalty with our customers. [...] We are gathering more customers faster than I think anybody else at the moment because of the fact that word of mouth is spreading that you will get value but also good advice. It's more than just the process of retail, it's actually becoming a trusted partner in someone's health. And knowing them by name and all those things which I think gets a little bit lost in the whole drive to be a retail base, so that's where we're trying to be different ...is [to] be a partner in their health and help them navigate it.

Key words and concepts revealed directly or indirectly in the description of this dimension “Reaching toward the individual customer’s world” include “relationship”, “caring”, avoidance of meaningless procedures, “friendship”, “enjoyment”, “solutions”,

“loyalty” and “trusted partner”. From the quotations, and focusing on these words and concepts it is reasonable to interpret that participants are seeking to influence the customer’s service experience in ways that are meaningful from the customer’s perspective. Participants are attempting to do this by re-orienting their service actions so as to increase and deepen the cyclical and reciprocal processes of relational interaction with customers, and having a purpose and meaning beyond simple financial transactions.

In making this interpretation, it is important to understand that the customer is not ‘the subject’, and the service and service provider separate interacting ‘objects’. Ontologically, the interpreted relations between customer, service provider and service are considered inseparable. The relations and the emerging outcomes are holistically considered and not as a system of interacting parts (Schembri, 2006). Since no human can fully comprehend or completely understand the life-world and lived-experience of another in any relational interaction, participants can be described as “reaching toward” the worlds of their customers in their relational approach. As described by Schembri (2006, p. 388), “Effectively, in taking the customer’s *experience* as the point of departure, a closer appreciation of the customer’s perspective is potentially enabled...”, (italics added for emphasis).

As will be discussed more fully later in this thesis, innovative ideas and actions can arise from the relational interactions between service providers and customers. So far this is evidenced by the earlier references to delivering “solutions”, developing “what is best” for the customer and striving to engage in a “relevant” way, from the perspective of the customer. Through such close relationality, customers and service providers are able to co-create (Flint, 2006), or co-construct (Schembri, 2006) their service experiences. As explained by Flint (2006, p. 358), “...customers and service providers can co-create innovative solutions as a shared interpretation of the solutions’ meaning propels them to more refined product/service concepts.” Perhaps the “shared interpretation of the solutions” reveals a source of loyalty between customer and service provider: a “more refined service concept”. This possibility is further developed in the next dimension of this property, “Engaging customers”, through the dimension “Seeing customers as defensive advocates”.

(iii) *Seeing customers as defensive advocates*

This dimension refers to particular advantageous consequences that managers perceive as arising from their close relationships with customers. The interpreted

meaning of their stories is reflected in the title of this dimension, “Seeing customers as defensive advocates”, and relates to the previous dimension, “Reaching toward the individual customer’s world”. But rather than viewing a perspective of how participants are ‘reaching toward’ their customers’ worlds, this dimension accentuates a type of dynamic reciprocity, where the managers describe how their loyal customers are ‘reaching back’ to them, by defending them against emergent direct competition. Jeremy related a story of his recent experience:

...So [name - a new pharmacist competitor], thinks he will open a pharmacy in [the city suburb of Jeremy’s business], so he buys a little shop just around the corner. [...] Well, from day one I had people coming in and saying, “[Jeremy], we are going to start a petition to get rid of him.” [I say] “You can’t do that. It’s private enterprise, he is allowed to do it.” [They say] “We don’t want him here.” People would go in there and say, “go away, we don’t want you.” People would come to me and say, “[Jeremy], we wouldn’t dream of leaving you, there is no way in the world.” And he [the competitor] had a cut price [discount] model. His prices killed mine. I lost about 5% of business in the 2 years he was there. He went away, and it was a really endearing thing of this community. They said they would be loyal to me. They actually came and spoke the words, but having spoken those words, they did it, and they just didn’t go to him. They didn’t want him there, and they...people would say, “Why would we leave you when you give such great service and advice?” People actually would say those words. But having said that, for two years they kept doing it...But anyway, he’s been and gone, but if ever there was a testament to people’s loyalty, you think maybe it is a thing of the past, and you wouldn’t expect that in the city, maybe in a country town or something, but the loyalty was extraordinary.

Jeremy’s narrative is a powerful demonstration of the potential benefit of close experiential association with customers, which arises through what can be described as dynamic relational reciprocity. Ulrich also related his experience of weathering harsh competition through his and his staff “*building a following*”:

When you get someone who starts building followings, that’s what you call a phenomenal staff member because that customer will always come back to that staff [member], whether it’s you or not, and that’s the most important thing with your staff. [...] I’ve known a lot of them [customers] for a very long time now and if I had five discounters open in front of me, they still wouldn’t go there. It’s

all parties as well. It's from customers that come to you for their Lipitor® scripts to customers that come to you for Methadone. I've got ninety Methadone people and they wouldn't go anywhere else. Even though [names discount-pharmacy competitor] is doing \$20 a week and I was doing \$35, none of them [methadone customers] went. (Methadone: see Glossary).

As with the previous narrative, Ulrick is describing a special kind of relationships with his customers that have an emergent defensive quality. Here, 'defensive' refers to a result which comes from customers being defensive of the participants' businesses, against extant competition from direct competitors. Viewed holistically, the dynamic relationship sees good service experience for the customer generating an experience of advocacy for the service provider: a dynamic relational reciprocity, and a dynamic demonstration of mutual loyalty.

While the data for this dimension are not as dense as those provided for other dimensions discussed in this chapter, they nonetheless demonstrate important variation within the phenomenon under study: understanding managerial capability. As discussed in Chapter 4, reporting such variation is an important requirement for the grounded theory methodology and the subsequent construction of theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These incidents demonstrate a further dimensional variation within the property "Engaging customers", and a dynamic relationship between the dimensions of "Reaching toward the individual customer's world" and "Seeing customers as defensive advocates". The next and final dimension described within the property "Engaging customers" moves from the dynamism of relations between managers and their individual customers to the dynamism between managers and larger local communities, seen through managers' "Investing and participating within the local community".

(iv) Investing and participating within the local community

Several managers emphasised an engagement process within their managerial practice that occurs at a larger scale than that of individual customer interactions. Some managers explained their high involvement with local community organisations of various types. Such engagements can be seen as philanthropic, community spirited and generous. But also it is evident that such larger scale engagement interactions have a reciprocal nature, being of benefit, or of potential benefit to the managers' businesses. For example, Quintin explained the beginnings of what has become for him, a major set of community support and philanthropic interactions:

So it started one day - a good customer of mine came in and his child had very severe cerebral palsy and he was at a special school, and I happened to meet him while fund raising, so I wrote a cheque there and then...because it was a very good cause and he had been a good client of mine. And that set the whole ball rolling. And thereafter, I gradually eased out of mainstream advertising whether it be the press, TV or whatever, and put virtually all of it back into the community...community programs.

Quintin explained how his philanthropic activities have grown to replace virtually all of his pharmacy group's traditional marketing and advertising:

...we don't really do any advertising. This is fairly important. Most of our advertising dollars, and for the last, probably fifteen, twenty years, we put straight back into the community. We support many, many community projects. We have a number of scholarships that we support...scholarships for every [names State/Territory] school, including the special schools. We do have a lot of health promotion for other organisations, the Heart Foundation, Diabetes Association, all those sorts of people. So that contributes significantly, I believe...very hard to quantify...but significantly to our visibility here in [names city]...

In connecting these interactive initiatives to individual customers, Quintin gives the following example:

...But again, all part of the visibility. And even to [names his pharmacy-group], anybody in a social situation, "Oh yeah I know [name of pharmacy-group]...they helped my young son's daughter" ...or whatever it might be, to...such and such. So we do a lot of ad hoc community work. And we employ a person full time to manage that for us, and I have a fair bit to do with that because it's my particular pet project, from way-way back, And it's just grown and grown year by year.

Jeremy also spoke of his deep community engagement over a long period. In explaining the evolution and redevelopment of his pharmacy's local area he said:

...half our public housing estate was knocked down because it was the first of Australia's redevelopments with public/private [co-investment], and we've just finished it after 11 years. It is 50% public and 50% private, and it actually works. I've been the chairman of the thing, called the CLC, the community liaison committee that takes the views of the community to feed in to what got built, and what we finished up with. And it is bloody good, I have to say.

While this conversation segment alone is limited in what it says, it becomes more meaningful when it is linked to Jeremy's earlier explanation of how his customers "saw off" a rival pharmacy competitor when that competitor opened nearby. Jeremy explained his role as chair of the community liaison committee while relating the story about his competitor, discussed in the previous dimension "Seeing customers as defensive advocates".

Another example of broader relational involvement with community organisations was offered by Xavier, who holds a board position on his local area's State hospital board:

One very important factor is that we still work with doctors and the health system...the community health in the area. If you can work with them and show them that we can save them a lot of money, especially the hospitals, then we become entrenched in their way of thinking and we become part of the profession.

Later in explaining his engagement role and reasoning, Xavier said:

I mean my step of going into the next role where I was seen, it also makes it easier for me to integrate community pharmacy with hospitals [...] but my idea is if I can convince one health board which is the biggest in Australia, looking after 1.3 million people with (a) 1.5 billion budget...if I can convince this board to use the community pharmacies in that area as a sort of connection to the hospital, to put less pressure on the hospital, use the knowledge of the pharmacies as a triage and take over some responsibility. [It will] also be commercial as well.

Xavier's community hospital organisation involvement can be seen to be both generous but also as mutually beneficial in its intent. In common with the other data, the larger scale interaction is aimed at creating pathways for greater individual customer engagement.

Other managers had similar participative stories to tell. Tom is also a member of a large local hospital board. Harold and Vincent sit on advisory boards for large local schools, and Peter has a major role in a local Aged Care service, which focuses on dementia management in his local community. This dimension "Investing and participating within the local community" is an important variant within the cluster of dimensions that seek to show how managers are "Engaging customers".

From the manager's life-world perspective therefore, "Engaging customers" can be theoretically understood as a patterned consistency of action involving: (i) bringing

pharmacists to the fore; (ii) reaching toward the individual customer's 'world'; (iii) seeing customers as defensive advocates and (iv) investing and participating within the local community. All engagement activities are happening contemporaneously over time as a practice pattern.

While it is tempting to divide the dimensional perspectives into some form of micro- versus macro- duality for analytical purposes, it is important to resist this rationalistic analytical temptation. The philosophical approach of this study invites an analytical focus on "the patterned *consistency* of actions" (Chia & MacKay, 2007, p. 224, italics original), illuminated here by the four interpreted dimensional gerunds and conceptually summed by the property description "Engaging customers". The property "Engaging customers" is not viewed as being constituted by discrete dimensional entities that become related through activity (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009). Instead, it is important to highlight that managers are always already entwined with their world and emergent environment, and the dimensions identify aspects of a practice of customer engagement that are able to be partially illuminated in analysis.

While customers are a vitally important category for managerial concern in all businesses, the other crucial group are the businesses' employees. In this study, the next property "Engaging staff" was another densely constituted property in all data sets. "Engaging staff" describes the range of actions performed by managers, centred on developing unity of staff understanding and business direction, and is the next property constituting the Sub-core category: "Re-orienting meaningfully".

PROPERTY 3: ENGAGING STAFF

Regular dialogue ↔ Staff empowerment

Property description: Range of managerial actions centred on developing unity of staff understanding and business direction.

Business owner-managers of small to medium sized retail/service businesses usually cannot satisfy the wants and needs of their entire customer base alone. This is true for the community pharmacy businesses examined in this study. Employees (or staff) are crucial, at least as enablers of the wishes or requirements of the owner-managers. This requires multiple operations being carried out by staff with an array of skills and roles.

Many cross-functional activities which are to be carried out in a co-ordinated way have a major influence on how the businesses run. This implies that employer-

managers must attempt to influence all employees toward a commitment to a quality and culture that matches their own standards (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Chang & Chang, 2009). These standards include both operations and customer service, whether those standards are implicit or explicit. Lack of alignment or unity of service-ideal between the employees and their employers risks deterioration of the quality of interactions with customers. It also causes a reduction in overall service quality with consequent customer defections and loss of profitability (Grönroos, 1994).

The advantage that SME's such as the pharmacies in this study have is that their customers are more easily accessible than in larger firms. This is because customer numbers are relatively fewer, more localised and as demonstrated earlier in this chapter, many customers are known personally by the business owners and their staff (Jones & Rowley, 2011). This means that there is a much shorter line of communication between the retail-service providers and their customers (Weinrauch, Mann, Robinson, & Pharr, 1991), accentuating the relative ease of customer accessibility.

As with the previous property "Engaging customers", this property "Engaging staff" is also constituted by a cluster of ongoing patterned actions, expressed as dimensions. This property and its dimensions further elucidate the higher category "Re-orienting meaningfully".

(i) *Engaging staff through dialogue*

All managers spoke of how communication in various forms was a crucial and ongoing managerial action in their businesses. The most common more formalised communication method discussed by managers was the adherence to regularly scheduled meetings with staff with whom they are closely involved. A representative quote is from Gerald who said: "...we have regular staff meetings and there's a lot of one-on-one [communication], and also, I'm one of the staff...". Other managers spoke of several different types of regular staff meetings. For example, Mark related:

...we have regular quarterly development reviews, regular meetings, some formal, some are informal. We have our leadership executive days which is six monthly. We have group training nights which are monthly. We have done a lot of networking, but we also have a lot of meetings, you know, and obviously with internet, the email contact, phones.

The fact of the acknowledged regular meetings is hardly surprising. What was more interesting was the quality of the dialogue referred to within the various meetings

that managers described as important to them. Many managers spoke of the quality of openness with staff that was important to them. As described by Adam:

...we conduct weekly staff meetings and we're pretty open in our approach to the strategies we run in the business, so everybody's aware of this whole underlying ability of pharmacists to influence positively, customers from a sales perspective, so that's a core belief in our store.

Ben also described his encouragement of openness in meetings-communication:

...I always encourage an open and honest communication. I always elicit feedback from our staff and encourage them to provide feedback. So whether they initiate it, or whether I initiate it, is that we've got this open and honest communication.

Openness appears to be a common quality in manager-staff dialogue in the participant group, but not only within the structure of a meeting. Laetitia spoke of what she called a culture of "open conversation":

...most of the stuff we do here, it happens by evolution but doesn't just happen by revolution. [...] So we talk. It's an open conversation all the time. So we'll talk about what we're doing, what we can do, and so it's never written down in stone. This is how we're going to execute something, but it evolves because there's an open conversation and that's how things progress, and so yeah, we're doing...we're not big on documentation, but we're big on communication, and that's...everything just evolves through talking...

But more than just openness, many participants spoke of openness in staff communication that included the more refined quality of transparency. Frederick spoke of his willingness to share what could be regarded as quite sensitive business data with his staff: *"...I share information with my staff on [...] you know, where the gross profit is, where the wage percentage is, how that's affecting the...the net profitability. They're aware of the economic climate in which they are employed."* Others expressed the same willingness to be transparently open with critical business performance data. A quote from Sara demonstrates the seeming completeness of such transparency: *"I show them everything, P&L's [Profit and Loss Statements], anything that I get I will show my guys. The guys on the floor, they see what we do daily, they see our budgets, there's no secrets about money. Yeah, it's pretty open."*

Managers' willingness to engage in such openness and transparency seems to be driven by more than just making staff aware. Xavier spoke of his transparency of information provision being related to being honest about what he requires from his

staff. He said, *“You’ve got to be honest with what you require and what has been happening. You can’t sort of keep them in the dark about certain things and certain issues, because that’s not complete total management.”* The implication in Xaxier’s statement is that information and relationship transparency is linked to staff motivation and the progress of the total management project.

This resonates with statements made by some participants who spoke of their desire for staff to be able to feel some form of ‘ownership’ of the business. As expressed by Jeremy:

I always give them ownership. I talk to them about figures, I show them what money we make, and how much money we take. They can look at our taking sheets. They can have a feel about that. They know what the margins are that we make on things. They know my wages bill if they want to ask.

While the idea of ownership can be accentuated through open dialogue and transparency regarding financial performance, managers also described that the shared-ownership idea can also be achieved through dialogue concerning operational processes and service development. Robert spoke of how his ongoing dialogue with more senior staff in his group brought about staff becoming *“...much more married to the process[es], much more involved with the process[es]...”*, from discussions concerning, for example, solutions to human resource issues. Similarly, Adam related his experience of trying to engender a sense of *“ownership”* with senior staff who are responsible for implementing and bedding down new operational initiatives. Adam told of how working together with senior staff and hosting dialogue supported by people with external expertise: *“...is always much more interesting, than having your boss trying to talk about something new. I think gaining the ownership of the program from senior staff from day one is something that I think is critical.”*

In this dimension the participants indicated that engaging staff through dialogue which is open, honest and transparent is a part of their ongoing practice. Isaacs (1993) points out that the Greek roots of the word dialogue are *dia* and *logos*, suggesting “meaning flowing through” (Isaacs, 1993 p. 25). Put similarly by Bohm (2004, p. 7), “dialogue is a stream of meaning flowing among, through and between us”. The purpose of dialogue is said to be in the provision of a meeting ground so as “simply to establish a field of genuine meeting and inquiry” (Isaacs, 1993, p. 25). The effect of dialogue can be to “develop a common strength and capability for working and creating things together” (Isaacs, 1993, p. 25), or out of which a new and common understanding may emerge (Chiva, Grandio, & Alegre, 2010).

The idea of “common strength and capability”, or common understanding implies an emerging convergence between the people engaging in the ongoing dialogue. As asserted by Schein (1993), dialogue enables groups to establish a shared set of meanings and a common thinking process. The researcher interprets that the managers who referred to giving staff “ownership” were revealing an attempt to create a unity of world view in the staff group, through ongoing dialogue. This idea of “creating unity” within staff groupings was a recurring concept in the interview data, and is the title of the next dimension within this property, “Engaging staff”.

(ii) *Creating unity*

Developing common understandings among workers within a business is well recognised as a key function of good management. This is because some level of common understanding of such things as business context, business direction, business purpose and aims is the foundation of co-ordinated and purposeful action (Langfield-Smith, 1992; Sandberg & Targama, 2007; Weick & Quinn, 1999). The common role of the manager is described as a facilitator in the “development of a larger, consistent ‘whole’...” (Sandberg & Targama, 2007, p. 122). Unified and coordinated action is at the foundation of business success (Newell, Robertson, Scarbrough, & Swan, 2002). The majority of participants in this study revealed their understanding of this requirement through a range of different viewpoints and patterned actions.

For example, Noel spoke of unity with his staff, but in terms of being “*all on the same page*”. Noel said: “*I know at the end of the day that's the key to the whole success of the operation that we've got today, is that culturally and morally and ethically we're all on the same page.*” Mark also spoke of the same idea of unity in coordinated action using a ‘walking’ metaphor: “*I'm trying to get everyone to walk the same direction at the same time in the same beat and making sure we are acting in unison and everyone's congruent...*”

Diversity of people and the ideas they bring to a workplace is usual. Bringing them together for the purpose having them operating more as a “*single unit*” can be challenging, time consuming, and according to some, enjoyable. When asked what he found to be the most enjoyable aspects of his management role, Ben said:

...a lot of your time is spent...especially in the industry that we are involved in, is definitely people management, dealing with different personalities, different age groups, different genders, different backgrounds, as well, so it's about balancing all of that. But being able to explore everyone's potential and so that everyone

can make a contribution and that the business can operate as a single unit, and balancing all the conflicting interests that brings with it as well.

The challenges of bringing people together and then creating a dialogue meaningful to all staff was also described by Adam, when he spoke of preparing for operational change. When asked about how he routinely approaches dialogue with staff concerning new initiatives, Adam was explicit in his priorities:

...[to] get everybody together, a huge call you know, getting people that work on the weekends, various shifts, bits-and-pieces, we make sure that we get every single person, which doesn't happen easily, to present at a meeting and provide plenty of opportunity for people to ask questions. We would normally go through role-play, so that people could actually see...that's a strong part of what we do. I do that at almost every opportunity when we are instituting a change in strategy. I like to get down right to the coal-face and what it's going to mean to the actual staff working with customers. So we will generally do that and then provide plenty of opportunity for questions...

Adam immediately went on to explain how he facilitates clarity in making sure that questions are both asked and answered about the essence of proposed changes:

I've noticed in the past that a lot of people do not ask questions at meetings, either they're bamboozled [confused] or they are shy or they don't know what to ask. So I'll normally [laughing tone] draft up my own frequently asked questions as well. [Laughing tone] So if they don't come forward on their own, I'll ask them for them.

The intent by Adam to create common and shared meaning among staff relating to a particular matter is clear from this interview quote.

Other managers were more implicit in their description of creating unity within their staff group. Frederick spoke of his desire to emulate what he perceives to be an attractive and benevolent leadership style, which he had experienced earlier in his career. When speaking of his managerial strengths Frederick said he believed them to be in:

...the loyalty and support that I show to the staff. I mean none of my staff [act as if] I'm their best friend, but I'm not the type of manager that storms out orders and barks at them. My very first manager in a pharmacy managed that pharmacy by...well the staff didn't want to let him down, because they loved him, and I suppose whether that intrinsically...I have utilised that same thing, or

whether because that's what I was exposed to and I just followed that path [...] if you are good to the staff then they'll be good to you.

In Frederick's description, he invokes an understood quality of reciprocity in the last phrase of the quote: "*if you are good to the staff then they'll be good to you*", which implies a relationship that has a common understanding at its centre affording a continued and ongoing circle of reciprocity (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003).

Other managers spoke of relationships and processes with staff that bring about unity through a spirit of reciprocity. For example, Sara spoke of "...try[ing] to reward the people that are helping...", and to create a unity of thought: "... if I can get my managers to think the same way as me, and they're starting to, then it's kind of exciting." Jeremy gave a specific example of reciprocity in staff engagement:

You know if they like to work for you they'll work well if you treat them well. Things like [staff member name] was going to this...she's a lifesaver and she was going to [coastal town] or something last weekend because she actually races those rubber duckies and had a comp going on down there and she needed to go three hours early. I had made up the wages a week early because my [assistant] pharmacist's away and I just had the opportunity to do it, so I had done the week in advance. She had come to me and said my wages are going to be wrong because "I'm off three hours early". I said, "Call it a present. You owe me." She was knocked out that I did it. But I think at the end of the day it didn't cost me much and can you imagine what that says to the staff member? [...] So you just give and take.

The findings offered so far demonstrate the dimension "Creating unity" by showing the personal ideals and dialogic approaches which managers engage to develop unified understanding among their staff. Participants also use other devices such as benchmarking information, information-technology (IT), and engagement in business competitions to bring a more structured operational approach to having staff understand a more unified view of their 'world'. While these devices are used to positively influence whole-of-business performances, the changes sought have to be comprehended and 'owned' by most if not all individual staff.

Most of the participants described their use of IT within and across their businesses for a range of purposes such as centralised financial and inventory control, payroll, staff training and as an internal communication system or intra-net. While this is not surprising for businesses in the 21st century, several participants spoke of how

they rely on such a system to again bring businesses together or to engender common “alignments”. As described by Oliver:

...we use our IT to try to identify synergies so that they (his branch businesses) work similar. And when you overlay them our stores tend to look more the same as each other [...] So they're all coming together now and we have a meeting of the minds and we're now aligning everything. So we're now using IT to create alignments.

Some participants use their IT systems for what Robert called “league tables” to provide all managers and staff across groups with a regularly updated table which allows comparison between stores on key business performance data. In effect, all managers and staff within and across different branches can then see indicators of their own business’ performance, benchmarked with all other branches as well as a benchmark average for each indicator. For example, Robert points out: “*...we have not shied away from publishing a table that shows the stores that are doing well with [for example] generic conversion; showing the stores that are doing really well with the vitamin category...those sorts of things.*” Unified performance data which is made available to all staff tends to bring awareness to the lower performers in the group and invites them to change to become closer to the average. As put by Robert: “*It's very simple. [...] This is what's happening in our store, this is what's happening in your store. Here are some solutions, here are some ways we can help you.*”

When the researcher was visiting Vincent’s private office to conduct the research interview, the researcher noted and made comment about a large data-table displayed on his office wall. The table appeared to be a large leader-board providing business performance data on a very large number of pharmacies and pharmacy groups. When asked what the spread of businesses was, Vincent said: “*These are all the stores in Australia, and different brands in Australia. I've got all the numbers.*” While Vincent uses the national data mainly for himself and his top management team, like Robert, Vincent provides comparative data from his own group to allow constructive intra-group benchmarking.

The exemplars of Robert and Vincent demonstrate yet another diversified way through which participants are attempting to create unity within their group, but at the whole-of-business scale. In this case, the comparison and benchmark data is offered to bring business performances and staff understanding, (especially low performers), closer to a common understanding.

A further method through which some participants encourage unity within their staff and operational structure is via participation in business award competitions. When the researcher visited one of Harold's pharmacies, the researcher immediately noticed an array of what appeared to be framed awards across a top shelf on a wall in the customer waiting area. Early in the interview, the researcher raised the fact of these awards with the following question: "I notice out in the pharmacy there, across the top row, there is a whole string of awards that you have received. Can you tell me about those?" In responding, Harold explained:

OK, so where do I start with awards? Ahm, the local business awards, we've won you know, seven or eight times, actually probably nine times, ten times, something like that....and then we've won the State small business award seven times, and then last Saturday we won the national small business awards for pharmacy...

Harold went on immediately, without further questioning from the researcher, to explain what value he sees in award competition participation. He said:

...we use it really from a team-member thing, perspective, you know? [...] we use it as an opportunity to remind the team of the procedures [...] for an excuse to revisit the procedures, even with experienced team members. [...] It's not just my authority, because we're able to say, here are the criteria that we're being measured against.

In speaking about operational compliance with the award-competition rules and conditions, Harold said: "*It's someone external who's doing the judging and it's the awards process that does that for you...and the recognition of course always makes them proud.*" Harold related how his staff gained great satisfaction from succeeding in the award-competition: "*... it was hilarious, after winning the award [the previous Saturday], for the next ten minutes, everyone was sitting on their phones, texting their friends and putting it up on Facebook, and [laughing], so that's a bit different, you know.*"

This example reveals how competition participation encourages review and standardisation of procedures involving such things as customer service quality and culture, for all staff members including those deemed as "*experienced*". Harold also asserts that the effect is to have staff reflect internally about their own behaviours and encourages changes toward a more appropriate set of unified norms. His acknowledgement of "*It's not just my authority...*", implies that participation in the overall competition structure and its standardisation of requirements lowers the personal

pressure that he needs to bring to bear on members of the staff group to comply, and if necessary, change attitudes and behaviours. The reciprocated reward for staff participation is to win. Gratification within the staff group is evident in Harold's comment about how winning "*makes them proud*" and in his relating about how staff members were enthusiastically communicating the 'win' on social media.

Charles also related how he has used business award competitions to achieve standardisation within his team. He said:

Having something like an award or a competition, that is probably the best way you can standardise a team to work towards...to say, "this is what we should be going for...we're capable of doing it." A lot of staff, [are] visually stimulated by points, by graphs, by performance, [and] if you can show them that, then that helps with the osmotic thing. So probably that's the best tool that I can get...to get to that point, because it's measurable...

Edward was another participant that described the participation in business award competitions as an important unifying activity in managing his business from year to year. In reflection, Edward said: "... [it] *actually gave us a lot of motivation, a lot of inspiration, to keep going and then go for that [major pharmacy business award] one, last year.*"

These experiences show how award-participation delivers identification of a common goal, a level of operational uniformity and required norms, and standardisation of procedures and practice approaches. Successful competition provides gratification for the staff as a group through gaining stimulus from progress-data, creating motivation and inspiration, and pride in the team-produced result. The outcomes of such experiences imply a convergence of practices within and between participants toward the required objectives, in effect, the promotion of a unity of practices and attitudes in the social network in the business.

The quotes that describe this dimension "Creating unity" among members of the staff-team reveal variations in the ways that participants attempt to create such unity. Honest and transparent dialogue (as described in the previous dimension) establishes the basis for all variations. Bringing diverse people together, to be "*on the same page*" and engaging in a spirit of reciprocity, are patterns of action that managers practise to bring staff closer to the managers' own world-views.

Examples explained how the more sophisticated devices such as IT usage, league-tables and participation in business award competitions also serve to bring unity within groups. These patterns of action can be viewed as an attempt to merge the life-

world perspectives of groups of people, toward that of the pharmacy owner-manager. The evidence shows that the managers are at the centre of the 'unity' idea, as they are the beholders of their own notion of what it means to succeed (Reijonen & Komppula, 2007; Simpson, Tuck, & Bellamy, 2004).

The aim of participants to achieve a suitable level of common understanding among a diverse cluster of individuals that forms their staff group is not always achievable. Participants expressed that they were also careful about how they recruited new staff members as shown within the next dimension. Participants described how they ensured they only recruit people who they estimated would 'fit' into the business, where such an estimate was made from the owner-managers' life-world perspectives.

(iii) *Employing for 'fit'*

Several managers highlighted perspectives that they knew were important in the recruitment and selection process for new employees. One perspective was to take account of the prospective employee's knowledge, skills and abilities. The other was to gauge, or experience a candidate's more subtle understanding of their work in relation to the context in which work is done. That is, to gauge their attitude in relation to the specific business context.

Managers indicate that while 'skills' are an important consideration in their recruitment process, it was gaining an understanding of what might be called the 'world-view' of the candidate that has more influence on the participant's decision to accept or reject the candidate as a suitable employee. Managers preferred individuals whose 'world-view' was suitably congruent, or a 'fit' with their own. Peter described his approach clearly:

I have always employed for 'fit' rather than 'skill' so I'm looking for the softer skills that people possess. It's a caring industry so they have to be caring. They need to be able to understand the nuance of people [who] come in. They are sick, they are unwell [...] So I have always employed for 'fit' rather than skill set. I always feel that we can skill them up if their attitude is right. I think trying to shoe-horn somebody who doesn't like patient contact [...] they're not comfortable [and] if they're not comfortable leaving the dispensing, then there is a problem there or there will be a problem there. I was lucky enough to have, a preceptor [mentor] and others who encouraged me to go out into the store and be the people-person, and I still find that to be the greatest part of working...is going out and talking to people rather than being in the dispensary. My role is

still made in the dispensary but it's not key. I think the key part is me understanding my clients, them understanding me and what I can actually offer them. So we always hire for 'fit'.

Peter's approach was very personal to him. The 'fit' he was looking for in new employees was with his own 'world-view' which had been constructed over time. Other managers also emphasised their personal involvement in the recruitment and selection process. Sara, who owns three very busy discount-focused pharmacies said:

...when I employ staff, I'm always there to employ my own staff, I'm always there. Now I'm a bit more strategic, like...will this person 'fit' into this [...] I employ them on personality now so they'll come in and, like I said before, I try and work out whether or not they fit in.

Gerald shared a similar highly personalised approach to recruitment and described what human qualities he was looking for in selecting staff, rather than knowledge or skills:

...getting to know my staff is important to me and so I like to employ all of my staff. I like to interview all of my staff [...] I look for flexibility. I look for compatibility with the other workers, and obviously compatibility for the tasks that they're going to perform. I look for people who are robust enough to accept constructive criticism, but be prepared to speak honestly and openly without fear or favour, so to speak, for the sake of the business.

Quintin explained his approach differently, but again contrasted what he called "personality" with "skills", but was also explicit on what attitude and performative characteristics he was looking for in a "gut feeling". Quintin explained:

I'm a great believer in people [...] but you just get a feel for someone and I'm a great believer in gut feeling about people. If you like them, you know you going to get on well [...] Personality's more significant. Skills are important of course, but the person...you know some people who are very, very highly qualified but not really cut out to be a community pharmacist...I want those who work hard, that's pretty important...[but also] ability to get on with people. They must have a humane streak through them, you know...

These approaches, which focus primary attention on congruency or 'fit' between a prospective candidate and the world-view of the owner-manager, are not constrained to the recruitment and selection process. Managers also spoke of their ongoing attention to the suitability of existing staff in their organisations. An example of how this attention is applied is offered by Mark who spoke of how he is trying to manage

bringing staff together around his own view of the world, but also taking action when he sees that some employees are not “*cultural fits*”. Mark said:

I'm trying to get everyone to walk the same direction, at the same time, in the same beat and making sure we are acting in unison and everyone's congruent, and [I'm] being very focused on weeding out the people that aren't cultural fits. So that's been an ongoing process, and it's a very hard process, you know, it's probably one of the biggest challenges we've had, so we're still working on it [...] It's like pulling a Band-aid, you do it properly with your staff, you'll be fine. But if you don't have strong foundation, you've got no chance. [...] I just can't underestimate the importance of hiring slowly and firing quickly because it's so frustrating when you see deadwood in an organisation that's holding us up.

Mark’s statement emphasising the “*importance of hiring slowly and firing quickly*” permits a view into the ongoing dynamism of how he is cultivating and nurturing congruency in his life-world and the shaping of the collective that makes up his organisation. While the previous dimension “Creating unity” is an important and ongoing pattern of actions showing how participants engage their existing staff, this dimension “Employing for ‘fit’” shows how congruent unity is maintained over time. Managers are continually making judgements on ‘who’s in’ and ‘who’s out’ of the staff group. Participants are creating and shaping the foundations of their own organisational identity and collective mind (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003), a collective mind cultivated to reflect the participant’s own understanding of how things should be.

However, this is not meant to imply that staff are treated as mere minions whose only purpose is to serve the needs of the more powerful employer. It is clear that participants make considerable effort to empower their staff members in a variety of ways. “Empowering and trusting staff” is the title of the final dimension constituting the property “Engaging staff”, and describes some of the actions that managers engage in to lift the autonomy, responsibility, knowledge and self-reliance of staff members within their organisations.

(iv) *Empowering and trusting staff*

In discussing the first dimension “Engaging staff through dialogue”, within this property “Engaging staff”, examples were shown of how participants, through dialogue, promoted the shared-ownership idea as a means of achieving shared meanings between themselves and their staff members. The idea of shared-ownership also carries a quality of empowerment for staff as well. It is suggested that empowerment exists when an

enterprise engages in practices “that distribute power, information, knowledge, and rewards throughout the organization” (Bowen & Lawler, 1995). Empowerment implies less reliance on a top-down ‘command and control’ method of managing and more reliance on some level of sharing of management concerns and outcomes through willing networks of workers, who share a reasonably common understanding (Sandberg & Targama, 2007, p. 9).

Jeremy was brief but very clear about his primary style of relationship with his staff. In responding to a question about how he brings his staff along with him in running his business, he said: “*Inclusive, first thing. They own it.*” When talking about his management style with his staff, Xavier spoke of his appreciation of the staffs’ perspectives “*because there’re on the ground*”. With this understanding Xavier said:

...it’s very bad to make a decision and push it down. They have to be given ownership. It has to be theirs. I love that, because when you push something, it doesn’t work, [...] It’s interesting, even if it’s my idea, I don’t take ownership of it. They find such joy that they’ve been acknowledged for certain things in some areas, and you’re getting results, so why do you need to take that?

In explaining her approach to staff management, Sara talked of the importance of “*trust*” as a basis for her staff performance. Sara explained:

I used to give all the directions and so everyone would come to me, but I didn’t want to run my stores like that. I’m not a micro-manager. I don’t need to be in anything. I trust my guys. So it comes from them.

Peter also referred to “*trust*” as a central principle in maintaining engagement with staff and avoiding lack of interest in the business and customers:

...it’s really just about supporting but also giving them self-determination. People respond to that and really enjoy the challenge, plus, placing your trust in them. I think there’s a real lack of trust in some pharmacies that I have worked in over the years. There was a lack of trust with the staff and management that pans out to be disengagement and just a lack of interest in the business itself and for the customers.

These quotes demonstrate a type of shared and consultative management style, where the manager engenders a spirit of trust, involvement, participation, engagement and shared responsibility, and thus encouragement of empowerment, or an “empowered state of mind” (Bowen & Lawler, 1995). In relation to the overarching conceptual property “Engaging staff”, this dimension “Empowering and trusting staff” overlaps with the other three dimensions: “Engaging staff through dialogue”, “Creating unity”

and “Employing for fit”. Together these dimensions demonstrate a cluster of ongoing patterned actions which shows how managers engage with staff with the aim of developing a shared understanding of how to conduct work practices from day to day.

While sharing understanding implies a two-way process of sharing between the manager and the staff, the central and prioritised understanding that is shared is that of the owner-manager. This is evidenced through the quotes offered in the descriptions of each of the dimensions. The managers engage in dialogue with staff to share (the managers’) sensitive business information, and managers create unity by bringing staff “*on to the same page*” (as the manager), and make decisions about which employees “*fit*” and those that don’t.

The prioritised world-view is that of the manager who seeks committed participation from a staff group who share something of the same view. Managers encourage their own self-constructed ‘reality’ to be absorbed by their employees in their employee-engagement practices (Alvesson, 1993; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Willmon, 2001). Some authors in the literature have asserted that “leadership situations may be conceived as those in which there exists an *obligation* or a perceived *right* on the part of certain individuals to define the reality of others” (Smircich & Morgan, 1982 p. 258, italics original).

How managers world-views, are actualised in practice within the emerging context is now partially but significantly revealed in the descriptions of the three properties already discussed in this chapter so far: “Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental symbols”, “Engaging customers” and “Engaging staff”. Each of these properties is constituted by clusters of patterned actions or activities (dimensions) that in turn provide a closer explanation of how capable daily business practice is dynamically performed.

The motivation for these sorts of actions (and not others) can be somewhat explained through taking account of the notion that human action is based on peoples’ understanding of reality, or what their own reality means to them (Blumer, 1969; Flint, 2006; Sandberg & Targama, 2007). Meanings inform and constrain both identity and action (Mills, 2003; Weick et al., 2005). Knowing that people act to satisfy personal meaning is a crucial consideration when seeking enlightenment about why and how and why people enact their world. “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” is the title of the final property within the Sub-core category “Re-orienting meaningfully”. As with the other explanatory properties, “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” will be shown to be constituted by a range of dimensions that disclose the conceptual property, and give

increased perspective as to *why* managers are ‘re-orienting’ their businesses in the ways so far described.

PROPERTY 4: ACTING TO SATISFY PERSONAL MEANING

Dimensional range: Helping people ↔ Giving back

Property description: Range of underlying personal influences (meanings) that guide and limit how managers enact their pharmacy business evolution.

So far, the three conceptual properties described in this Chapter demonstrate clusters of actions that the managers revealed when asked to describe their managerial approaches and actions, given their experience of the emerging business environment. Managers also revealed remarkably consistent responses when the researcher probed what they thought was the most important reason for their involvement in (ownership and management of) their businesses. The researcher probed the managers with questions such as “What is it that you are really trying to achieve here?”, “What gets you out of bed to do this every day?” and “What does doing all this mean to you?” Such questions were seeking to explore their perceived *raison d’être*.

By the time these sorts of questions were asked, usually late in the interview, the contented rapport between participant and researcher mostly led to enthusiastic and very sincere responses. The first two dimensions in this property were very heavily represented in the interviews. Nearly all participants cited “Helping people” and “Relating with people” as crucial in explaining their deeper managerial motivations. The other two dimensions “Not being about the money” and “Giving back” were less densely represented however are important supplements or variations contributing to the theoretical richness of this property.

(i) *Helping people*

“Helping people” as the title of this dimension conceptually accounts for the different ways which participants expressed their perceived *raison d’être*. This dimension shows that their purpose is directed at their customer (patient) group. Words and phrases used by participants included for example, “to assist”; “helping people”; “to solve problems”; “providing solutions”; “to benefit”; “to make a difference” et cetera. For example, Frederick spoke of “*the driver*” in his work life:

...the driver for me [...] comes back to customers...well, help [pause]...[to provide] good outcomes for customers. You know all too often you see people falling through the cracks all the time and to know that you’ve made a difference

to someone. I mean it sounds clichéd but there's no better feeling than actually knowing you've made a big impact on someone, or helped someone or a family, or [helped them] through something. For me, that's always sort of been my...it's why I'm in health care. I mean that passion is very strong [...] It's making sure people are well and healthy and the healthiest they can be and know that there's someone that cares for them.

Harold also spoke of what drove him fundamentally, in a similar way: *“That's fundamentally what is driving me, is to take care of the customers [...] my core issue, is I want to maximise the health of my patients.”* Table 9 displays a range of other representative quotes from participants centred on the concept of “Helping people”.

Table 9: “Helping people”: Representative responses from participants after being asked to comment on the most important reason or purpose for their daily lives as pharmacy business-owners and managers.

Participants	Quotes : “Helping people”
Jeremy	<i>When someone comes in sick and you help them and they come back two days later to say thanks for what you did for us or thanks for what you did for my old mum, or my kids have done really well since you helped them, then that’s pretty good.</i>
Karen	<i>...that you're helping them [customers] with something...that they're getting something. They might be getting a product, but they're getting something of value to them, that you're helping their health, and I think that.</i>
Laetitia	<i>...on the whole, you can see that you're doing something and you're helping people...</i>
Noel	<i>...wanting to have a better outcome for people. I don't like seeing people in pain, be it emotional pain or physical pain. Physical pain you can do something about mostly, but people in emotional pain... being a pharmacist gives you the opportunity to make a difference.</i>
Peter	<i>You can actually make a difference in people's lives [...] I know for a fact people are alive today because of what I do as a pharmacist.</i>
Sara	<i>... we’re trying to give our stores a heart [...] we care about people. That’s always been a part of my reason for becoming a pharmacist [...] I want to help people, that’s why you become a pharmacist.</i>
Tom	<i>...the reason why I did pharmacy was because I wanted to connect and look after people’s health. [...] I’m proud of being a pharmacist and I reckon it’s a very, very important role.</i>
Ulrick	<i>So it’s just [being] a friend, helping out. [...] You’ve got to build that friendship, whether they’re psychotic or mentally ill or stressed out from home or homeless. You’ve got to have that same attitude to all your customers. Build a friendship, help them.</i>

The perceived fundamental motivation of ‘helping people’ was also matched and integrated with a motivation of seeking to relate or connect with people, reflected in the next dimension of this property.

(ii) Relating with people

The dimension “Relating with people” refers to managers expressing a need to relate with people in daily practice which also produces great satisfaction. The different

ways that managers spoke of their need to connect includes words and phrases such as “engaging with people”, “customer interaction”, “talking to people”, “relationship” and “people contact”. For many participants, such connection is highly motivating and appears to be at the centre of processes directed at satisfying their own needs. For example, Laetitia passionately expressed her “love” of conversation and connection with customers:

Well, I'm lucky I love what I do. Because of the people contact [...] that's what I love, that open conversation, and likewise, I have...I have an amazing memory, so I remember stuff going on in people's life and that's how I can pick out the conversation every time. Sometimes not everything you talk about in pharmacy is easy. Sometimes it's awkward, so it's nice to have that personal (perspective) that you can talk about, something just off the cuff and personal, and then you can segue into well, this is why you're here today and we've got to talk about your medication or whatever. So that's what I love, love, love about pharmacy.

Gerald also spoke about talking with people as a vital and basic aspect of his daily practice-intent but in terms a “need to engage”. As his most basic motivation for what he was doing, Gerald firstly spoke of “making a difference to people’s health” and “being able to help people”, and immediately continued:

... it is also that engagement with people [...] I think the reality is we need to engage with people and we need to engage people in various ways. I like people and I like engaging with people. And I like engaging with them, I guess...in my working life, in a meaningful way, and being a pharmacist has enabled me to do that.

Table 10 displays a further range of other representative quotes from participants centred on the concept of “Relating with people”.

Table 10: “Relating with people”: Representative responses from participants after being asked to comment on the most important reasons or purpose for their daily lives as pharmacy business-owners and managers.

Participants	Quotes : “Relating with people”
Ben	<i>At the end of the day it’s about how myself personally as a competent pharmacist can communicate with the consumer and what they benefit from what I tell them.</i>
Jeremy	<i>I love this profession. People, talking to people. Obviously the feedback and the respect you get from people [...] And look when you’ve been in an area, a community like I have, as long as I have here, you know a lot of people.</i>
Karen	<i>I want this place to be as best as it can be in its professionalism, in its practice, in its delivery of health to the community [...] It is the fact that you’re dealing with people...</i>
Noel	<i>...at the end of the day it's about relationship [...] I think that truthfulness and authenticity with each other...and so I want to be authentic with people. I'd like to think I come across as being authentic, I mean apart from my innermost secrets [...] I mean I think I'm an open person trying to achieve a better world in which to live, you know. And I do that on a daily basis.</i>
Tom	<i>...the reason why I did pharmacy was because I wanted to connect and look after people’s health. [...] But overall, it’s still just that connecting with people and trying to get people to understand that it’s their life, and it’s up to them to improve it, to ask for help and to listen and hear.</i>

The two dimensions explored so far: “Helping people” and “Relating with people” show what participants perceive as the most important purposes in their daily lives as pharmacy business-owners and managers. These dimensions partially illuminate what it is that participants are really trying to achieve, or a dynamic sense of meaning. In responding to this turn in the interview conversations, several managers even more clearly articulated their sense of what it all means to them, by explaining what it was *not* about. This is explained in the third dimension within this property and is titled: “Not being about the money”.

(iii) Not being about the money

In responding to an interview question inquiring what running his business meant to him, Charles gave the following explanation:

...[To] make people feel better. And if you make people feel better, the profits will come. If you try to aim to make profit, you won't make as much profit... I've made more profit, not trying to make a profit. It's by achieving an outcome, but having all the processes in place behind that outcome, and if you achieve (the) outcome, the profit takes care of itself. It's very clichéd, looking after your customers, they look after your business. But making them feel better and just making my knowledge mean something to them.

Implicit in the response from Charles is that while financial considerations are important, they are not his primary focus. Indeed, he seems quite explicit that putting profit and financial considerations first, results in less than desirable profitability. The customer and their needs are his stated primary focus, with his simple purpose of “making people feel better”.

Gerald also expressed a sentiment that money was not in his mind as a primary focus:

I don't get up out of bed every morning, and haven't gotten out of bed as a pharmacist because it has all been about the money. I can tell you when my businesses were in strife, I can tell you every morning you know, if I actually got any sleep...I was out of bed early in the morning and I was in there trying to make things happen, but you know, when life is otherwise OK, it's not what motivates me to get out of bed.

And later:

...when I deal with my customers I'm not thinking about the money [...] I'm not thinking about how many things I can get into a basket for them to spend down at the till. I'm much more interested in making sure that we've met their needs...

These sentiments bring into focus how some participants are approaching their daily business activities through focused relationality, with money and profitability at a lower level of concern. This dimension overlaps and relates to the previous dimensions “Helping people” and “Relating with people”, and at the same time gives greater clarity to these two dimensions. Table 11 displays a range of other representative quotes from participants centred on the concept of, “Not being about the money”.

Table 11: “Not being about the money”: Representative responses from participants after being asked to comment on the most important reasons or purpose for their daily lives as pharmacy business-owners and managers.

Participants	Quotes : “Not being about the money”
Harold	<i>...once again goes back to my core issue, which is I want to maximise the health of my patients. So it’s around... I see services as a way of doing that. Um, at the moment um, it’s not profitable. So I can’t say I’m doing it from a profit perspective.</i>
Karen	<i>The way that we practice has always been clear. There’s strong professional consideration so that business thing... you’re not going to make a stupid business choice, but you’re going to make it in the context of what is professional. Otherwise, we’re not going to make that decision.</i>
Oliver	<i>And now I’m at a point in time that I ask the question why?, why wouldn’t I get out of pharmacy and go into something else? And I think I’d only do the same thing again in something else, which is try and add value, try and make a difference, and [...] do it with integrity. I was going to say honesty, but that’s not quite... Do it with integrity and try and be generous to help other people and in doing so I will get more than I need.</i>
Peter	<i>We hold ourselves to a higher standard and some people say it’s a folly because we’re not making as much money as some others, but that’s not the point of what we’re doing...</i>
Sara	<i>[After explaining that “car[ing] for people” was her primary concern] Honestly, the money in pharmacy was not the reason why I became a pharmacist. I just want success and I want happiness in my work life and so the money is not my driver.</i>

The final dimension which follows is titled “Giving back” and also provides deeper contextual understanding and greater clarity for the property “Acting to satisfy personal meaning”.

(iv) Giving back

The final dimension “Giving back” refers to an important motivation which some managers described as vital to their sense of meaning in what they do in their work. “Giving back” encompasses a participant’s motivation to return something of value to either individuals or their community as a whole, in a spirit of mutuality. Implicit in their words is the dynamism of reciprocity and mutuality. Jeremy expressed specifically what he meant:

There is a respect, a mutual respect and just putting something back into the community is great fun. When someone comes in sick and you help them and they come back two days later to say thanks for what you did for us [...] then that's pretty good.

A strong but more general motivation expressed in Quintin's explanations was his long dedication to community philanthropy as a crucial foundation for how he operates his pharmacy businesses. Quintin said: *"You don't appreciate just how good it makes you feel personally. It really is a win-win in so many different levels and I just love it...giving back this sort of stuff to the community."* Xavier also expressed a strong drive to "give back" to community in response to the "privilege" of being a pharmacist in a "prominent position" with the public:

...being a pharmacist in this country has also given me some sense and value of community service which is there. Every pharmacist gives that community service and they are in a prominent position to be able to do that, and they've got the exposure with the public quite a lot, and that has been a privilege in itself as well. So when you get to this idea of being privileged and then when you earn enough to live on, you start thinking about what can you give back. Some people do, some people don't. For me, that was: 'what can I give back to the community?' So that's what has driven me first...

This dimension "Giving back" is closely related to "Helping people", discussed as the first dimension of the property, "Acting to satisfy personal meaning". The dimensions are similar in that they strongly imply a type of intentional benevolence or 'giving to help'. Both dimensions are also actualised through integrated relationality with others, exhibited through participants' descriptions of (the dimension) "Relating with people".

"Helping people" and "Giving back" differ in that the former refers to a dynamic person-to-person relationality aimed at achieving a beneficial outcome for the customer. The latter refers more to the dynamic of mutuality and reciprocity, where there is an implied cycle of inter-dependent giving and receiving. Both relations of "Helping people" and "Giving back" are "Not about the money" for most participants.

The four dimensions "Helping people", "Relating with people", "Not being about the money" and "Giving back" constitute the property "Acting to satisfy personal meaning". Together, these dimensions show what participants perceive are the central motivations for their managerial life: their *raison d'être*. It is through their consistent attempts to enact these dimensions that their meaning-making is emergently achieved.

In effect, the “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” can be seen to be an elaboration of participants’ understanding of themselves: their identity (Simpson, 2009).

The dimensions illuminated within this property can be seen within the dimensions of all other properties discussed in this chapter. For instance, in the first property, the managerial actions described as “Increasing the opportunities for service based experiences” shows how managers are re-orienting toward their customers so that “Helping people”, “Relating with people” and “Giving back” can be actualised. The dimensions of “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” can also be seen as the underlying motivation for all of the actions (dimensions) of the second property “Engaging customers”, in particular, the dimension “Reaching toward the individual customer’s world”. Similarly, all of the actions (dimensions) constituting the third property “Engaging staff” are better understood when the primary motivations of “Helping people”, “Relating with people” and “Giving back” are taken into account. They can be seen as the central motivation for meaning-sharing with staff, as the centre-point of ‘unity’ for “Creating unity” and as the basis for judgements for which staff ‘fit’ and which do not.

Another way in which the dimensions of “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” can be understood theoretically, is to see these central and meaningful actions as ‘habits’, described as “a generalised system of significant symbols” (Simpson, 2009, p. 1335). In Appendix 2, four themes permeating the philosophy of the Pragmatists are discussed, (p. 310 - 314). One of the four themes of Pragmatism, is that of ‘habit’ which has a particular meaning quite different from conventional understandings of ‘habit’, being a behavioural concept characterised by behaviours hardened by rigidity and fixedness.

Instead, from the Pragmatist perspective, habits were described as “acquired pre-dispositions to *ways* or modes of response (...)” (Dewey, 1988/1922, p. 32). They are described as “expressions of social norms of conduct, but at the same time, they are dynamically emergent, admitting the possibilities of mutability and change over time” (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011, p. 68). Citing Mead (1934), Elkjaer and Simpson point out that ‘habits’ exhibited by a person, pre-emptively establish an emergent and symbolic context, making it easier for respondents to *anticipate* actions in given situations. Relationality between people is therefore not so much executed by rational choice of response but by the interplay and interpretation of continuously transacted ‘significant symbols’ (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Weick et al., 2005). Habits, as a system of

significant symbols, are therefore understood to play a vital role in the construction of sociality (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

In summary, within this property “Acting to satisfy personal meaning”, the dimensions describe how participants are acting to satisfy a particular set of meanings. The dimensions are also theoretically proposed as ‘habits’ in the Pragmatist philosophical sense and an elaboration of participants’ understanding of themselves: their identity (Simpson, 2009). It is the participants’ habitual elaboration of identity which permeates and drives the construction of a particular type of sociality (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Mead, 1934) and therefore the sociality of “Engaging customers” and “Engaging staff”. This theoretical idea will be further developed in the following discussion.

DISCUSSION - SUB-CORE CATEGORY 2: RE-ORIENTING MEANINGFULLY

In this chapter the Sub-core category “Re-orienting meaningfully” has been developed through four properties and their dimensions, grounded in the interview data. The construction of this Sub-core category describes what managers are doing and therefore *how and why* they are acting within the perceived emerging context, described in the previous chapter. These analytical properties and dimensions progress a theoretical answer for the research question: *How can we understand managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management?*

The four properties and their dimensions show how the managers are re-orienting themselves, their operations and their staff toward what they interpret as the wants and needs of their customers. Consistent with the foundational philosophical tenets of this grounded theory methodology, the properties and dimensions are not to be viewed as separate and interacting systems of action. Managers are acting out a ceaseless flow of activities unfolding all together (Cooper, 2005).

The actions are viewed as intertwined and inseparable aspects of an ongoing sociality (Simpson, 2009). What can be seen to be the ‘separation of the inseparable’ in this analysis is being undertaken as a convenient device (Simpson, 2009) to illuminate theoretical aspects of the phenomenon of managerial capability within this context. Doing so has enabled a theoretical approach to better understand possible answers to questions such as: ‘what’s going on here?’, ‘what does it mean?’, ‘why is it happening?’ (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

To begin to theoretically understand 'what's going on here?' the research analysis and synthesis relies on the perspective of Pragmatist philosophy which underpins the research methodology. Pragmatism is especially useful for exploring the dynamic processes and practices of organisational life (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009). The essence of Pragmatist philosophy lies in the explicit link between knowledge and action (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Within this perspective, knowledge is not understood as the explicit and tacit knowledge a person possesses, to apply rationally (like tools) to the puzzle of emerging circumstances. Rather, knowledge is understood as 'knowing'. Knowing implies people come to know dynamically and emergently through meaningful participation in social actions in their world (Simpson, 2009).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the interpretivist perspective suggests that what we think we 'know' (knowledge) is continually shaped by the evolving understandings we have about our world and ourselves in our world. For a person to understand something is to know what it means in that person's world. It is from our momentary understanding of our world, that is momentarily knowing what an event or circumstance means, that our actions are anticipated for the next moment. Pragmatist philosophy suggests that our ideas of 'what to do next' arise from our understanding of the world and the meanings we attach to our world in each moment. Our self-constructed meanings frame our anticipations and then how we will act in the next moment.

In summing up the essence of Pragmatist philosophy, Elkjaer and Simpson (2011, p. 56) suggested that: "the explicit link between knowledge (or meaning) and action suggests that ideas are more than mere accretions of past experience, but rather, their importance lies in their projected influence on future experiences." Pragmatism asserts that "what people believe to be true is what they find to be useful (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011, p. 57).

Meaning as context

The perspective discussed above suggests that in exploring the participants' managerial practices, it is sensible to begin with what participants believe, as it is sense of meaning that anticipates both directionality and action. In this study, the fourth property "Acting to satisfy personal meaning" is understood through its dimensions. The dimensions are ways of understanding what meanings form the basis (motivations) for actions. The spirit of these dimensions reflects a customer-centric attitude which is

embedded with an intentional benevolence (“Helping people” and “Giving back”) and a need for close mutuality and reciprocity (“Relating with people”). The dimensions are further clarified by the specification that such motivations are not primarily led by the profit or commercial motive. The motivations are “Not about the money”.

When the notion that human action is based on what reality means to them is taken seriously (Blumer, 1969; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Flint, 2006; Sandberg & Targama, 2007; Simpson, 2009), it can be understood that meanings inform and constrain both identity and action (Mills, 2003; Weick et al., 2005). In this way, meanings and identity can be seen to be rather like the emerging business context discussed in Chapter 5. To reflect this theoretical idea of meanings/identity being similar in effect to the emerging context, a further developed version of the diagrammatic representation, Figure 6 (Chapter 5, p. 114), is offered in Figure 7 (p. 171).

Figure 7, builds on Figure 6, and presents the first progressive development of what will become in Chapter 8, a representation of a substantive theory of managerial capability. In Figure 7, the property “Acting to satisfy personal meaning”, which is one of the four properties of the second Sub-core category “Re-orienting meaningfully, is linked to the properties of the first Sub-core category.

The property “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” is represented in the same manner as the emerging and experienced context. Together both the emerging context and a manager’s sense of meaning constitute their continuously unfolding experienced world, in time. Again, the recursive design in the figure, marked with the notation “[A]”, represents dynamism and movement. The open end of the circle on the right hand side represents openness to the future and the recursive two-way arrows represent continuous anticipation of what is to come. The emerging context (including meaning) can therefore be understood as a relentless flow of new interpreted contextual dispositions that define and constrain managerial actions.

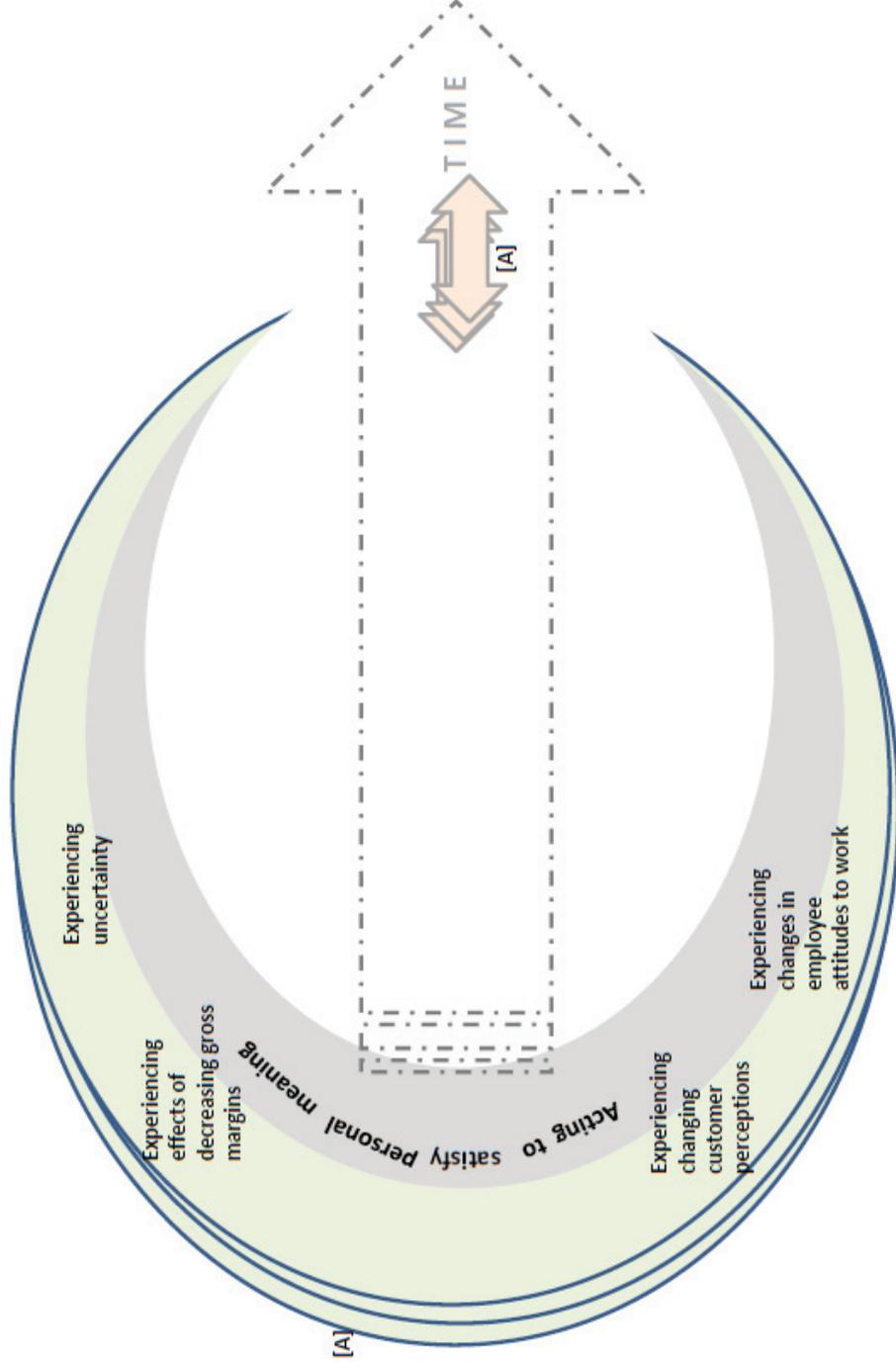


Figure 7: Representation of the property “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” (darker grey) as being conceptually similar in its effect to the experiencing of emergent context. Figure 7 is a progressive development of Figure 6, discussed in Chapter 5.

The human proclivity for “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” was discussed earlier as being constituted by patterned meaningful actions, or from the Pragmatist philosophical perspective, ‘habits’. ‘Habits’ were described as a system of significant symbols or “acquired *pre*-dispositions to ways or modes of response (...)” (Dewey, 1988/1922, p. 32, italics inserted for emphasis). The prefix ‘*pre*-’ in the word “pre-dispositions” in Dewey’s quote is important because it implies a particular ontological and epistemological perspective. That is, the embodied meaning structure or identity of a person (their ‘habits’) is what forms and shapes perceptions and “...percepts are ontologically and epistemologically prior to concepts” (Barbalet, 2004, p. 341). That is, perceptions are ontologically prior to conceptions (thoughts and ideas).

Perceptions formed and shaped by embodied meaning/identity precede thought, and both enable and constrain what thoughts we construct and therefore how we enact each momentary situation. Social actions and their effects (participation) also “construct or re-construct the social meanings that shape our thoughts and actions” (Simpson, 2009, p. 1333). That is, the responses that social actions invoke are reinterpreted and may incrementally recreate new meanings, perceptions and thoughts.

As summarised by Elkjaer and Simpson (2011, p. 56), “...the originating maxim of Pragmatism, suggests that the meaning of ideas resides in the actions that they lead to rather than in their antecedent causes.” Figure 8 shows the mutually reconstituting link between knowledge (meaning) and social action diagrammatically. This link captures the Pragmatist notion of how knowing (meanings) shape actions (Simpson, 2009) and supports the theoretical proposal that embodied meanings can be considered as a type of context that shapes our thoughts and actions, as shown above in Figure 7.

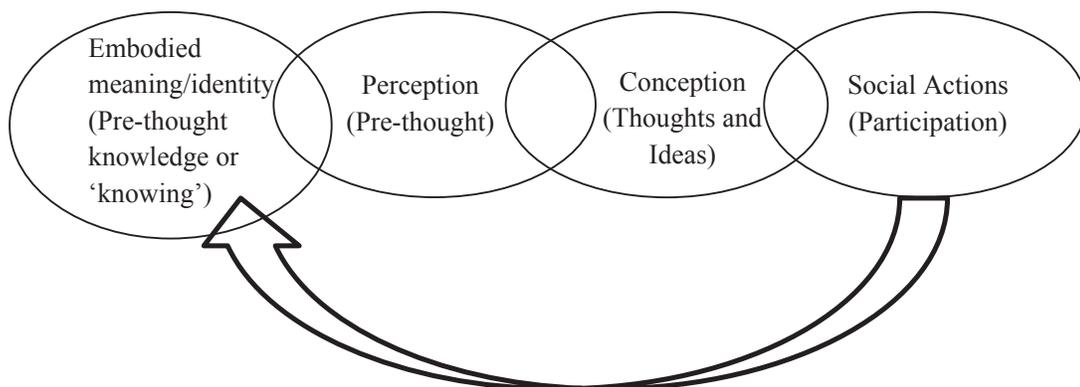


Figure 8: Representation of the Pragmatist philosophical ideal of the social process: the mutually constituting link between knowledge (meaning) and social actions.

“The ultimate test for us, of what a truth means, is indeed the conduct it dictates or inspires.” (James, 1898, p. 259). Quotation cited in Elkjaer and Simpson (2011, p. 56)

Social processes as ‘trans-actions’

When the remaining three properties of this Sub-core category are examined through the Pragmatist’s theoretical lens, two properties “Engaging customers” and “Engaging staff” can be understood as clusters of patterned actions where the clusters (dimensions) in both properties are primarily social in nature. The dimensions can be seen to be clusters of social processes that give meaning to the properties “Engaging customers” and “Engaging staff”. Pragmatist philosophy and thinking is founded on the notion that all people (managers/practitioners) are active participants in their social worlds (Simpson, 2009). Their lived-experience is understood as dynamic, continuous and emergent (Sandberg & Targama, 2007).

It is through this ongoing participation in social worlds that meaning/identity and social actions mutually reconstitute each other (Figure 8). As an individual’s social interactions unfold over time, they can be understood to be expressions of both internalised meanings and revised new meanings that arise from cyclical iterations figuratively shown in Figure 8. Citing Mead, Simpson (2009, p. 1334) points out that it is through these iterations that it is possible to see how social actions occur as a process located within the flow of time. Also, through the mutually constituting processes, the participants themselves emerge or ‘become’ which is claimed as a central idea within Pragmatist philosophy (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

An important theoretical refinement to this theory of mutually reconstituting ‘interaction’ is to see this process not as iterative inter-actions between physically and mentally separated subjects, but as ‘trans-actions’. The notion of ‘trans-action’ is credited to Dewey, or more specifically to Dewey and Bentley, (1949) (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009). As explained by Simpson (2009, p. 1334):

...whereas an inter-action is something that happens between actors who are physically and mentally independent, a trans-action happens across actors who are aspects of a relationally integrated whole; whereas meanings are transmitted between actors in an inter-action, the actors *are* the continuously emerging meaning in a trans-action. (Italics original).

The idea of trans-action is an ontological shift that eschews the more common dualistic notion of inter-action between the two ‘worlds’ of interacting but separate individuals. Instead trans-action views individuals as aspects of a dynamic integrated whole (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Trans-actions therefore become the location for meaning-making (Simpson, 2009), and the more relevant focus for analysis. Figure 9

offers a representation of the Pragmatist notion of ‘trans-action’ across two actors (left and right) who become aspects of a relationally integrated whole, represented by the outer circle. This representation further develops the ideas represented in Figure 8 by elucidating a dynamic model of unified social process, or trans-action. Once again, the recursive design in the figure is marked with the notation “[A]”, representing dynamism and continuous movement through time.

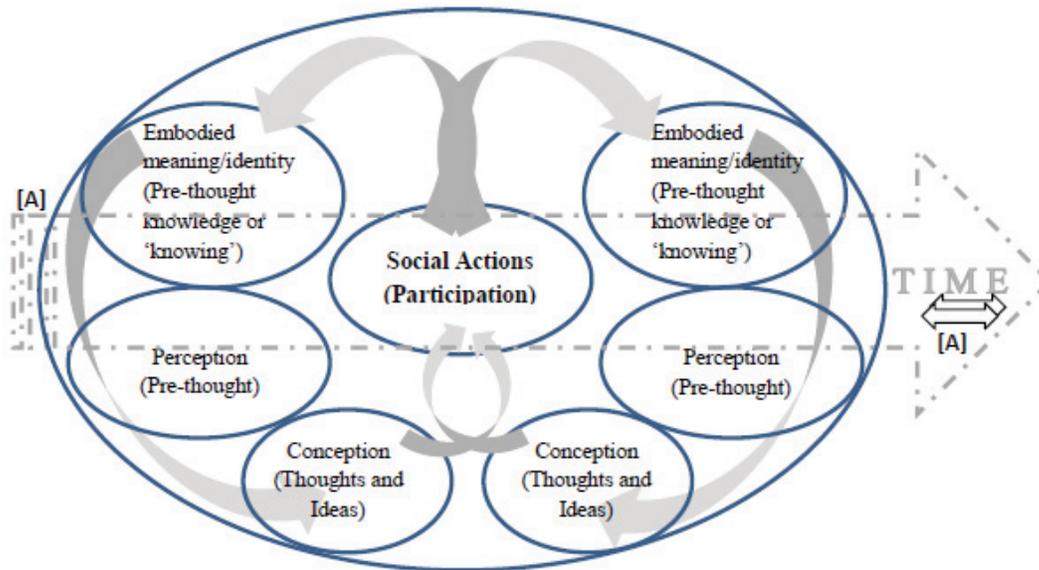


Figure 9: Representation of the Pragmatist dynamic notion of ‘trans-action’ occurring across two actors (left and right) who become aspects of a relationally integrated whole (represented by the outer circle).

“...the actors *are* the continuously emerging meaning in a trans-action” (italics original). Simpson (2009, p. 1334) after Dewey and Bentley (1991/1949).

Considering trans-actions as the location for ongoing meaning-making implies notions of both ‘production’ and ‘invention’ (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2014). That is, dynamic social processes and actions are not pointless, they have a “formative character” (Gherardi, 2016). Social practices are destined toward particular outcomes (forms) that arise as a result “of a discursive practice that frames creativity” (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2014, p. 145). Creativity and innovation is thus an effect resulting from the mutual manipulation of objects, techniques and materials. The effect is materialised in the form of altered ideas, direction and/or materials (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2014). The notion of trans-action demonstrated in Figure 9 implies that creativity and innovation do not reside in the heads or psyches of individuals but arises as an effect of the social practices involving mutual engagement (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2014). The next two sections describe how different practices ‘shape’ the character of forms which emerge.

Trans-action with customers: a divergent dynamic of emergence

Considering ‘trans-action’ as a theoretical departure point for analysis, the property “Engaging customers” can be understood as a range of social processes and representations of trans-action involving the managers. Certain aspects of trans-action are reflected in the dimensions (i) Bringing pharmacists to the fore; (ii) Reaching toward the individual customer’s ‘world’; (iii) Seeing customers as defensive advocates and (iv) Investing and participating within the local community. When viewed this way, analysis is at the social level rather than at the level of the individual. Using this ideal, the manager and the customer are no longer identified as provider and recipient respectively, but as an indivisible united entity.

The value of such a perspective has been described by Küpers (1998, 2000) who theorised professional-consumer relations as being a symbolic, emotional and embodied united entity which he called the *prosumer*. Viewed as single and whole, the interrelation between manager and consumer highlights reciprocal relationality where each of them experiences the other in meaning-sharing, which develops new meanings (knowing) in the process. In this way, the manager and consumer co-construct meaning (Schembri, 2006) and experience. As put by Schembri (2006, p. 388): “Customers as prosumers, therefore, are not merely recipients, nor co-producers as in the rationalistic sense, but co-constructors of their service experience.”

In this study, the experience of participants in interpreting the uncertain, changing and complex environment is reflected their perceptions of changing dynamics within their customer relationships. Their experience in relation to customers was described in Chapter 5 through the grounded dimensions of the third property “Experiencing changing customer perceptions” (p. 103), where participants seemed to be experiencing a widening ‘gap’ between themselves and their customers.

The nature and quality of their responding actions is reflected in the second property of Sub-core category 2, “Engaging customers”, where the dimensions “Bringing pharmacists to the fore”, and “Reaching toward the individual customer’s ‘world’” are interpreted as trans-actional attempts to ‘narrow the gap’ between themselves and their customers. Figure 10 shows aspects of the link between managers’ experience of customer-context (on the left) and the quality of action (on the right) within a notion of ‘trans-action’.

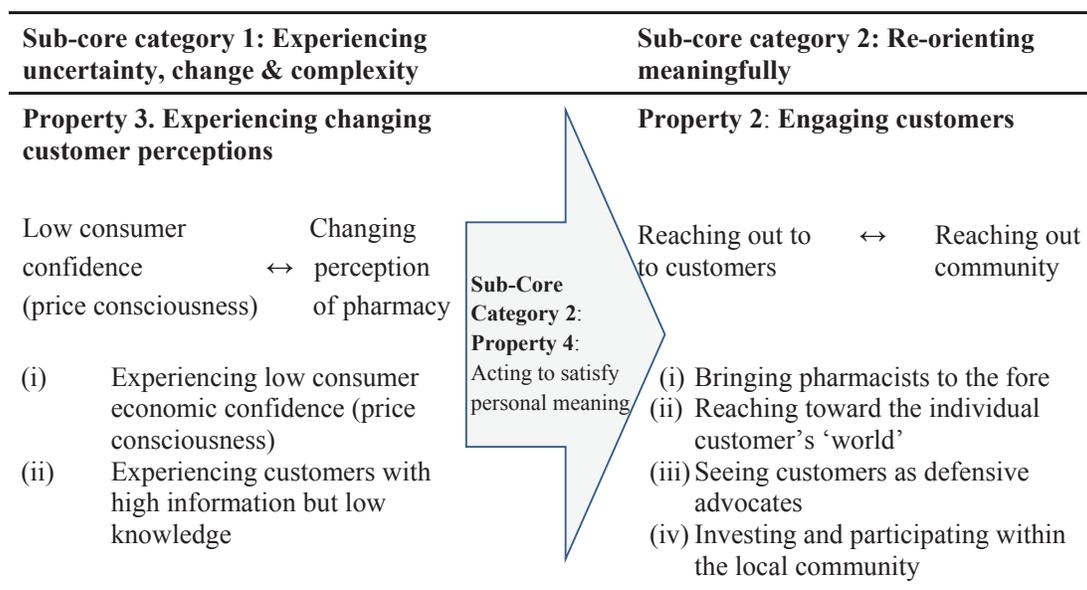


Figure 10: Managers' trans-action with customers: Aspects of managers' changing relationship with customers linking Sub-core category 1 and 2 through their conceptual properties.

Figure 10 also shows how managers' patterned actions of "Engaging customers" are shaped by their need to act to satisfy personal meaning (centre arrow). The dimensions of the property "Acting to satisfy personal meaning": (i) Helping people, (ii) Relating with people, (iii) Not being about the money and (iv) Giving back, illuminate the quality and meaning of their trans-actioal relations with customers. But while "Acting to satisfy personal meaning" appears manager-centric and about managerial-enactments that remain congruent with managers' meaning structures, it is important to understand that the manager-customer trans-action is a meaning-*sharing* relation between managers and customers. In this study, it is the managers' experience of insecurity about customer loyalty and relationships that is motivating them to take these actions. As with most businesses, it is the customer who has the greatest power of choice: to remain loyally in relationship with a particular business, or to go elsewhere. Power is weighted in favour of the customer.

In this chapter, the dynamics revealed in the dimensional range constituting the Property 1, "Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental signals" and the social process of Property 2, "Engaging customers" show that participants are seeking to understand their customers' life-world by reaching out to customers and to their communities. In particular, the dimension "Reaching toward the individual customer's 'world'" shows that it is the managers' own world-views that the managers are willing to adjust more than they are seeking to change their customers' world-views. That is,

managers can be viewed as ‘pursuing’ their customers by “Confronting the need for customer-relevance”, “Increasing the opportunity for service-based experiences” and “Reaching toward the customer’s individual ‘world’”.

From the managers’ perspectives, these dynamics characterise a *divergent* dynamic of emergence and transformation, where the managers seek new meanings (knowing), incrementally diverging away from their previously held understandings (Simpson, 2009). The social process of “Engaging customers” and the effects of trans-actional participation construct and re-construct the social meanings that shape the managers’ thoughts and actions (Simpson, 2009). The *divergent dynamic* described here begins to illuminate how incremental creative action is accommodated in the explanation of managerial capability in this study.

Trans-action with Staff: a convergent dynamic of emergence

The property “Engaging staff” can also be understood as a range of social processes and representations of ‘trans-action’. Certain aspects of trans-action are reflected in the dimensions (i) Engaging staff through dialogue, (ii) Creating unity, (iii) Employing for ‘fit’ and (iv) Empowering and trusting staff. The experience of managers in interpreting the uncertain, changing and complex environment discussed in Chapter 5 reflected their perceptions of changing dynamics within their staff relationships. The managers’ experiences in relation to staff was described through the grounded dimensions of the fourth property of Sub-core category 1, “Experiencing changes in employee attitudes to work”, (p. 107).

Participants related experiencing a widening ‘gap’ between themselves and their staff. The nature and quality of their responding actions are reflected in the third property of Sub-core category 2, “Engaging staff”, where the dimensions can be interpreted as trans-actional attempts to ‘narrow the gap’ between themselves and their staff. Figure 11 shows aspects of the linkage between managers’ experience of staff-context (on the left) and the quality of action (on the right), within a notion of ‘trans-action’ with staff.

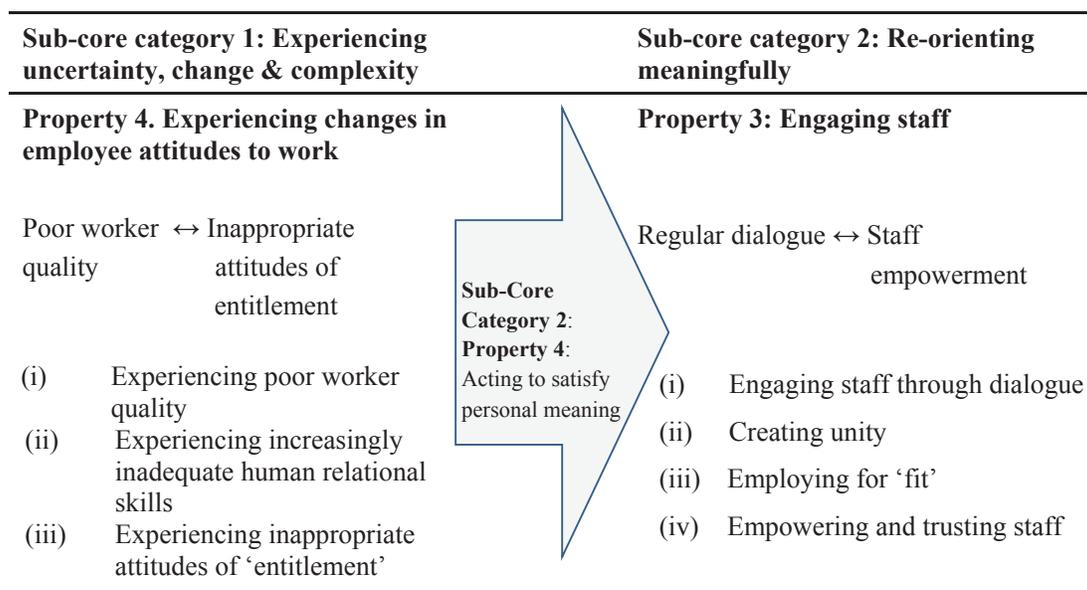


Figure 11: Managers’ trans-action with staff: Aspects of managers’ changing relationship with staff linking Sub-core category 1 and 2 through conceptual properties.

Again, the quality of the manager-staff trans-action (on the right) is shaped by the managers’ need to act to satisfy personal meaning (centre arrow). As with customers, the manager-staff trans-action is a meaning-*sharing* relation between managers and staff. But within this relation, it is the manager who holds the primary power in the manager-staff relationship. The unequal power relationship legitimises control over business-culture orientation and who will stay to participate and who will go.

The social processes constituting Property 3, “Engaging staff” shows that participants are seeking to shape their employees’ life-world through regular dialogue, unifying actions, careful employee selection and empowering trusted staff. In particular, the data forming the dimension “Creating unity” showed that it is the employees’ world-views that the managers are seeking to adjust more than they are seeking to change their own world-view. That is, participants can be viewed as ‘conforming’ their staff , as disclosed through dimensions such as: “Confronting the need for customer-relevance”, “Increasing the opportunity for service-based experiences”, “Bringing pharmacists to the fore”, “Engaging staff through dialogue”, “Creating unity”, “Employing for ‘fit’”, and “Empowering and trusting staff”.

From the managers’ perspectives, rather than being divergent in nature, these dynamics characterise a *convergent* dynamic of emergence and transformation toward equilibrium of meaning-sharing, in favour of the managers (Simpson, 2009). As was discussed earlier when reporting the data showing how the concept “Creating unity”

emerged from the interviews, managers encourage their own self-constructed 'reality' to be absorbed by their employees in their employee-engagement practices (Alvesson, 1993; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Willmon, 2001).

Table 12 (p. 180) shows how the properties and dimensions of the Sub-core category 2, "Re-orienting meaningfully" are constituted by both dynamically divergent and convergent practices from the managers' perspectives. Divergence implies dynamism toward creativity and novelty and convergence toward equilibrium and stability. In fact in each case, the dynamism of each dimension involves both divergence and convergence, and the table reflects what is interpreted as the dominant dynamic of each dimension.

Table 12: The dimensions of each property constituting the Sub-core category 2, “Re-orienting meaningfully” are identified as being either primarily dynamically *divergent* (toward creativity and novelty) or dynamically *convergent* (toward equilibrium and stability), from the managers’ perspectives.

Property	Dimension	Primarily Divergent	Primarily Convergent
1. Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental symbols			
	(i) Confronting the need for customer-relevance	✓	
	(ii) Altering product ranges and categories	✓	
	(iii) Managing pricing	✓	
	(iv) Increasing the opportunity for service based experiences	✓	
	(v) Pursuing operational efficiencies and re-balancing risks	✓	
2. Engaging customers			
	(i) Bringing pharmacists to the fore	✓	
	(ii) Reaching toward the individual customer’s ‘world’	✓	
	(iii) Seeing customers as defensive advocates	✓	
	(iv) Investing and participating within the local community	✓	
3. Engaging staff			
	(i) Engaging staff through dialogue		✓
	(ii) Creating unity		✓
	(iii) Employing for ‘fit’		✓
	(iv) Empowering and trusting staff		✓
4. Acting to satisfy personal meaning			
	(i) Helping people		✓
	(ii) Relating with people		✓
	(iii) Not being about the money		✓
	(iv) Giving back		✓

Divergent and convergent social processes

It is through divergent dynamic social processes that managers actively challenge their own knowing (meaning), through a range of processual actions that in effect seek to close the ‘gap’ between their own world-view, and the world-view of their customers. The divergent processes are not only potentially creative over time, but represent the means through which managers’ understanding changes over time and therefore the meaning of what it is they are trying to accomplish. This is regarded as the most fundamental form of learning (Sandberg & Targama, 2007).

In this study, approach or open-mindedness to novelty and collaborative innovation with customers is revealed from the Property 1 dimensions such as “Confronting the need for customer relevance” and “Increasing the opportunity for service based experiences”. Enacting opportunities to discover novelty and collaborative innovation with customers is revealed from the Property 2 dimensions such as “Bringing pharmacists to the fore”, “Reaching toward the customer’s ‘world’” and “Investing and participating within the local community”. The dimensions of Property 4, “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” establish the participants’ pre-existing internalised context, or their basis for interpretation, within which customer relationships are engaged. As aptly referenced by Weick et al. (2005, p 409), “When action is the central focus, interpretation, not choice, is the core phenomenon”. Innovative (divergent) actions thus already have a pre-established directionality from the managers’ perspectives, to the extent such actions are acceptable to customers.

Through the convergent dynamic, managers are actively shaping the world-views of their staff, toward their own understandings of the moment, toward unity. This process can be seen to be dynamically convergent toward a manager-centric equilibrium (Simpson, 2009). This idea reflects the “communities of practice” ideal of Lave and Wenger (1991), and further developed by Brown and Duguid (1991, 2001). Their ideas suggest that interdependent individuals (or groups) both construct the work context and share meanings (identities) at the same time as constructing a social context that enables meaning/identity sharing (Brown & Duguid, 2001). Within such a co-constructed context, knowledge-sharing enlightens how ‘what is known’ by the group is refined and altered. The ways of knowing are located in the relations among group participants (Gherardi, Nicolini, & Odella, 1998; Gherardi & Perrotta, 2014), rather than within individuals themselves.

When the properties and their dimensions are considered together dynamically, it is possible to imagine the integrated processes as a performative account. On the one hand managers are actively seeking closer understanding of the life-world of their customers. This is demonstrated through divergent practices that allows closer meaningful participation. On the other hand, and simultaneously, managers seek to bring their staff together through convergent practices, encouraging staff participation which is congruent with the managers' evolving world-views. What comes to the fore with this theoretical approach is the dynamic tension between the divergent and convergent practices that seem to be balanced by capable managers.

Put another way, managerial capability in this study appears to be constituted by a nexus of on-going actions and social processes that are both divergent and convergent in nature but never still. From the managers' perspectives, their social selves are being continuously re-developed as they interpret the emergence of their experienced environment and act meaningfully through two key 'trans-actions': "Engaging customers" and "Engaging staff". The dynamics of divergence show the potential for creativity and transformation. The dynamics of convergence show the potential for coherence and control. Both dynamics can be understood as practically creative effects and processes of 'forming' resulting from "situated doing" (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2014, p. 145).

The nexus of actions and social processes and their divergent or convergent character are shown in Figure 12, and is the next refinement in a growing diagrammatic and theoretical representation of managerial capability in this study. Figure 12 diagrammatically shows the theoretical integration of Sub-core category 1, and Sub-core category 2. While the figure conveniently separates the concepts and seems to imply separation of and order within processes, it is emphasised that the represented process as a whole is totally integrated and processual.

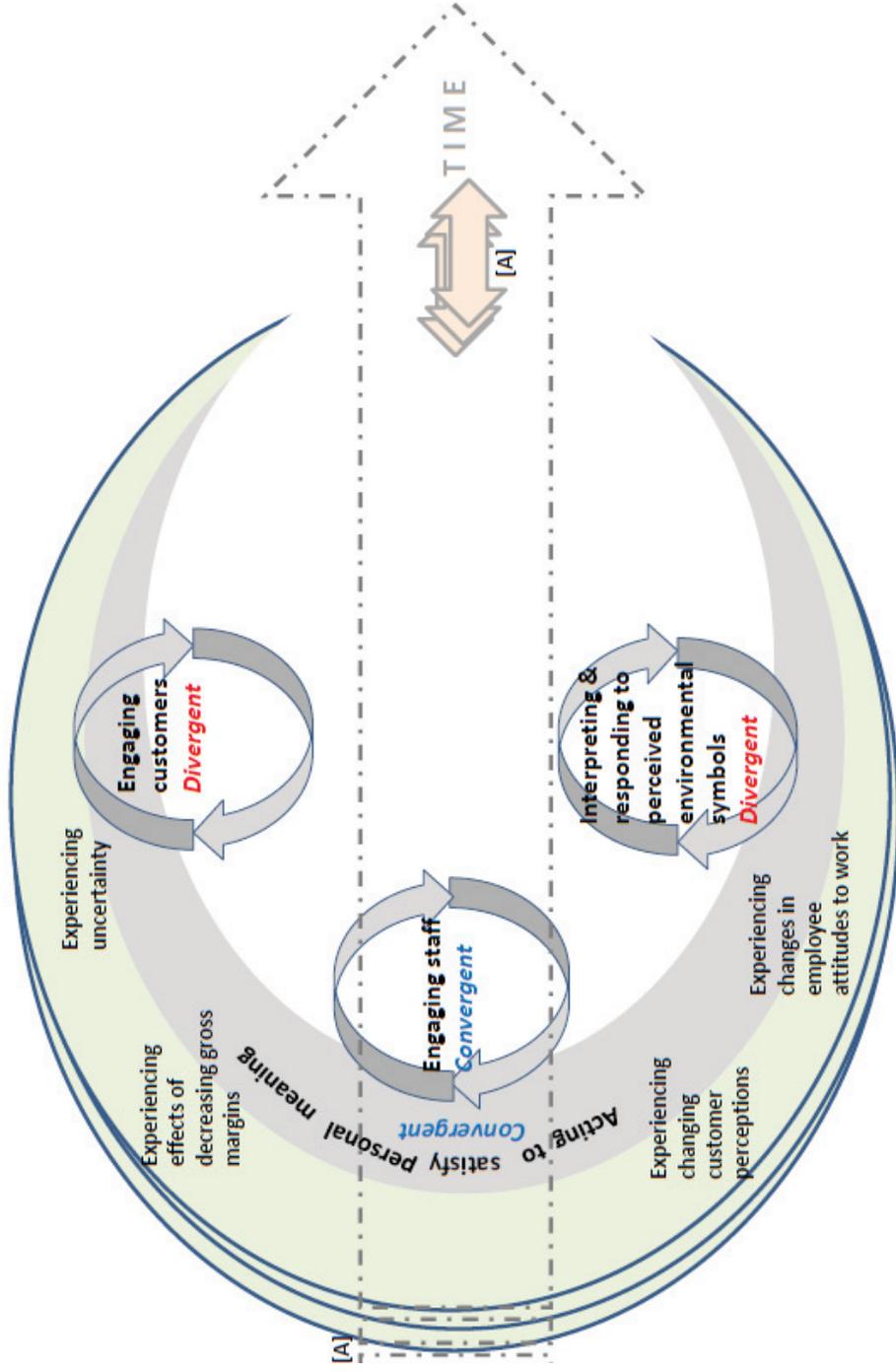


Figure 12: Developing representation of managerial capability expressed as a nexus of actions and social processes which have both divergent and convergent character. The figure also shows the theoretical integration of Sub-core category 1, and Sub-core category 2.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, the Basic Social Process of concern is that of ‘managerial capability’ reflected in the research question: *How can we understand managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management?* The aim of this chapter was to interpret and analyse what the managers are actually doing, given the contextual experiences they are having. It is through their patterned actions and social processes, revealed through their sayings and doings, that a theoretical conceptualisation of their managerial work, that is, their managerial capability is revealed.

The departure point for this chapter was the analysis of managers’ experienced worlds, explained in Chapter 5. It is important to understand that the findings regarding managerial actions reported in this chapter are not built ‘on top of’ their experience of context but are integrated with and shaped by that emerging experience. To explain the Sub-core category title “Re-orienting meaningfully”, the chapter began with the description of four interpreted and integrated conceptual properties describing participants’ managerial actions. Each property was subsequently illuminated through interpreted conceptual dimensions which show the variation within the property and provide clarity of what is going-on.

Properties and their dimensions have been coded in the form of gerunds accentuating processes in the data. This has enabled the researcher to develop a deeper theoretical sensitivity when examining the data, thus moving analytical thinking away from static topics and toward enacted processes (Charmaz, 2006). Such an analytical style gives priority to the verbal function (Chia, 1995) showing “how practices are always in-the-making, always becoming and evolving” (Bjorkeng, Clegg, & Pitsis, 2009, p. 147; Carlsen, 2006). Focusing on actions raises the visibility of connected sequences that include context and time.

In the analysis and discussion, the philosophy of the Pragmatist thinkers was used as an interpretive lens. The key influence of the Pragmatists arises from their special understanding of the dynamic link between knowing (or meaning) and action, the latter mostly being social-action. New ideas (thoughts) about future actions are shaped by refreshing knowing/meaning that arises as a consequence of previous action. That is, knowing (meaning) and social action are mutually constitutive, dynamic and emergent.

It was from this understanding of the centrality of meaning and the ontological precedence of ‘perceptions’ (meaning) before ‘conceptions’ (thoughts) that afforded the

first major theoretical synthesis in this chapter. That is, that a persons' meaning structures are experienced in a similar way to their experience of the emerging context. Like an emerging business-environment context, a manager's sense of meaning is a (usually unconscious) pre-thought phenomenon. Perceptions arise when the significant symbols of environmental-change are felt and perceived. Such pre-conscious perceptions are unique to the individual and are formed because of already existing embodied meaning/identity which is disrupted. Particular thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions then surface and follow from such perceptions. Particular actions are then influenced and enacted, following on from perceptions. These ideas were reflected in Figures 8 and 9 (p. 172 & 174), and the accompanying discussions. The influence of this understanding (meanings as context), upon managerial actions was represented in Figures 10, 11 and 12, (p. 176, 178 & 183 respectively).

After considering that context and meaning are experienced similarly, analysis then turned to the two central social processes reflected in the properties "Engaging customers" and "Engaging staff". Before considering the particular nature of each of the two interpreted social processes, a reconsideration of the fundamental nature of the 'social process' itself was discussed as a sensitising idea, by introducing the notion of 'trans-action'. As represented in Figure 9, trans-action implies that there is no separation between engaged individuals and replaces the perspective of 'interaction between' individuals with a perspective of 'trans-action across' individuals, where the individuals are seen to be aspects of a relationally integrated whole (Simpson, 2009, p. 1334). (See Figure 12, p. 183).

This theoretical refinement is important for analysis because 'trans-action' becomes the dynamic location of shared meaning-making (Simpson, 2009), and 'formativeness' (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2014). This perspective alters the analytical focus from the individual level to the social level, which is the more relevant level of analysis. Such a focus on 'trans-action' and analysis at the social level is not trivial. It represents an ontological shift away from the more common dualistic notion of interaction between the two 'worlds' of interacting but separate individuals, toward trans-action as holistic relationality (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

'Reality' in such a dynamically relational world "...appears as a flow of events which keeps on flowing" (Cooper, 2005, p. 1707). Trans-action permits a process-oriented or "performative account" (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 572) where social actions and routines are "emergent accomplishments" (Feldman, 2000, p. 613) and potentially transformed within every iteration of action (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Gherardi,

2016). This perspective, illuminates the means through which new actions can keep changing and re-forming, that is, how creative action occurs, depending on the mutually constituting dynamic between meaning, action, and outcome (Gherardi, 2016; Gherardi & Perrotta, 2014; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

The dimensions of each of the properties “Engaging customers” and “Engaging staff” were shown to be shaped by managers’ meaning structures, discussed within the property “Acting to satisfy personal meaning”. Each social process is different in that from the managers’ perspectives, “Engaging customers” is characterised as a divergent dynamic, while “Engaging staff” is characterised as a convergent dynamic (Simpson, 2009). From the managers’ perspectives the divergent dynamic infers actions that are incrementally creative, toward emergence and transformation. It was demonstrated through the dimensions of the property “Engaging customers” that the primary dynamic is that of managers having to ‘stretch themselves’, by reaching into the customers world, rather than the reciprocal. On the other hand, the convergent dynamic infers actions which engender conformity and unity of world-view within and between staff members, in favour of the managers’ world-view. Table 12 (p. 180), summarises the dominant dynamic assumed to be operating in all of the dimensions of each of the four properties.

This chapter has delivered an analytical explanation of patterned human action and social processes that shows how and why managers are re-orienting their businesses meaningfully in difficult times. The re-orientation process is a key part of what constitutes their ‘managerial capability’ as they struggle to find ways to move forward. So far, managerial capability is described as a nexus of actions and social processes that has a character of both divergence and convergence that seem immanently balanced in the day to day flow of managerial life.

Instead of developing a theory of managerial capability involving a deep description of personal characteristics or a ‘holistic’ description of the individual, the theory relies on the Pragmatist philosophical notion of ‘trans-action’ which is the social site for meaning-sharing and the most relevant aspect of analysis. Such a perspective focuses on what people ‘do’ in relation to and with each other. This perspective reveals activities and processes in which managers are involved to achieve their emergent ‘knowing’ and therefore, learning. The incomplete but emerging picture rendered diagrammatically in Figure 12 (p. 183), reveals patterns or aspects of activity and sociality, each of which has a different character, but can be seen together as emergent accomplishment.

But while the divergent dynamics reflected in the properties show how managers can learn, the reported divergent processes do not fully explain how managers renew their knowing through learning so as to develop creative and innovative action beyond their existing customer-relationships. The next chapter will show how managers learn through continuous learning and experimentation, as well as about and from their competitors, their colleagues and peers and from other sources. These practices will demonstrate habits of inquiry which produce new pre-dispositions from which to act in new, divergent and creative ways.

Chapter 7: Inquiring

The world is...”*a buzzing, pulsating, formless mass of signals, out of which people try to make sense, into which they attempt to introduce order, and from which they construct against a background that remains undifferentiated.*” (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1998, p. 1).

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter constructed the second of three Sub-core categories titled “Re-orienting meaningfully”, revealing what the managers are actually doing, given the contextual experiences they are having. The analysis within the previous chapter described patterned human actions and social processes that show how managers are re-orienting themselves and their businesses meaningfully, in difficult times. To this point, managerial capability is described as a nexus of actions and social processes that have characteristics of both divergence (toward novelty) and convergence (toward equilibrium and stability). The balancing of these competing tensions is seemingly immanent (inherent) in the day-to-day flow of their lived experience.

In the analysis within the previous chapter the divergent dynamic of emergence and transformation was proposed to be particularly involved with the dimensions “Confronting the need for customer-relevance”, “Increasing the opportunity for service-based experiences” and “Reaching toward the individual customers ‘world’”. These dimensions of activity were described as ways in which managers appear to be ‘pursuing’ their customers, by seeking new meanings (knowing) and then incrementally *diverging away* from their previously held understandings. The divergent dynamic represents a means through which managers learn.

While ‘learning’ is demonstrated in the analysis of the previous chapter, the findings revealed in this chapter will show a stronger set of interdependent practices and social processes demonstrating how managers engage in inquiry in a seemingly unknowable world. The title of this chapter ‘Inquiring’ refers to the ‘acts of inquiring’, a key theme in the philosophy of the Pragmatists (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Pragmatic inquiry involves acting (or practice) and thinking (Elkjaer, 2004b). As put by Dewey, referring to the act of inquiring, “It is seeking, a quest, for something not at hand” (Dewey, 1980/1916). As demonstrated in the conceptual properties and dimensions which follow, the ‘acts of inquiring’ span a continuum of practices.

This third and final Sub-core category “Inquiring” has been developed through two descriptive properties and their dimensions grounded in the interview data. The property descriptions show how managers learn through habitual social and

experimental processes, which result in the continuous acquisition of more varied predispositions to act. The range of practices will be expanded further in the discussion section of this chapter.

The analytical separation of properties and dimensions describing this Sub-core category are for reporting purposes. Actions are viewed as intertwined and inseparable aspects of an ongoing flow of many activities and practices. The analytical separation acts as a convenient device affording the addressing of questions such as: ‘what’s going on here?’, ‘what does it mean?’, ‘why is it happening?’ (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), on a path to address the research question: *How can we understand managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management?*

In this chapter the properties and dimensions, constructed from the interview data, are first reported in detail. The discussion which follows synthesises important theoretical proposals including considerations of how the inquiring practices arise in relation to the emerging context; how the mostly divergent social practices of the Sub-core category “Inquiring” lead to emergent learning and how temporality and the flux of time is critical for understanding the temporal continuity of actions in the present. The chapter concludes by presenting a theoretical representation of the developing reconceptualisation of managerial capability, integrating all three Sub-core categories developed in this study. The integration of the three Sub-core categories creates the departure point for the next chapter which develops the Core category and Basic Social Process (BSP) (grounded theory) for this study.

INQUIRING: PROPERTIES AND DIMENSIONS

During data collection, the interview questions moved toward seeking an understanding of how managers engaged in thoughts and actions, mostly in response to the perceived implications of business environment changes. In this part of the interviews, the researcher framed questions concerning how managers think about and implement their management approach to achieve the outcomes they had earlier described were necessary. Managers were asked to reflect and talk about how they came to know what they know, both in the short and long term. Questions were asked such as “How do you inform yourself?” and, “What do you do to keep yourself and your team on top of things?”

Responses revealed a range of approaches and practices that analysis has focused into two theoretical properties: “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting”.

Each of these is described and dimensionalised, that is, described through data-derived dimensions (Strauss, 1987). Table 13 summarises the Sub-core category.

Table 13: The properties and dimensions of Sub-core category 3: “Inquiring”.

Properties (Categories)	Property Description	Dimensional Range
1. Learning continuously	Range of individual and social ongoing learning actions directed towards refreshing and renewing understanding and world view	Continually ↔ Participation in non-pharmacy interests (i) Continuously searching (ii) Learning from ‘smarter’ people (iii) Learning from judging pharmacy business awards (iv) Learning by joining peak-bodies and committees (v) Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests
2. Experimenting	Range of ongoing research actions directed toward improvement of organisational and business performance	Trial and error ↔ Making mistakes (i) Learning by trialling new initiatives and means (ii) Imitating (iii) Learning by making mistakes

PROPERTY 1: LEARNING CONTINUOUSLY

Continually searching ↔ Participation in non-pharmacy interests

Property description: Range of individual and social ongoing learning actions directed towards refreshing and renewing understanding and world view.

“Learning continuously”, refers specifically to the learning actions, habits and social learning practices of managers. All participants regularly grounded their interview responses within descriptions of their previous and ongoing learning experiences. This revealed the diverse ways that the managers proactively engaged in refreshing and renewing their knowledge and worldview in their day to day life, but more poignantly demonstrated a continuity of learning and a future focus.

(i) *Continuously searching*

In describing how they learned, the managers’ responses clearly revealed the dimension “Continuously searching” as a habitual approach or orientation over time, rather than ‘searching’ as a mere episodic behaviour. In relating how they experienced

new knowledge, managers regularly used words such as “continually” and “always” in narrative descriptions, or implied this meaning in their stories. In explaining how he informs himself, Peter said: *“I’ve always been somebody who, if I see a gap, I will have a go at it. It [this method] hasn’t always been successful, but unless you have a go at it, you’ll never know.”* Peter went on to relate a range of different specific examples from his managerial life to demonstrate the accuracy of his self-perception.

Adam was another who related a continuously searching orientation, but linked this aspect of his managerial practice to his overall sense of passion and interest in his professional work:

So I will continually seek to learn whatever I can in relation to pharmacy management through whatever sources become available. I will always be interested in doing things like workshops, courses, that are I guess, limited in their length of time [commitment], and reading, because it’s been a passion for me anyway. So, anything that relates to pharmacy in that sense. I think the day that I decide not to do that, or I lose an interest in it or the passion for it, is really when I should be passing the baton on, and saying look, it’s time for someone else to do it.

Gerald also spoke of a connection between his continuous inquisitiveness and a fundamental interest in his profession and work: *“You know I have this thirst...you know I still have an interest in my core training and...you know, things change and I still have an ongoing interest...”*

Managers spoke of many ways in which they engage their continuously searching natures with the general aim of learning. Frederick described how he routinely but opportunistically visited pharmacies or other businesses, without necessarily having a particular focus for his inquiry:

I will always... if I’m in a shopping centre, for whatever reason, I’ll always walk past the pharmacy. I’ll always go in, and rarely purchase anything, but I’ll always go in and see, well how long does it take for someone to serve me, um, look at some of their ranging...

Frederick explained that his continuous curiosity was not limited to his own region or nation:

...every time I’m overseas, I mean I’m probably, you know, going into every pharmacy I see, and just see what they’re doing or what signage they’re using, or how their cabinets are made or displayed or, you know, all of those things... you’re sort of always looking out for ideas... So I would be looking, you know, I

don't think it matters what retailer you go to, it's you know, could be a dress shop, if you see something that correlates with a path you're trying to carve then you can change it, implement it...

Peter expressed a similar continuous inquisitiveness while travelling:

It drives my wife crazy but I'll walk into pharmacies worldwide just to have a look and go well that's shit...because that's exactly what we've got and it's not working, or it's working but it's pretty parlous. Then I'll walk into some of the really innovative cutting-edge places and go wow, that's amazing... would that work in pharmacy?

Many of the stories relating to this dimension seemed to involve a continuous searching practice that was mostly non-specific in its focus and opportunistic in its implementation. But some managers engage in continuous searching practices that are both more focused and planned in their intended outcome, but not necessarily specific. Oliver who has interests in ten pharmacies spaced across the continent, spoke of how he has focused his imagination on the future through continuously searching for particular risks:

...part of the time has to be spent trying to imagine where is the industry is going to be, and what we need to get there. How do we keep in contact at the grass roots level with pharmacies, the staff, the teams, and the customers? Who would we need to be talking to, to give us the best information on where, what's happening in the market? And if that's considered critical, do we have it? So for example we have somebody full-time who...their role is to plot every pharmacy in Australia, every doctor's surgery et cetera in Australia, put circles around it, find out what are the risks.

The “risks” he is referring to are leads for new business opportunities on the one hand, and locations where his businesses may be under threat from a competitors, on the other.

Vincent, who owns and operates a national chain of discount-focused pharmacies also gave an example of a more methodical and planned continuous searching action. In explaining how “...we're always looking for better ways to do things...”, Vincent explained he has divided his national management concerns into seven separate product or service focused areas or departments. Each department is served by an individual department head, to whom is given “...a lot of autonomy...”. Each quarter Vincent expects his subordinates to suggest two to three initiatives which

will improve productivity. Vincent concludes: “*So that way we continually change and evolve with what’s happening in the environment.*”

The examples given by Oliver and Vincent show how continuous searching processes can sometimes be quite intentional and strategic. As shown by the earlier quotes in this dimension, the majority of managers demonstrated that their continuous searching practices were more innate, a habitual approach, an awareness, or a way-of-being. Their searching-way is seemingly more ‘lived’ every day, than cognitively deployed in response to an environmental stimulus. Oliver expressed it this way:

...I don't tend to ask questions. So it's not a verbal inquisitiveness, it's not about 'tell me about...'. Inquisitiveness. It's just a higher sense of awareness and I cannot, I choose not to turn it off. I can't explain it...just being there in a moment.

Adam appears to be saying much the same thing about his continuously inquisitive approach to life:

I think it's just continually searching for answers to things. For me I think it's just been more of a journey that I just continually aspire to something...[to] continually learn how to achieve that objective and just work on it. There's no limited source, it's a bit the opposite. I keep my antenna up for any opportunity to learn more about how I can do better.

But while this dimension shows how learning appears inherent and continuous, the subsequent dimensions discussed next emphasise the social and relational aspects of the managers’ learning processes. The next dimension demonstrates how managers engage in “Learning from ‘smarter’ people”.

(ii) *Learning from ‘smarter’ people*

The title for this dimension referring to ‘smarter’ people arose from a comment made by Adam when referring to how he acts as a conduit for new ideas and learning for his staff. The term ‘smarter’ was not necessarily meant literally but is interpreted more as a reference to sources of information and knowing that are new and relevant, made available through other people. To quote Adam: “*...at staff meetings I’ll be throwing around ideas there, that I may have gleaned from smarter people than me...*”. All participants referred to some form of person-to-person socialisation as being vital to their ongoing learning processes, and Adam’s quote also shows how such learning is actualised in his business.

How learning from others is experienced was expressed by the managers in several different ways. Vincent spoke of a broad range of social opportunities being responsible for his learning, ranging from communicating with those around him to belonging to communication networks that operate at a national/international scale:

So you learn from everyone around you. So people think that you don't learn from, you know, your people that report to you. I learn a lot from just the people that I work with every day, because they come up with interesting and novel things that you never think about... But I also have a business networking group that is made up of very successful business people that I network with. That gives me access to those networks across Australia, across the world.

Xavier related how speaking to those whom he regards as “*experts*” around him has shaped his learning journey. These are local contacts and colleagues who have had a major role in helping him to grow his business over the years. He said: “*...networking has been absolutely essential...I've identified the [right] people...and I've been lucky and fortunate enough to meet those people who were driven to be successful...*”. Such people then help in “*understand[ing] the areas that you need to look at...*”.

Others spoke of mentors, coaches, advisors and consultants. Table 14 demonstrates a range of quotes emphasising the importance of socialised learning in the managers' daily lives.

Table 14: “Learning from ‘smarter’ people”: Quotes from managers concerning how they learn from others.

Participants	Quotes : “Learning from ‘smarter’ people”
Edward	<i>...my accountants, I actually really appreciate what they can offer me... I actually have a really good relationship with them...I find that very, very useful.</i>
Ian	<i>[Referring to making regular visits to colleagues’ pharmacies] You’re learning from people...I go out for the day and look at the pharmacies... I take a mate occasionally... and we go and look and learn... [from] someone who does it. I talk to pharmacists...what do you do well or what’s your reputation?</i>
Jeremy	<i>I spent lots of time with people like [names marketing consultant]. [Consultant] knows me personally. I did a lot of homework about using the sort of stuff she talked about.</i>
Mark	<i>...I learn from [observing] people's successes...</i>
Robert	<i>[I] Speak to people who know more than I do. It's as simple as that. Speak to people who are successful in what they are doing and have got a proven track record, and are better at stuff than me.</i>
Sara	<i>I educate myself. I’m not finished with my education...Yeah. I learn from people.</i>
Tom	<i>[Referring to a key strategic transition for his group of 11 pharmacies] [I] got an action coach...and so I was getting two coaching lessons a month, fighting with the coach and this and that and the other to get to these goals that I wanted to get to. So that was a turning point...</i>
Ulrick	<i>...the biggest mentor that I’ve got to appreciate the most is actually [names mentor] and he still calls me every Sunday just to see what I’m like and what I’m doing and how things are. He’s been the biggest mentor. ... I like looking at people and adapting – just looking at them and just seeing how they could do things better.</i>

Vincent summed up the meaning of this dimension “Learning from ‘smarter’ people”, when he said: “...so it is just a function of meeting new, interesting people with different experiences that you can sort of tap into, that can help you, because what I find the easiest (is) to learn is from shared experiences.” It is this theme of learning from shared experiences which links this dimension with the remaining dimensions explaining the theoretical property “Learning continuously”. The next dimension reveals a particular type of shared learning experience for some of the managers: “Learning from judging pharmacy business awards”.

(iii) Learning from judging pharmacy business awards

In the previous chapter, one of the explanatory dimensions nested within the property “Engaging staff”, was the dimension “Creating unity”. One of the aspects demonstrating this unity-dimension was the participation by some managers in business award competitions, (p. 152-154). In that section, the quotes revealed how competition *participation* encouraged review and standardisation of procedures (thus unity), involving such things as customer service quality and culture, for all staff members including those deemed as “experienced”. Participation in business award competitions was shown to unify operational procedures and produce singleness of purpose for staff practice. These are socially mediated outcomes.

In addition to award competition participation, some managers were also engaged in being an award competition *judge*, when they were not competing in the same award. One of their key motivations for being involved this way was to learn from others through this process. As explained by Harold:

[As a judge]...I keep doing [...] the AJP Awards for product awards, advertising, marketing, and that sort of thing, and ASMI, the Australian Self Medication Industry Association, also have an award, so I do those two awards simply to a) meet people and b) look at the processes... for the purposes of just getting a different perspective on their view of the way community pharmacy operates, you know, and the way that their products help patients, how they do health promotion [...] It's also to get an understanding of some of the smartest ideas around and what procedures and systems they use for it. And that's been very good.

Peter has also had several years of judging experience from which he has had major learning experiences:

I was lucky enough to be the judge for [national] Pharmacy of the Year [award] for quite a few years and some of the stuff that I saw was wonderful. We can apply that learning experience and context in a real meaningful way. We're doing just amazing things.

Two of the 25 managers revealed participation and learning this way. The quotes demonstrate an important variation in the cluster of practices that constitute an understanding of how some managers continuously learn. Discovery of such variations is consistent with the sampling methodology which aims to seek out incidents that demonstrate variations within, and relationships between, the properties and dimensions

of a concept or category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Gaining socialised exposure to novel ideas is also evident in the next dimension “Learning by joining peak-bodies and committees”, which is discussed next.

(iv) Learning by joining peak-bodies and committees

A common practice among the managers was their committee or board participation within their professional peak-bodies and related businesses or associations. It is reasonable to interpret these committees and boards as collectives inside the managers’ broad professional ‘community of practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991). A community of practice describes a human collective constituted by social interaction in which common cultural, practical and historical understandings are shared (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2003). While each manager had a cluster of interrelated reasons for making such a commitment, the common theme among the motivations was that of education and being exposed to new information and perspectives.

Several of the managers have served long-term roles in national pharmacy peak bodies. Some of these managers hold responsible positions on committees, or boards of health related public and private enterprises. In every case, managers spoke of, or strongly implied, the advantages of this style of participation. They referred to such things as enjoying the enlightening opportunity to step outside their private pharmacy-world, the creation of new and meaningful perspectives, creating new networks and learning in a variety of ways. Table 15 (p. 198) demonstrates a range of quotes emphasising the importance of socialised learning in the context of committee and board memberships.

Table 15: “Learning by joining peak-bodies and committees”: Quotes from managers concerning how they learn from others.

Participants	Quotes : “Learning by joining peak-bodies and committees”
Frederick	<i>... because when I first moved to [regional town], you do feel very isolated, you’re usually the only professional in a store [...] the only pharmacy I knew was those few stores of mine, plus the group that I work with. And that’s one of the reasons I became more involved in (a national professional peak body), and probably went from one extreme to the other, where...[Laughs] and I think it’s important you’ve got to get out.</i>
Harold	<i>...getting on to the committee of [a national professional peak body] [...] was all about getting out of the pharmacies, you know, trying to see what the leaders of our industry knew and [were] trying to learn, you know, follow in those footpaths, trying to broaden your understanding and make networks and things like that. So I did that for eight years, and was...I think that was interesting. It was very educational.</i>
Jeremy	<i>[In talking about learning in his senior role in a national professional peak body] ...I spent a lot of time in pharmacy circles, I go to a lot of peoples’ pharmacies, I’ve seen crappy places in the States [USA], and I’ve seen some okay places in the States. I’ve been a lot of places in Europe and France, Europe and Britain. I think I’m just a good observer.</i>
Laetitia	<i>...so I went to work for [state professional peak body] as a manager for professional development in [Australian state], and that was a great opportunity. It allowed me to advance my management skills. I did a diploma of management while I was there, as well.</i>
Tom	<i>... I’m on the [major regional city] Hospital Health Board [...] It’s opened me up to public health. Wow, what a juggernaut and interesting animal that is [...] I’m also involved in [a regional state] Hospital Foundation as well. So those sorts of things have led me to professors at university, other doctors, auditors, all different types of people. And it’s got me out of this [referring to his local business] – as I’m in my company, I’ve actually grown with the company.</i>

The experiences related in Table 15 show examples of how managers are exposed to social experiences that open their minds to new ways of viewing the world. The next and final dimension describing this property “Learning continuously” shows that for some managers, learning arises from participating in activities seemingly unrelated to their professional-pharmacy lives. This dimension titled “Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests” refers to learning that is relevant to these non-

pharmacy activities, and transferrable to their pharmacy enterprises, and is discussed next.

(v) *Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests*

This dimension “Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests” adds variation to the property (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), “Learning continuously”. Considerable effort has been made in analysis so far to demonstrate how the participants are loyal to the caring-ethos of their profession, for instance, by “Acting to satisfy personal meaning”, (p. 159). It is also clear that many of the managers are not entirely captured by their professional pharmacist-identity. This is especially so in relation to learning, evidenced by diverse involvements that some managers have in activities that are either on the fringe of the pharmacy ‘community of practice’, or completely outside that community.

Managers explained their involvement in a range of activities such as sitting on institutional boards connected with general (medical) practice and high-schools. They also owned and participated in other businesses within sectors such as consulting, retail, computing and IT, and real estate. The themes in their narratives included learning related outcomes, derived from social interaction, such as gaining fresh perspectives of Australian healthcare, insights into understanding customers’ needs, and gaining increased understanding of business governance. Table 16 (p. 200) demonstrates quotes emphasising the importance of socialised learning in the context of participation in diverse interests.

Table 16: “Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests”: Quotes from managers concerning how they learn from others.

Participants	Quotes : “Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests”
Frederick	<i>...I think that having an idea of what the government’s agenda is, and things outside, I mean like looking outside the box [...] I was on the board of the [Region] board of general practice, the division of general practice [...] and just doing things like that outside of the pharmacy arena, the relationships that you build, and the insight that you glean um, the insight that I have now for GP’s is completely different to what I originally thought.</i>
Harold	<i>...one of my other businesses we do services to private health insurance. This is a disease management company that looks after private health insurance companies and [from this] I see recruitment services is what the pharmacy can deliver [in the future]. So, for osteoarthritis, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and general obesity, you know, different health funds will pay for different disease management programs for those patients. And so we can identify those patients, recruit them into the service, and (maybe) get a...recruitment [fee] or payment [...] I also sit on a board of a school, and that’s good too, because you get a completely different industry [...] and that’s very helpful because you meet guys who are sort of specialists in construction...work for the multinational construction companies and things like this, and PWC [Price Waterhouse Coopers consulting firm] level finance accounting, running the books, the accounting books for these firms, for the school, you know, and it’s a large school, so we’re talking a 20 million dollar business...[and] understanding the difference between the leadership the board provides versus the management infrastructure...</i>
Ian	<i>We’ve got real skills in franchising so we’ve started [to] go out on a tangent and use these franchising principles and the structures we’ve got here in doing other things outside pharmacy. That’s starting to progress. Now that we’ve built an internet site we can see we don’t need to be restricted to pharmacy, to the selling product on this internet site. We’re diverging out, we’ve got all that set up and that’s starting to work.</i>
Oliver	<i>[Oliver is building a business management administration IT network that had its origins in his pharmacy businesses, but has now expanded to include non-pharmacy businesses.] I currently now have about 10 to 12 frontline partners. There’s now currently 52, 53 stores [...] I think it’s 54 stores at the moment. And 11 of them are non-pharmacies.</i>
Quintin	<i>I follow the parallels between running a bookshop and running a pharmacy. A lot of parallels. You must know your product, you must know your customer...you know, it became rapidly apparent to me that the demographic here in [Region] is tertiary educated, they have money, I don’t discount like a lot of the others and it’s just gone from strength to strength [...] Yeah, a lot like pharmacy, it just... you focus on the customer, and everything else follows.</i>

A further important aspect revealed in the above quotations is evidence of anticipation, a reaching forward toward the unknown. Phrases such as “*looking outside the box...*” (Frederick), “*I see recruitment services is what the pharmacy can deliver...*” (Harold), “*We’re diverging out...*” (Ian), are examples of future-focus enmeshed in their actions.

The five explanatory dimensions of this property “Learning continuously”, demonstrate a range of continually unfolding social learning processes. Mostly, it is evident that managers do not know in advance what specific learning will be achieved within their participatory journeys. The anticipation they imply through their involvement seems to have a character of ‘let’s see where this will take us’, that is, an emergent quality in finding one’s way. The actions described within this dimension are more *purposive*, than *purposeful*.

Learning in the opportunistic ways described within the five dimensions, occurs because ‘space’ or ‘slack’ is available in the managers’ life-worlds that allows for some mixture of randomness, experimentation and coincidence to occur. As suggested by Clegg et al. (2005, p. 157) “Such a space is one where no one calculates every single step but where one can freely choose between different ways of moving in and of exploring the space; a way of travelling without a narrowly predetermined route or destination.”

The property “Learning continually” appears to be a way-of-being that is characterised by un- or low-intentionality in terms of specific learning outcomes. The next property titled “Experimenting” demonstrates a range of actions which can be interpreted as inquiring actions directed toward improvement of more specific personal and business performance. As will become evident, actions described within the property “Experimenting” are more infused with intent. Intentions include trialling specific new initiatives and means, imitating things and processes managers have seen, and reflecting upon the lessons that mistake-making delivers. The property “Experimenting” is discussed next, once again elucidated through its dimensions, grounded in the data.

PROPERTY 2: EXPERIMENTING

Trial and error ↔ Making mistakes

Property description: Range of ongoing research actions directed toward improvement of organisational and business performance.

All participants were engaged in experimentation or trial and error methods of some type to try to improve performance of new business and efficiency approaches, and customer service methods. The dimensions constituting the property “Experimenting” show the dynamic means that the managers use to connect abstract ideas with the concrete outcomes. “Experimenting” includes participant descriptions of trialling new initiatives and means, imitating and improvising, and learning from mistakes, all of which are regarded as learning types (Miner et al., 2001).

(i) Learning by trialling new initiatives and means

Managers had different styles and scales of trialling processes. Processes ranged from being quite contained, limited and discrete, such as trialling new but particular marketing methods. Other processes described whole-pharmacies being treated as trial-stores that are situated in a range of demographic regions to test new marketing and service ideas, at a national scale, over time.

The purpose of trials also differed. The purpose of some was to make sure that a new process actually functioned properly and worked according to an expectation-range prior to it being expanded. Harold explained a typical limited trialling process:

...you've got to test it before you do. So, for my arthritis program for example, we picked our top ten arthritis patients and sent them a letter, to see what sort of response we would get, and to test the service before we went and advertised it to two or three hundred people.

Other trials were conducted in a spirit of ‘all-or-nothing’, where managers leapt into a new process seemingly with a single roll-of-the-dice, thus accepting a higher risk in the event of failure. A quote showing this approach was given by Jeremy:

I was the third pharmacy in [State capital city] to do forward dispensing [see Glossary]. ...come [the] Monday [prior], it might not have been completely finished but it was all in place. The computers [terminals] were out at the front, because they're all [the processors] sitting at the back ready to go. The tables and everything were ready to be installed but we were going to use it. There was no retreating to the back. We were in this full bore [...] From day one it worked.

Yet another purpose was described in the form of embracing a more generalised exploratory process, a philosophy, within a larger scale of concern. Oliver described how a philosophy or spirit of experimentation has been a part of his business life from the beginning. Speaking about how his business interests have grown to include multiple pharmacies over 25 years with many partners, he described how he developed

what might be called an exploratory organisational culture to encourage an outcome of independent thinking:

In the very, very early days, part of my philosophy was not to tell the managers what to do, but give them a working environment to go and explore for themselves. Like a playpen. And so a lot of the partners that I've currently got now have been with me since 1992 [...] they were given some guidelines but mainly I was encouraging them to experiment, to try different things, see what works, see what didn't. And that's really held us in good stead because that's made them independent thinkers.

Table 17 (p. 204) demonstrates further quotes from managers illustrating how trialling new initiatives and means were expressed.

Table 17: “Learning by trialling new initiatives and means”: Quotes from managers concerning how they learn through trialling new initiatives.

Participants	Quotes : “Learning by trialling new initiatives and means”	The Scale and Purpose of the ‘trial’
Adam	[Re: trialling new pharmacist-roles centred on them only consulting and counselling at the medicines counter] <i>...I suggested with the current supply of good pharmacists available we should consider [this] on a contractual basis, give it 3 or 6 months [...] this is an experiment that’s most likely going to unfold over the next few months...</i>	Scale: Discrete process in one pharmacy; Purpose: Testing a process prior to expansion
Karen	[Re: trialling new professional services] <i>...the sleep study thing is a new thing which we put in [...] and that hasn't gone well, but I'm now thinking it's probably our fault, one in timing [and] that we were taxed, staff-wise here. We could have done better probably [by] liaising more with doctors to let them know we're doing it and they could trigger it themselves and then marketing differently to our customers and advertising it.</i>	Scale: Discrete process in one pharmacy; Purpose: Testing a process prior to expansion
Mark	[Re: trialling new IT initiatives] <i>I spend all my time just testing, you know, database issues, new IT initiatives that we're rolling out in the group. So for example, we've designed our own scripts-online systems, which is a web portal which has an app for various Smartphone's. We've designed, redone the website recently to ensure that we're getting a lot of hits in the search engines and getting raised there.</i>	Scale: Pan-organisation systems Purpose: Testing a process prior to expansion
Robert	[Re: successful trial of point-of-sale database implementation in a few stores that led to expansion] <i>...the critical thing that we can do now is, we've got the [product-sales] data so that you can put something [a product or range] in, give it a run, measure it. Not successful? Turf it out. Human beings tend to not want to admit 'failure', because that's the way we see trying something and not being successful. And, gee-whiz...If I could teach anybody that, it would be...just try stuff, give it a go, do your best to make it work. Do your best to think it through and figure it out and apply your intelligence, but make sure there's that line that says; well, if we fall over that line we give it away. We've got to stop.</i>	Scale: Pan-organisation system Purpose: Testing a data-base process prior to expansion, which has led to the ability to trial other things (e.g. new products and ranges)

Participants	Quotes : “Learning by trialling new initiatives and means”	The Scale and Purpose of the ‘trial’
Vincent	[Re: pan-organisational approach to trialling and experimentation]. <i>In terms of new things [...] We have six trial stores which are all my stores, across different demographic and geographical locations. [...] We will measure it. If it works, we will roll it out across the network. So things like fragrance cabinets. So we’ve just recently undergone a revamp of our fragrance cabinets. So I’m testing that across my stores at the moment. We’ll measure the actual increase versus the benchmark of stores that are that age. Then we can provide that evidence, saying this is the uplift that you will get and then we will roll it out across the network.</i>	Scale: Discrete product categories but across multiple trial-stores. Purpose: Testing a product category prior to national expansion.

The trialling practices illustrated in Table 17 imply an active rather than passive style of responsiveness to a non-benign environment (Daft & Weick, 1984). Again, learning arises as an effect of ‘the doing’. Managers appear to engender a tolerance for ambiguity through their practice of trialling new initiatives and means (Chia & Holt, 2006). Their consistent action to flexibly feel and find their way, to develop new understandings and perspectives, stands in contrast to following a deliberate strategic destiny, guided by a formalised and fixed ‘vision and mission’ which follow set steps to achieve such destiny (Chia & Holt, 2006). The process of trialling new initiatives and means innately contains anticipation of an outcome. The process is prospective in nature.

In addition to trialling new initiatives and means, some managers also emphasised that imitating the seemingly good ideas of others was a powerful and available stimulus for new action. “Imitating” is the title of the next dimension within the property “Experimenting”.

(ii) Imitating

People are known to be deeply susceptible to imitating others, evidenced most clearly in the way that children learn. Copying good ideas and fitting them to suit a different context or circumstance can be a highly efficient pathway to innovation (Westney, 2014). Creativity and learning in producing new processes and events are a part of the imitation process since virtually no imitated process can spread without change (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996).

Charles explained that observations undertaken in “*daily life*” were often a rich source of good ideas which led to relevant learning and innovations. When asked how he informed himself over time, Charles said, “*I think just daily life [...] it’s more from everyday life and just experiences in other sectors that are a lot more competitive than pharmacies*”. When asked to expand, he spoke of a imitating a simple but effective experience he had which led to effective learning and innovation. Charles reports his version of a dialogue he had with a computer salesman:

Yeah, so I bought a laptop and the gentleman [computer salesman] rang me a day or two later and said, ‘how’s it going?’ [Charles says] ‘yeah, good!’ [The salesman asks] ‘how are you finding it?’ [Charles responds] ‘...not too bad, but actually while I’ve got you, why does it do this?’ [The salesman says] ‘oh, if you press that button and do this it will fix it.’ [Charles] I thought that’s fantastic. I probably wouldn’t have been motivated to ring him otherwise, but he rang me, and that’s where I got the idea I should be ringing customers when they start a new medication to see how it’s going... for chronic therapy [...] I was so happy with that service or that level of engagement. In many ways (there) is a way you can transcribe that into your own business. So that’s probably the main source to be honest.

Vincent related several specific examples of learning, innovating and implementing ideas sourced through observing and imitating businesses in other industries. In describing how he goes about this, he said:

...each year, we’ll take our teams out in different groups and we’ll visit the top retailers. Top Shop, Zara, Myer, David Jones, Woolworths, Coles, Bunnings. We went to everything and each of them [team members] are tasked with taking at least two or three different things from the stores that we could implement quickly into our stores.

Robert also elaborated his routine of taking key staff to visit other businesses with the intent to observe and reflect upon what might be useful to imitate:

[I am] trying to get people to think about what good retailers are doing, because we are retailers. It’s a bit of an uncomfortable marriage sometimes between health care provider and retailer, but that’s what we do. I get them (team members) to think beyond the four walls, encourage them to go and have a look at other pharmacies. Go and have a look at what Chemist Warehouse are doing. Don’t whinge and complain to me about that the fact that they are cheap, go and have a look at what they are doing.

The link between imitating and learning has been explored by Sahlin-Andersson (1996) who suggested that imitating is more than mere copying. This is because when people imitate they are in fact translating and rationalising. She suggested that local issues or problems are “constructed through comparing the local situation with that of the other organization” (p. 70).

Sahlin-Andersson referred to the process of translation to the local situation as a type of “editing” which results in “new meanings” which are “ascribed to activities and experiences” (p. 70). Imitating is thus a learning process where “imitation of successes may result in transformed organizational identities” (p. 71). Imitating is therefore a process where the assumed value of what is imitated arises from an assumption of how it has worked in the past in a different context to that known by the imitator. The ‘edited’ imitation is foreseen by the imitator, and is anticipated or imagined into the future, embedded in the context known to the imitator. Imitating is thus prospective in its orientation.

While the actions of the first two dimensions describing this property “Experimenting”, are clearly *prospective* in nature, the next and final dimension “Learning by making mistakes” delivers learning from realisations about the past, and is thus *retrospective* in nature.

(iii) *Learning by making mistakes*

While only a few of the managers spoke clearly about learning from making mistakes, those that did counted this type of learning as among the most potent and long lasting learning experiences. Identifying learning from mistake-making as one of the dimensions in the property “Experimenting” provides important variation within both the property “Experimenting” and then within the Sub-core category “Inquiring”. It is likely that all managers learn from making mistakes, given that mistake-making is apparently ubiquitous within the human condition (Dawes, 2007).

Noel touched on what he perceived to be the obvious learning-choice before all people in business, “...*you either stay in your cave and see the world overtaking you or you sort of get in there and make a few errors and you learn as you go along.*” When the researcher asked him to expand on “*learn[ing] as you go along*”, Noel laughingly said, “...*I mean shit, my life is littered with [mistakes], what did I say [earlier]?... Edison you know, ‘I failed my way to success’. Well [laughing], I think that could apply to me.*” Noel elaborated a few examples of learning experiences that arose from

mistakes that he had made, each resulting in a sizable financial loss. But in each example the focus centred on lessons learned, rather than money lost.

Sara also cited making mistakes as a key source of learning. When asked how she gets to know things, she said, *“Yep. I make heaps of mistakes. I learn from errors. I really believe that. I educate myself. I’m not finished with my education.”* Sara continued by explaining that making mistakes not only delivered lessons from the experience of the mistake, but also that she had become highly motivated to learn more generally, through making mistakes.

Both Mark and Quintin related examples of what they regarded as serious mistakes that resulted in a contested partnership dissolution and the precipitous sale of pharmacies, respectively. Both told their stories in the light of lessons-learned. Mark referred to *“learning experiences”* when he said, *“I’ve had learning experiences along the way. One [was] a partner situation [that] didn’t quite work out. That’s probably the one that comes to mind still fresh. So I learned from that, and won’t be making that mistake again.”*

Xavier who has been in business for over 30 years spoke more generally about the paradox of positive motivation and learning arising through a sense of failure from making mistakes, when he said:

There will be a lot of times it’s not going to work the way you want. That doesn’t or shouldn’t stop you. There used to be a proverb saying that without failures, you wouldn’t be successful. That’s open knowledge in the market. Everybody knows about it but are they prepared to do it? Are they prepared to face the failure? I’ve had a lot of failures in my life. I still have failures in my life, but that’s what keeps me going [...] All we have learned about management is by making mistakes and learning. We didn’t go to any schools of psychology or management. So it is all with learning at work, and that’s what we have done, and that’s what I have done. I’ve never been to a management school and I still don’t profess to be a fantastic manager, but I’ve understood enough to know where the flags are, [the] red flags are, and where are the issues.

In bringing these quotes together within the dimension “Learning through making mistakes”, it was important for the researcher to reflect on the nature of ‘mistake’, and therefore explore how learning arises from the reality of mistake-making. Hons (1995), in her examination of “going wrong” (Hons, 1995, p. 6), points out that the common attribute of ‘mistake’ and ‘error’ is ignorance. Ignorance can be either avoidable or unavoidable. When ignorance is unavoidable, that is, when an agent

realises they have done something wrong and could *not* have known better, then Hon calls this ‘error’. But she associates ‘mistake’ with avoidable ignorance, that is, where an agent realises they have done something wrong but *should* have known better. Although the quotes do not clearly reveal this distinction, there is an implication in all of them that the manager meant they should have known better. Perhaps ‘mistakes’ hold more gravitas than ‘errors’ for the perpetrator because ‘mistakes’ hold a greater consequence of responsibility for an individual. It could be for this reason that mistakes and their progeny of lessons are so long and passionately remembered.

In summary, within this Sub-core category “Inquiring” the properties and their dimensions describe clusters of actions or practices that show how managers learn through habitual social and experimental processes. These processes result in the continuous acquisition of more varied predispositions to act in the future. Nearly all of the dimensional descriptions in both properties show ways in which managers are living lives forward, but in the present. How these practices integrate to deliver continuous meaningful learning within an uncertain, changing and complex environment is elaborated in the discussion that follows.

DISCUSSION – SUB-CORE CATEGORY 3: INQUIRING

In this chapter the Sub-core category “Inquiring” has been developed through two explanatory properties and their dimensions, grounded in the interview data. The title of this chapter “Inquiring” refers to the ‘act of inquiring’, a key theme in the philosophy of the Pragmatists (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). As explained by Elkjaer and Simpson (2011, p. 61-62), it was Dewey who framed the notion of inquiry “as a continuously unfolding social process in which meanings are constructed as people engage with each other”. The social learning perspective of Pragmatism illuminates how learning occurs through ongoing experience and inquiry through life, and how learning is understood as a process of socialisation which develops identities as persons adapt and change (Brandt & Elkjaer, 2011).

As shown, inquiring practices are seeking-processes which can be both *purposive* and *purposeful*. Practices which are *purposive*, *serve a purpose* of “Learning continually” (Property 1), as managers attempt to negotiate order between their own social world understanding, and that of others whom they meet. Learning occurs as new understandings arise, without necessarily having specific learning aims in mind. *Purposeful* practices are those where managers *have a purpose* in their seeking, such as those revealed in the dimensions “Learning by trialling” and “Imitating” (Property 2).

The consequence of all inquiring practices delivers continuous learning mostly through social processes, resulting in actionable knowledge (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011) or knowing.

The analytical perspective is that managers are not acting to learn through discrete sets of conveniently classified actions. Instead they are acting out a ceaseless flow of activities happening without pre-conceived sequence. The actions are intertwined and inseparable as ongoing sociality. However, theoretical separation of concepts is useful as a device to illuminate something of ‘what’s going on here’?

WHAT’S GOING ON HERE?

The focus of analysis is the linkage between knowledge and action, or expressed dynamically, between knowing and acting. From this perspective, knowing (meaning) and learning are considered social and collective actions where knowing and learning cannot be separated (Brandi & Elkjaer, 2011). It is through continuous knowing and learning that the individual and the collective are said to be “continuously in the making, in effect, a becoming” (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Indeed, the concepts of ‘knowing’, ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ all arise through participation within social processes. To quote Brandi and Elkjaer (2011 p. 31), “To be and become or emerge as a knowledgeable person demands participation in social processes, which also involves relating to other beings and to (and with) the cultural and historically produced artefacts of the social worlds”.

A key initiator of inquiry is doubt, experienced as emotion, and arising through experience and social relations. Doubt signals some sort of breakdown or disruption to taken-for-granted action or thinking (Elkjaer, 2004b; Talisse, 2007). To more deeply examine how learning emerges continuously in this study, it is necessary to:

- examine how the inquiring practices arise in relation to the emerging context;
- consider how the mostly divergent social practices of the Sub-core category “Inquiring” lead to emergent learning and
- consider how temporality and the flux of time is critical for understanding the temporal continuity of actions in the present.

These issues are discussed next.

“Inquiring”: Learning and the experiencing of context

To understand the Pragmatist view of learning, and how learning arises through experience of unfolding context, it is helpful to consider the theories of sociologist Anselm Strauss. Strauss is one of the progenitors of the grounded theory family of methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and followed the Pragmatist traditions of Dewey and Mead (Atkinson, 1997). Strauss (1993) understood that people exist in social worlds, or social arenas. Clarke (1991, p. 131) in her essay on Strauss’s view of social worlds defines social worlds as “...groups with shared commitments to certain activities, sharing resources of many kinds to achieve their goals, and building shared ideologies about how to go about their business”. Within and between trans-actional social arenas, processes of tension, conflict, rupture and negotiation of world-view arise, either unconsciously or consciously (Brandi, 2010; Elkjaer & Huysman, 2008). It is when one social world meets another that tensions and conflicts may be felt.

In this study, managers are themselves experiencing their own social worlds, framed by their organisations, and in trans-actional engagement with the worlds of their staff and their customers (as described in Chapter 6). As put by Brandi and Elkjaer (2011, p. 34): “In a social worlds understanding, organizations are arenas of coordinated collective actions in which social worlds emerge as a result of commitment to organizational activities”.

“Inquiring” in the Pragmatist sense is initiated by sensed disruptions to the existing taken-for-granted social world-view. Sensed disruption can take the form of feelings of unease, uncertainty, procedural disturbance, unsettling emotion, innate curiosity or even surprise. The feeling that something is not-as-usual can be intuitive and does not necessarily require the conscious involvement of “intellectual wit” (Elkjaer, 2004b, p. 425) and may not be primarily cognitive. Learning can occur unconsciously and adaptively within trans-actions of social worlds through ongoing sensitivities of what others are doing and saying (Barnes, 2001; Chia & Holt, 2006). For learning to become clearly visible, the inquiring processes must eventually find their way into conscious cognition where human reason, intellectual capacity and verbal thinking can take place (Elkjaer, 2004b).

In this study, the disruptions to the social worlds of managers have been conceptually demonstrated through the grounded properties and dimension of Sub-core category 1, “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity” (Chapter 5). Managers expressed a range of experiences concerning general unknowingness and uncertainty,

reducing business profitability, altered perceptions of their customer bases and changes with employee attitudes to work. The stated perceptions are evidence of the conscious cognition of the experienced context. The social worlds of managers are thus partly constituted by their experience of context.

Managers are also in trans-actional engagement from time to time with the social worlds of others, exemplified within the dimensions described in this chapter as they continually search, meet smarter people, join peak-body committees et cetera. When these social worlds meet, contradictions, tensions and disruptions arise and become the initiators of (emotional) discomforts or inklings that may act as pathways to eventual querying of current views and practices (Brandt & Elkjaer, 2011).

When newness or novelty is met through a new experience, a tension arises between the current state of knowing and the experience which invites a new way of knowing. When current knowing and new knowing tug and pull at each other, understanding is deepened or changed, and learning is the effect (Wenger, 2003). Learning thus becomes *an effect* of relational trans-action between and among individuals who carry their contextual understandings, and the social-learning world through which managers participate (Wenger, 2003).

The properties and dimensions demonstrated in this chapter titled “Inquiring” demonstrate a range of both generalised and specific actions and practices that are responses to the experience of disruptions. Figure 13 proposes a representation of the linkage between Sub-core category 1 (Experiencing context) and Sub-core category 3 (Inquiring). The design of Figure 13 has been kept consistent with those representations which have been offered earlier. Again, the recursive design in the figure, marked with the notation “[A]”, represents dynamism and movement. The open end of the circle on the right hand side represents openness to the future and the recursive two-way arrows represent continuous anticipation of what is to come. The wedge of colour extending to the far right of the figure represents the prospective nature of the actions and practices that constitute the Sub-core category “Inquiring”. This future-focus of present actions is addressed later in this discussion.

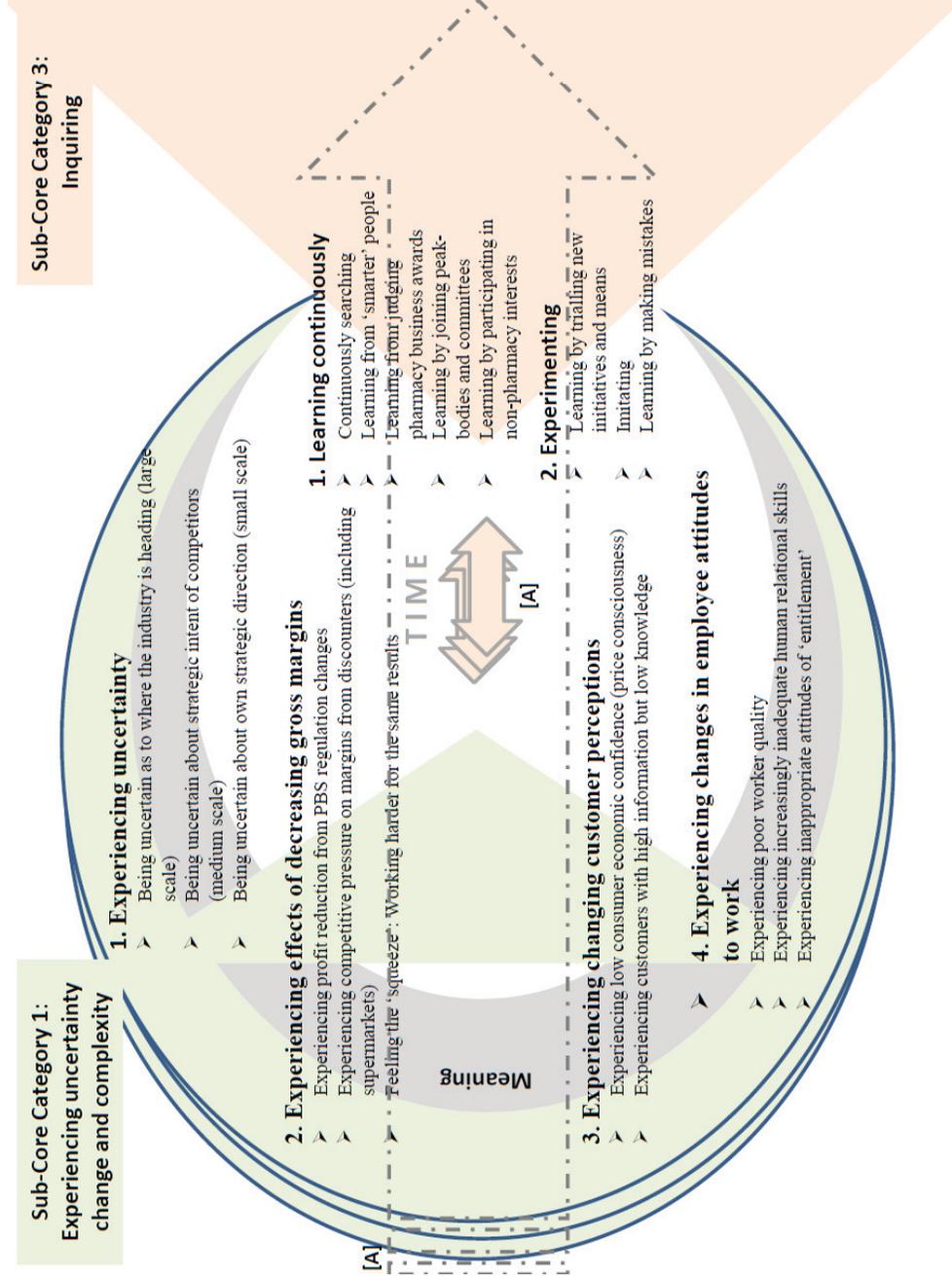


Figure 13: Representation of the linkage between Sub-core category 1: “Experiencing uncertainty change and complexity” and Sub-core category 3: “Inquiring”.

The relationships between the properties and dimensions of each Sub-core category in Figure 13 can be considered as a backward and forward dynamic delivering emergence through time. Learning becomes an effect arising from what is experienced. As expressed by Dewey:

To 'learn from experience' is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence. Under such conditions, doing becomes a trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like; the undergoing becomes instruction—discovery of the connection of things. Two conclusions important for education follow. (1) Experience is primarily an active-passive affair; it is not primarily cognitive. But (2) the *measure of the value* of an experience lies in the perception of relationships or continuities to which it leads up. It includes cognition in the degree in which it is cumulative or amounts to something, or has meaning (Dewey, 1980/1916, p. 140, italics original).

The “value” referred to here by Dewey “lies in the perceptions of relationships or continuities” or particular emergent meanings (knowing) that shape the managers’ emergent understandings of the world. This emphasises how the creation of meaning is always relative to the situation or context (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

While “inquiring” develops open-endedness of creative, innovative and experimental reasoning processes (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011), reasoning is also constrained by the necessity of negotiating emergent ‘intersubjective’ meanings (Cook & Yanow, 1993). Each manager must make the “backward and forward connection”, between their own experience of context (Sub-core category 1), and the mostly social experiences described in the dimensions of “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting” (Sub-core category 3), discussed in this chapter.

Such meanings (knowing) develop and change within a continually emerging context, through time. As asserted above by Dewey’s writings, learning is the “discovery of the connection of things”, and through these emergent constructed connections, managers find their way. However, as implied earlier, construction of such “connection” is not an individual task or necessarily defined as a mental-cognitive process resulting from human interaction. Rather, “connection of things” is better understood as a social-relational process where the connection of things is established through co-construction, through the social dynamic of ‘trans-action’.

“Inquiring” as transaction: Divergent and convergent dynamics of emergence

In the previous chapter, the Pragmatist notion of ‘trans-action’ was developed showing how social relations can be understood as ‘trans-action across’ individuals, rather than ‘interaction between’ individuals. This perspective, where the individual is seen as one aspect of a relationally integrated and trans-actional whole, raises the analytical focus to the social level. (See Chapter 6, p. 172-187 and associated figures). The value of such a perspective is in its explanatory power, where trans-action becomes the site for meaning sharing and consequent development of new meaning structures (that is, knowing). The trans-actional perspective therefore illuminates the means through which new actions can keep changing, that is, how creative action occurs. Further, trans-actions were shown to have either a divergent (toward novelty and new meaning), or convergent (toward equilibrium and unity of meaning) character in their practise. (See Table13, p. 190).

Using the same framework for analysis as used in Chapter 6, the dimensions which constitute the two properties of “Inquiring” can be understood as trans-actional social processes that are mostly divergent in character. Table 18 (p. 216) shows how the properties and dimensions of “Inquiring” are constituted by mostly divergent, but also convergent dynamic actions, from the managers’ perspectives.

Table 18: The dimensions of each property constituting Sub-core category 3 “Inquiring” are identified as being either primarily dynamically *divergent* (toward creativity and novelty) or dynamically *convergent* (toward equilibrium and stability), from the managers’ perspectives.

Property	Dimension	Primarily Divergent	Primarily Convergent
1. Learning continually	(i) Continuously searching	✓	
	(ii) Learning from ‘smarter’ people	✓	
	(iii) Learning from judging pharmacy business awards	✓	
	(iv) Learning by joining peak-bodies and committees	✓	
	(v) Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests	✓	
2. Experimenting	(i) Learning by trialling new initiatives and means	✓	
	(ii) Imitating	✓	
	(iii) Learning by making mistakes		✓

The characterisations of divergence and convergence in Table 18 are not meant to imply an absolute nature of action. Ongoing participative action will always involve blends of divergent and convergent outcomes. The characterisations seek to highlight the interpreted dominant dynamic of each dimension. The open-ended “Continuously searching” approaches (Property 1, Dimension 1) are important given that they demonstrate the Pragmatist ideal that current accepted meanings are continuously challenged by a searching approach in the flow of life. This then reveals meaning-sharing and meaning-making as a continuous process over time, and not limited to discrete episodic moments of surprise and possible learning.

Also, it is reasonable to interpret the “Continuously searching” approach as ‘habit’. The Pragmatists’ concept of ‘habit’ is expanded in Appendix 2, and is described as “acquired predispositions to ways or modes of response (...)” (Dewey, 1988/1922, p.

32). Discovery of new ways or modes of responding through the habit of continually searching, albeit incrementally, is both divergent and prospective in character.

Similarly, the social process of “Learning from ‘smarter’ people” (Property 1, Dimension 2), implies an open-ended attitude by the managers as they tap into “interesting people with different experiences” (Vincent). The stories related by managers when describing their experiences in learning from others demonstrated a purposive learning approach where the sources can range from several people, to a specific person, mentor or expert. The approach to learn from others exhibits a divergent character of trans-action and a prospective orientation toward novel outcomes.

The managers who act as judges for pharmacy business awards, (Property 1, Dimension 3), gain the divergent experience of seeing the novel and innovative ideas of others when they act as judges. Participating (but not judging) in business award competitions as a contestant was discussed as primarily convergent in nature, (Chapter 6, p. 152-154). Judging is primarily divergent in character and prospective in orientation as a learning experience. Both practices are socialised learning experiences.

Taking the Pragmatist perspective, participation by managers as committee members (Property 1, Dimension 4), can be viewed as a somewhat convergent practice (toward stability), by virtue of participation being *within* the managers’ community of practice. But as evidenced in the data, their social and learning experiences in this environment provide opportunity for divergence (toward novelty) and transformation (Simpson, 2009). This illustrates that this type managerial practice is a dynamic and emergent process that both sustains current understandings while at the same time encourages possibilities for creative action (Simpson, 2009), and new understanding.

Participation in a variety of non-pharmacy interests (Property 1, Dimension 5), shows how learning occurs across social arenas. It is within this space between different organisations and where the managers’ knowing meets the unknown, that learning takes place (Clegg, Kornberger, & Rhodes, 2005). Put another way, Araujo (1998, p. 317) sees knowing and learning as “collective accomplishments residing in heterogeneous networks of relationships between the social and material world, which do not respect formal organizational boundaries.” The practices involved in participating in non-pharmacy interests afford yet another opportunity for divergence, as shown in the quotations. The flavour of anticipation and prospect - a reaching forward toward the unknown, was also discussed as evident in data.

The two dimensions “Trialling new initiatives and means” and “Imitating”, described as constituting the second property “Experimenting” are also clearly divergent

in their intent and prospective in their orientation. The trialling processes described here are distinctly future-focused. Trialling new initiatives and means imply that outcomes are not guaranteed, but particular outcomes are expected, or at least hoped-for. Orientation is toward that hope, nested in ongoing anticipation. As the future unfolds and becomes the present, the emerging consequences of the trial serve to guide the next action. New anticipations emerge.

Similarly, the process of imitating is infused with the intention of succeeding with something new to the context at hand, and is therefore oriented toward novelty. Imitating is also prospective, and holds a future-focus. When imitating is engaged, the imitator needs to reformulate what is imitated by using the imitator's experiences from the past, to produce an edited version to fit the new local situation into the future (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996). It is in this reformulation that present circumstances meet future visions of how the edited imitation will work. Re-editing may continue through time. Results from imitating permit constant comparison between previous experience (the past), present outcomes arising from imitating, and continuing hopes and expectations for the imitation in the future.

In relation to both the character of action and orientation in time in the three dimensions constituting the property "Experimenting", the last dimension, "Learning by making mistakes", is the exception. A crucial aspect of the 'mistake' is to understand how it comes into the consciousness of the mistake-maker, as the point at which learning (making sense) can commence. As pointed out by Weick et al. (2005) the realisation of a mistake is a moment of retrospective sensemaking. Paget (1988, p. 56) elegantly explains the retrospective nature of a mistake coming into being:

A mistake follows an act. It identifies the character of an act in its aftermath. It names it. An act, however, is not mistaken; it becomes mistaken. There is a paradox here, for seen from the inside of action, that is from the point of view of an actor, an act becomes mistaken only after it has already gone wrong. As it is unfolding, it is not becoming mistaken at all; it is becoming.

Mistakes are therefore more accurately classified as 'realisations', that connect the 'now' of the realisation, with the flawed action of 'then', which is in the past (Paget, 1988).

The first learning-lesson from a mistake is, or should be, the motivation for non-repetition, as evidenced by the remark made by Mark reported earlier (p. 208), "*I [...] won't be making that mistake again.*" The learning outcome continues into the future at least in the form of 'not-that' when new emergent actions are considered. Learning from

making mistakes is constituted primarily through a retrospective sensemaking orientation which should at least, serve to protect and conserve the actor in the emergent future through learned avoidance. It is therefore more characterised by convergence than divergence.

The properties and dimensions of Sub-core category 3, “Inquiring”, demonstrate what Dewey meant by inquiry, that is, the actions of “seeking, a quest, for something not at hand” (Dewey, 1980/1916). The conceptual properties and dimensions represent the actions or practices of inquiring. Practices include continuous practices of inquiring that are purposive, or seemingly absent of clear, particular and articulated strategy, (for example, Property 1: Learning continuously). Other practices such as those represented by the dimensions of Property 2, “Experimenting”, are more intentional, or purposeful in character.

“Inquiring”: Temporality and intentionality

A further and important consideration is how past, present and future aspects of time are integrated in the emerging theory of managerial capability. According to Elkjaer and Simpson (2011, p. 65), the Pragmatist philosopher Mead developed the ideas of Dewey relating to the backward and forward interplays between active and passive aspects of experience. Mead’s focus was to recognise the ‘social act’ as a temporal flux (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009). As put by Tsoukas and Chia (2002, p. 572), actions are performed and “experienced by practitioners as an unfolding process, a flow of possibilities, and a conjunction of events (...) occurring in time”. With this view, sociality is seen as more than just a succession of unfolding transactional moments (Simpson, 2009).

According to Simpson’s analysis of Mead’s works (Mead, 1938; Simpson, 2009), Mead’s view of temporality considers that actions of the present include both the past and the future. To quote Simpson (2009, p. 1338): “The past is the multiplicity of social attitudes that are constituted as significant symbols in any given social setting, while alternative futures are abductively anticipated and enacted”. A consequence of this weaving of social action and temporality together is that the future becomes part of the enacted practices. Anticipation becomes infused into the unfolding actions themselves.

In other words, people are located at the moving momentary juncture between past and future where their momentum in time obliges them to construct new meanings. The meanings of their emergent present arise through a reconstruction of histories,

which at the same moment are projected forward to anticipate the future. Anticipations of this future thus shape the outcomes of present actions (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011, p. 66). The moving present moment arises through ‘sensing backward’ while ‘living forward’ (Guiette & Vandenbempt, 2016).

The properties and dimensions constituting the Sub-core category “Inquiring” in this study reflect a sense of prospect and anticipation. The use of gerunds in theoretically describing each of the dimensions accentuates process in the data and the moving and evolving nature of action. In Property 1, “Learning continuously”, the data supporting the dimensional description “Continuously searching” revealed a continuity of seeking-behaviour, always anticipating that something useful might be discovered. The remaining dimensions, “Learning from ‘smarter’ people”, “Learning from judging pharmacy business awards”, “Learning by joining peak-bodies and committees” and “Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests” are all practices infused with anticipation of useful (if not specified) outcomes.

Similarly, the first two dimensions in the second property, “Experimenting”, namely “Learning by trialling new initiatives and means”, and “Imitating” were also shown to be highly prospective in their nature. The trialling and imitating practices themselves (Property 2) are founded on the anticipation of more specific outcomes than those outlined in Property 1. Both properties of the Sub-core category “Inquiring” show how managers are anticipating future consequences of actions which allow them to reconstruct their sense of meaning in the present moment. As put by Elkjaer and Simpson (2011, p. 65), “...we live life forwards by projecting our past experiences into our anticipations of the future. It is this connection to the future that underlies all intelligent activity.” The interplay between past and future illustrates the temporal continuity of actions in the living present (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Mead, 1959).

A further consideration regarding analysis is that of ‘intentionality’ in the practices described as constituting the Sub-core category “Inquiring”. In describing the two properties “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting”, each was characterised by dimensions that were either primarily purposive or purposeful, respectively. Purposive actions have been described as actions lacking intention or an overall plan (Chia & Holt, 2006). Simpson (2009, p. 1338) reports that Mead argued that the means and the ends of social actions “are co-constituting and co-evolving within social contexts that are themselves continuously changing”. With this perspective Mead considered that the connection between social action and deliberate outcomes to be only loose (Simpson, 2009).

In organisational studies literature, purposive actions have been described as mostly non-cognitive and part of habitual learned practice (Chia, 2017). While such purposive practices may not be a part of every-day consciousness, “over time, a certain *consistency of action* seems to emerge despite the lack of intention or an overall plan” (Chia & Holt, 2006, p. 639, italics original). Consequently there can be “implicit recognition that strategy is *immanent* in action” (Chia & Holt, 2006, p. 649, italics original). That is, strategic outcomes become available inherently even through non-intentional action.

The dimensions constituting the Property “Learning continuously” appear to be such a set of consistent actions or means, where there is low or no specific intentionality for particular ends. With respect to these dimensions, a clear and articulated strategy is absent thus requiring dependence on the internalised dispositions (meanings) of the managers. The meanings (knowing) that managers have along with their emergent situations are co-constructing and immanent (inherent) within each other as time passes (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Learning occurs as an effect of involvement and practice, not plan, and the managers’ participation occurs at what might be called the peripheries of their pharmacy organisations. Incremental and strategically relevant consequences emerge, integrated within the ordinary practices and habits of living (Chia & Holt, 2006).

On the other hand, the dimensions of the Property 2, “Experimenting” are more *purposeful* in character, where managers have a purpose that they can articulate and a range of conscious and rational expectations that they are aiming for. Indeed, most traditional explanations of how people work out ‘what to do next’ in unstable environments, namely strategising, assume that most actions involve intentionality, deliberation and purposefulness within individual agents (Chia & Holt, 2006). This in-turn assumes the discrete individuality of both managers and their organisations which are autonomous and are operated to satisfy pre-determined goals.

While this is undoubtedly the case as evidenced by the dimensions of Property 2, “Experimenting”, the point can be made that intentional learning resulting in the next strategic action is only part of ‘what’s going on here’. As put by Nayak and Chia (2011, p. 284), “We are first and foremost ‘bundles’ of relationships and event clusters, not self-contained subjects”. The implications of this view will be discussed more fully in the next chapter which brings together the three Sub-core categories in a theoretical explanation of *managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management*.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter completes the description and discussion of the third Sub-core category, “Inquiring”, derived from concepts grounded in the data. “Inquiring” is put forward as the final theoretical pillar, which together with the first two pillars (explained in Chapters 5 and 6), progresses a theoretical explanation to answer the research question: *How can we understand managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management?* This chapter has explored how managers renew and develop their knowing (meaning) through habitual social and experimental processes to enable the development of repertoires of alternative future actions and directions.

As demonstrated in the explanation of properties and dimensions, the ‘act of inquiring’ spans a continuum of practices. Practices include continuous practices that are purposive or seemingly absent of clear and articulated strategy (eg. Property 1: Learning continuously). Other learning practices, (eg. Property 2: Experimenting) are more intentional in character.

In the discussion section, analysis and synthesis of interpreted findings developed three theoretical considerations which together, progress an understanding of ‘what’s going on here?’. The dynamic linkage between the managers’ inquiring practices and their perceived experience of the emergent environment was established. The linkage, figuratively demonstrated in Figure 13, proposes that new knowing (meaning) develops within the experience of the continually emergent context. Managers find their way by developing new and emergent understanding of the ‘connection of things’.

Analysis prioritised the Pragmatist perspective of ‘trans-action’ to emphasise a holistic social level of analysis rather than interaction between discrete entities. The divergent character of most actions and social processes, was revealed through interpreted dimensions (see Table 18). Ongoing purposive and purposeful managerial actions and practices are blended demonstrating how change unfolds in a social-relational world. The blend of purposive and purposeful actions through time, characterised by divergence and viewed within the perspective of trans-action accentuates a process-oriented or performative account (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). It is through this performance that managers face the challenge of their own knowing (meaning) through a range of inquiring practices.

Temporality, that is past, present and future was also explained as being interwoven in to the emerging moment of present action. Prospect and future-focus were shown to be enmeshed in the dimensions (actions) constituting the theoretical properties. Anticipation and action mutually constitute each other. Anticipation was shown to shape emergent action and action (imbued with past experience) shapes unfolding anticipations. Life is lived forwards into the future where anticipations contain past experiences. ‘What to do next’ is both consciously considered but is also immanent, emerging simultaneously with managers’ responses to situations as they unfold (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). In this chapter, the property descriptions have shown *how* managers learn through social and experimental processes, which result in the continuous acquisition of more varied predispositions to act.

At the conclusion of the previous chapter, the developing reconceptualisation of managerial capability was described as a nexus of patterned actions and social processes that hold either primarily divergent or convergent character. The representation of this theoretical proposal was offered in Figure 12 (p. 183). In this chapter, further theoretical developments pertaining to how managers learn have been demonstrated and discussed. Figure 13 (p. 213), provides a representation of the theoretical developments proposed in this chapter. Figure 14 (p. 224) illustrates the integration of the properties of the final Sub-core category “Inquiring” into the developing theoretical representation of managerial capability for this study. All three Sub-core categories are theoretically integrated in this representation. The recursive design is maintained marked with the notation “[A]”, representing dynamism and movement. The open end of the circle on the right hand side represents openness to the future and the recursive two-way arrows represent continuous anticipation of what is to come. The wedge of colour extending to the far right of the figure, marked with the notation “[B]”, represents anticipation and the prospective nature of the actions and practices that constitute the Sub-core category “Inquiring”.

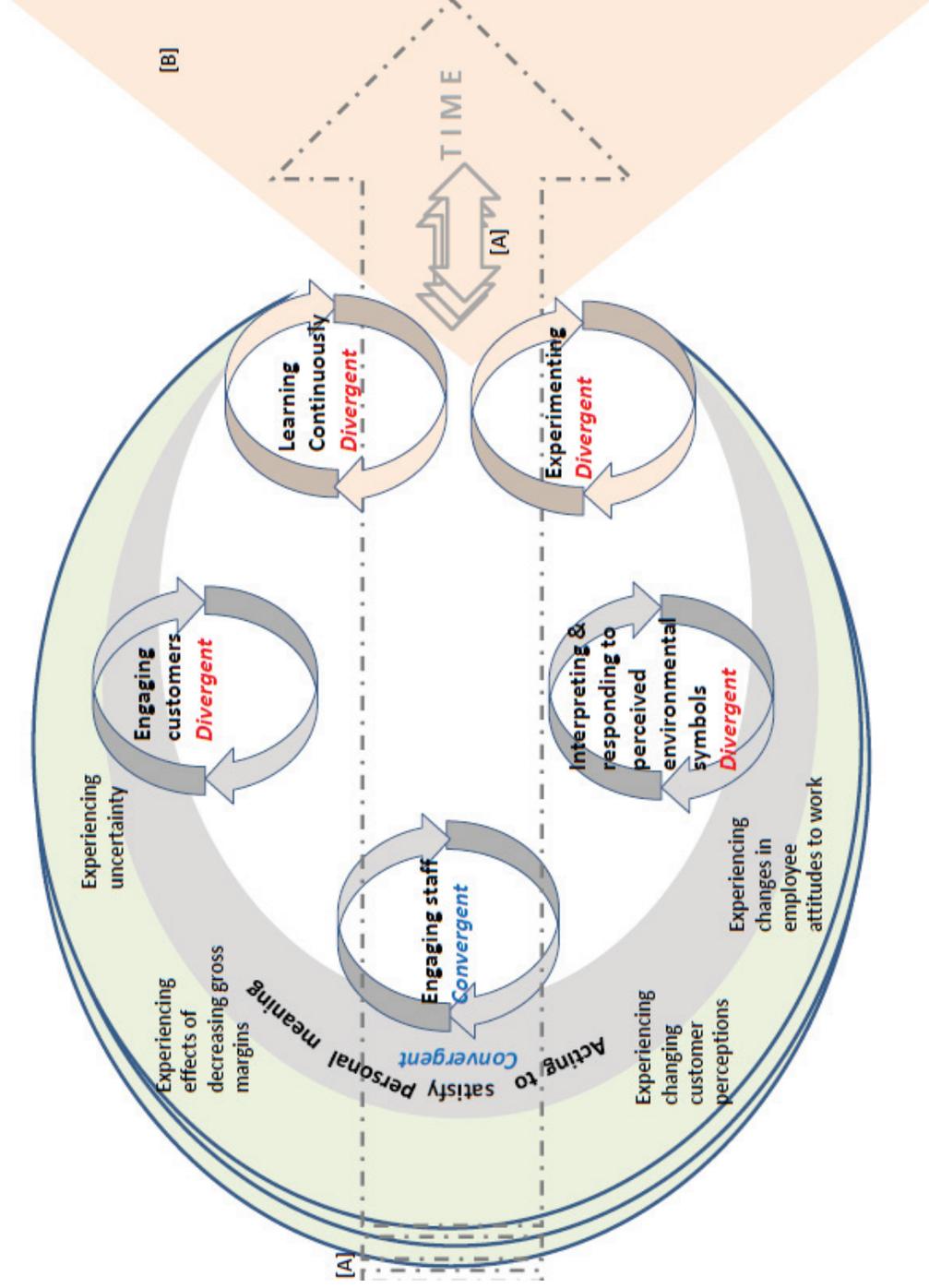


Figure 14: Developing representation of managerial capability expressed as a nexus of actions and social processes which have both divergent and convergent character. The figure shows the theoretical integration of Sub-core categories 1, 2 and 3.

Figure 14 can be viewed as a relational social-arena (Strauss, 1993) moving in time, rather than a theoretical model of the discrete individual who is interacting with other discrete people or systems. The figure demonstrates the constituting social processes of managerial capability which are either primarily convergent or divergent in character. All divergent social processes are characterised as producing learning as an effect, but the properties “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting” identify particularly recognisable social processes that accentuate how creativity arises in time. Through the divergent dynamic managers are actively challenging their own knowing (meaning) through a range of inquiring practices.

When the “Inquiring” practices are shown in the context of the practices discussed in the previous chapter titled “Re-orienting Meaningfully”, *how* managers renew their knowing is illuminated. Creative and innovative pathways emerge beyond their existing customer and staff relationships and such emergence explains how managers find their way in a seemingly unknowable environment. Figure 14 brings together all of the identified social processes so far discussed in this thesis. The notion of managerial capability is expanded as an unfolding nexus of on-going but particular practices and social processes that are both divergent and convergent in nature.

The Pragmatists’ ideal of linking past and future into the present moment, and where anticipation is present in all action, avoids the rationalistic consideration of time theorised as a sequential series of moments. Instead, reality continuously emerges in a dynamically relational world as flows of events (Cooper, 2005, p. 1707). Figure 14 represents the inclusion of the future in the unfolding present moment through the positioning of the properties “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting” as if reaching into the future. The expanding wedge of colour on the far right of the diagram reflects the notion of ‘living forward’ in continuous mostly inherent anticipation.

The theoretical notion of trans-action permits a process-oriented or performative account (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) of ‘what’s going on here’. Incremental strategic advancement is both consciously considered but is also immanent, emerging simultaneously with managers’ responses to contextual situations as they unfold (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). Consistent with the discussion in the previous chapter this perspective, explains the means through which new actions can keep changing, that is, how creative action occurs, depending on the mutually constituting dynamic relationships involving experiencing context, meaning, anticipation, social action, and outcome (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). This goes to the heart of explaining managerial

capability as a wayfinding phenomenon which delivers effective managerial outcomes in difficult times, but generated by a nexus of social processes and practices.

The next chapter discusses the Core category and Basic Social Process (BSP) which is constituted by the three Sub-core categories discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The explanation of the Core category, titled “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” represents the grounded theory of managerial capability in relation to effective community pharmacy management. The next chapter brings together an explanation of how managers manage capably through changing context and time, by linking the three Sub-core categories “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”, “Re-orienting meaningfully”, and “Inquiring” into one Core category, the BSP: “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”.

Chapter 8: Wayfinding – Knowing as you go

...at every moment during a voyage, the mariner is attentive to 'a combination of motion, sound, feel of the wind, wave patterns, star relationships, et cetera.', all of which – through comparison with remembered observations from past experience – translates into 'a slight increase or decrease in pressure on the steering paddle, or a grunted instruction to slack off the sail a trifle'. (Ingold 2011, p. 243 citing Gladwin 1964, p. 171-172).

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to provide an explanation for the the exploratory research question: *How can we understand managerial capability in relation to effective community pharmacy management?* As reviewed in Chapter 2, capability is a phenomenon that has been explained as the sensing of emergent and unfamiliar changes in environmental circumstances, and responding with changed but sensible actions, continuously over time. The aim of this study was stated: to reconceptualise the phenomenon of managerial capability as an ongoing accomplishment. In this chapter, a reconceptualisation of managerial capability gets to the heart of the phenomenon is performed through time, by presenting a more direct interpretation.

The application of grounded theory methodology saw the interpretation of managers' experiences and actions in relation to their perceived circumstances. In the three preceding chapters, three theoretical Sub-core categories have been explained which bring together processes that are foundations for explaining 'what's going on here?' This chapter unifies these foundations by identifying the central, or Core category "Wayfinding" and the enabling Basic Social Process (BSP) "Knowing as you go".

The word 'wayfinding' is ubiquitous in the English language and has been used to explain human-processes of what might be called 'getting around'. In the broadest sense its meaning involves the ascertaining of current position (spatial or relational) at the same time as taking the next action to follow a route which makes sense (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). Wayfinding has been used for its explanatory power in many diverse fields such as urban planning, indoor (building) navigation, architecture and anthropology, with a recent (September 2017) search showing more than 39,000 references citing 'wayfinding' in Google Scholar.

The use of the words for the Core category title, "Wayfinding" and "Knowing as you go", have been inspired by the anthropological literature, specifically the writings

of Tim Ingold (Ingold, 2000). Adoption of the word “Wayfinding” will be elaborated in this chapter by considering the three Sub-core categories as an integrated whole. The Sub-core categories account for how managers continually remain sensitive to their experience of environmental changes, and through their ongoing social practices, continually bring about learning and appropriate responses to those experienced changes. It will be proposed that managers continually find-their-way, through knowing as they go. The Core category “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” was developed by linking the data of accounts of managerial perceptions and actions, as demonstrated in the three previous chapters (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998).

The chapter begins with a synopsis of the important syntheses explaining the three Sub-core categories which form the theoretical foundation for the Core category and Basic Social Process (BSP). The three theoretical foundations are grounded in the accounts of the participants. Links through the three Sub-core categories and between their properties and dimensions are reviewed. Important and distinct conceptual aspects of this study are considered. Theoretical contributions are proposed and discussed.

The Core category, “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” is the central explanatory concept which binds the three Sub-core categories into the grounded theory of managerial capability in this research context. The Core category explains how managers ‘find-their-way’ through engaging in a range of particular (mostly) social processes that produce knowledge-in-action, or ‘knowing’. The chapter continues by explaining the key theoretical aspects of the Core category “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”, constituting the phenomenon of managerial capability.

The explanation of the three grounded Sub-core categories through the central explanatory idea of “Wayfinding” empirically grounds the concept within the data. This utilisation of the explanatory concept “Wayfinding” presents a clear and meaningful application of the term, grounded in the lived experience of real people. It thereby holds an empirical gravitas, extending and developing previous conceptual thought and hypotheses to enable development of theory.

The chapter concludes by evaluating the proposed grounded theory of managerial capability against criteria of evaluation for “credibility” and “empirical grounding” of the theory, as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The proposed grounded theory of managerial capability meets the all criteria and the Core category explains the phenomenon of managerial capability, through the means of a BSP.

***A SUBSTANTIVE GROUNDED THEORY OF MANAGERIAL CAPABILITY:
“WAYFINDING – KNOWING AS YOU GO”***

The three Sub-core categories are offered here as constructed but grounded findings, which together present the foundations of a substantive grounded theory of managerial capability. This theory is limited to owner-managers in the Australian community pharmacy context. As explained in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis, the grounded theory approach is based on the seminal work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), as adapted by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998), and more recently by Corbin and Strauss (2008).

The theory offered from this research is a substantive grounded theory, and not a formal grounded theory. A substantive theory is developed from inquiry in a specific area, such as a particular type of organisation (Goulding, 2002), and is the most common type of theory derived from grounded theory (Morse, 2001). As a consequence, this substantive theory will not generalise or proffer explanations of other situations, for which no data have been collected (Goulding, 2002). Citing Hage, (1972, p. 34), Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 55) define a grounded theory as denoting: “...a set of well-developed categories (themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Hage, 1972).

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, previous research concerning theorisation of the phenomenon of managerial capability has been undertaken from approaches mainly through the philosophical lens of positivism. Such approaches fail to address i) the meaningful totality in which individuals are immersed within a life-world, ii) the situational uniqueness of context as it relates to individuals and what they do, iii) time as experienced by individuals within their unfolding life-world, and therefore iv) movement, relationality and dynamism within resultant theory (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Woods, Gapp, & King, 2015). This study addresses these deficits in the managerial capability and the pharmacy management literature, by constructing an interpretive and process-philosophical perspective of the phenomenon of managerial capability. This reconceptualisation delivers a more direct understanding of the emerging phenomenon, within the Australian community pharmacy context. The main conceptual foundations of the grounded theory of managerial capability, in the context of effective Australian community pharmacy management, are shown in Table 19.

Table 19: The main conceptual foundations of the Grounded Theory of Managerial Capability in the context of effective Australian community pharmacy management.

Theoretical foundation	Categories
“Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”	Core category and Basic Social Process
“Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”	Sub-core category
“Re-orienting meaningfully”	Sub-core category
“Inquiring”	Sub-core category

The managerial capability of Australian community pharmacy owner-managers is conceptualised through the development and clarification of the concept ‘wayfinding’, in the given context. This is accomplished through the three theoretically distinct but intertwined Sub-core categories, that are clusters of mostly social processes. Each of the three foundational Sub-core categories has been thoroughly described in the preceding Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Each Sub-core category was constructed from subsidiary concepts (properties and their dimensions), and for ease of reference for the reader, these are summarised together in Table 20.

Table 20: Summary of the three Sub-core categories, with properties and dimensions, which together constitute the Core category: “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”.

Sub-core category 1: Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity		Sub-core category 2: Re-orienting meaningfully		Sub-core category 3: Inquiring	
Properties	Dimensions	Properties	Dimensions	Properties	Dimensions
1. Experiencing uncertainty	Variation: Large scale (general) ↔ Small scale (specific) (i) Being uncertain as to where the industry is heading (ii) Being uncertain about strategic intent of competitors (iii) Being uncertain about own strategic direction Variation: Regulatory changes ↔ Competitive pressure	1. Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental symbols	Variation: Reconsidering relevance ↔ Re-balancing risks (i) Confronting the need for customer-relevance (ii) Altering product ranges and categories (iii) Managing pricing (iv) Increasing the opportunity for service based experiences (v) Pursuing operational efficiencies and re-balancing risks Variation: Reaching out to customers ↔ Reaching out to community	1. Learning continuously	Variation: Continually searching ↔ Participation in non-pharmacy interests (i) Continuously searching (ii) Learning from ‘smarter’ people (iii) Learning from judging pharmacy business awards (iv) Learning by joining peak-bodies and committees (v) Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests Variation: Trialling ↔ Making mistakes
2. Experiencing effects of decreasing gross margins	(i) Experiencing profit reduction from PBS regulation changes (ii) Experiencing competitive pressure on margins from discounters (iii) Feeling the ‘squeeze’: Working harder for the same results Variation: Low consumer confidence (price consciousness) ↔ Changing perception of pharmacy (i) Experiencing low consumer economic confidence (ii) Experiencing customers with high information but low knowledge Variation: Poor worker quality ↔ Inappropriate attitudes of ‘entitlement’	2. Engaging customers	(i) Bringing pharmacists to the fore (ii) Reaching toward the individual customer’s ‘world’ (iii) Seeing customers as defensive advocates (iv) Investing and participating within the local community Variation: Regular dialogue ↔ Staff empowerment	2. Experimenting	(i) Learning by trialling new initiatives and means (ii) Imitating (iii) Learning by making mistakes
3. Experiencing changing customer perceptions	(i) Experiencing poor worker quality (ii) Experiencing increasingly inadequate human relational skills (iii) Experiencing inappropriate attitudes of ‘entitlement’	3. Engaging staff	(i) Engaging staff through dialogue (ii) Creating unity (iii) Employing for ‘fit’ (iv) Empowering and trusting staff Variation: Helping people ↔ Giving back		
4. Experiencing changes in employee attitudes to work		4. Acting to satisfy personal meaning	(i) Helping people (ii) Relating with people (iii) Not being about the money (iv) Giving back		

THE MAIN CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE GROUNDED THEORY OF MANAGERIAL CAPABILITY

As expressed throughout the discussions of findings in the three previous chapters, the fracturing of the phenomenon under study into conceptual processes at various levels is not meant to imply that these descriptive elements are separate interacting elements or systems. Rather, the abstracted Sub-core categories and constituent concepts are separated for analytical purposes, to illuminate theoretical process-aspects of the phenomenon of managerial capability within this context (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Simpson, 2009).

Managerial capability is conceptualised here as an entwinement of inseparable and ongoing experiences and social processes. Together the experiences and processes explain the unfolding phenomenon in the given context. The essence of each of the three Sub-core categories is discussed next, culminating in a discussion of the Core category “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”.

Sub-core category 1: Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity

This first Sub-core category was constructed through synthesis of the analysed findings discussed in Chapter 5. Analysis of the managers’ experiences was reported through four properties, each with a range of dimensions which capture variation in the properties. The four properties were described as “Experiencing uncertainty”, “Experiencing effects of decreasing gross margins”, “Experiencing changing customer perceptions”, and “Experiencing changes in employee attitudes to work” (see Table 20). The discussion in Chapter 5 focused on three key aspects to understand how an environment of uncertainty, change and complexity is *experienced* by the managers.

The three aspects are summarised as follows. Firstly, the entwined nature of context was discussed. That is, the managers’ worlds are experienced worlds (Sandberg & Targama, 2007; Schembri & Sandberg, 2011), and not worlds of complex but discrete interacting variables (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). The grounded findings suggest that managers only experience that which becomes available to them, and then only what they interpret as priorities in their unfolding movements through life. They do not necessarily experience all possible influences of context. Motivation for action arises primarily through interpretation rather than choice (Weick et al., 2005).

Secondly, the experienced world is a world-in-motion and is emergent through time. The persistent use of gerunds in the research coding and analytical process delivers a language of movement (Chia, 1995) to better approach the experience of the

managers. What was concerning the managers in this study were emerging issues of uncertainty, decreasing profitability, declining customer loyalty and staff who seemed increasingly not up to the job. This accentuates that the emerging context was experienced as a ceaseless stream of events, realisations and revised understandings, thus enfolding time. Within this view, past histories, present experience and future anticipations merge. Understood this way, the experienced emerging context accentuates the ‘temporal flow’ of their experienced organisational life (Langley et al., 2013; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). New flows of experience momentarily disrupt the previous flows of experience.

Thirdly, the entwinement of the manager-in-motion with the temporal flow of events invites the inclusion of the temporal-emotional aspects. Emotions are experienced in the ceaseless flow of life, and are experienced as “felt difficulties” (Simpson & Marshall, 2010, p. 357). The unfolding and experienced context reveals the temporal-emotional aspects such as anticipation, uncertainty and urgency, leading to questions about next-action and direction. Such questions might be ‘what should I do’, and ‘which way should I go?’, and inevitably induce a situation ripe for inquiring and learning (Simpson & Marshall, 2010). In this study, the emotional worlds of participants were expressed through their talk of “uncertainty”; “doubt”; feeling “caught in the middle”, “threat”, “extreme pressure”, the “squeeze” et cetera. These progenitors of anxiety reveal the emotional content and tension that was a large part of the managers’ experienced context. Knowing how to “go on” arises in this context of tension, uncertainty and suspense (Shotter, 1996), and forms an important ingredient of the managers’ experienced worlds. Managers thus contribute to their own experienced context.

Together these three aspects tell us much about *how* the managers are experiencing the unfolding contexts. Their experienced-world is the world that they see, feel and interpret through their senses and unfolding relationships. Their felt-world is their own world. Interpreted situational circumstances rise into view as flows of experience. For the manager these flows are accompanied by rising and falling experiences of emotion including uncertainty, tension and suspense. It is this flowing experienced context that both enables and constrains considerations of ‘what to do next’. Swirling eddies of significance rise into managers’ attention. Eddies of significance are reflected through the properties of the first Sub-core category: “Experiencing uncertainty”, “Experiencing effects of decreasing gross margins”, “Experiencing changing customer perceptions”, and “Experiencing changes in

employee attitudes to work”. Understanding these flows in the way described forms the departure point for considering the next key conceptual foundation: “Re-orienting meaningfully”.

Sub-core category 2: Re-orienting meaningfully

In Chapter 6, the analysis of data demonstrated what the managers *are actually doing*, given the contextual experiences they are having. It was pointed out that the findings regarding managerial actions were not built ‘on top of’ their experience of context, but as integrated with, and *shaped by* that emerging experience, which included managers’ own interpretations and emotions. The four integrated conceptual properties were: “Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental symbols”, “Engaging customers”, “Engaging staff”, and “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” (see Table 20). Together, these properties and their explanatory dimensions were used to show *how and why* managers meaningfully re-oriented themselves, their operations and their staff toward what they interpreted as the wants and needs of their customers, while remaining faithful to their own sense of meaning.

The theoretical development of the concepts relies on the essences of Pragmatist philosophy under-girding the grounded theory methodology. As in Chapter 5, the discussion in Chapter 6 focused on three key syntheses which together contributed to an understanding of *how* re-orientation was accomplished. The integration of the experience of context with re-orienting actions progressed the understanding of how managerial capability was accomplished.

Firstly, it was argued that managers’ meaning structures were experienced in a similar way to their experience of the emerging context. As discussed, the experiencing of context both enabled and constrained consideration of ‘what to do next’. Sense of meaning and identity also enabled and constrained what thoughts were constructed and therefore how social-responses were enacted. This was discussed earlier as a key understanding from Pragmatist philosophy. Just as resultant social responses including the experiencing of emotions flow back to *shape* the emerging experienced context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), the responses that social actions invoke may *shape* new internalised meanings, perceptions and thoughts et cetera (Simpson, 2009).

Embodied meaning and identity is thus like the experienced context. Both are *shaped* by enacted social processes in a mutually constituting way. The dimensions of the property titled “Acting to satisfy personal meaning” demonstrated the spirit of what daily professional practice really meant to the managers. The grounded dimensions of

this property were “Helping people”, “Relating with people”, “Not being about the money” and “Giving back”. These dimensions revealed a strong professional identity, common to managers in this study. The analysis in Chapter 6 showed how this sense of meaning and identity linked to, and influenced re-orienting actions, such as how managers engaged both customers and staff. (See Figure 10, p. 176 and Figure 11, p. 178). Re-orienting was not only fluidly adaptive. It was also meaningful.

Secondly, having established an indication of what their work meant to them, the two central social processes “Engaging customers” and “Engaging staff” were analysed utilising the Pragmatist notion of ‘trans-action’. The theoretical proposal of ‘trans-action’ was introduced as a refinement and very different conception from the more commonly theorised ‘inter-action’. Trans-action views that there is no ontological separation between engaged individuals and replaces the dualistic perspective of ‘interaction between’ individuals with a process perspective of ‘trans-action across’ individuals (Dewey & Bentley, 1991/1949; Simpson, 2009).

The main theoretical consequence made available from this refinement is that ‘trans-action’ becomes the dynamic location of meaning-sharing (Simpson, 2009), thus raising the analytical focus from the individual level to the social level. Using trans-action to understand social processes revealed the social processes as relationally integrated and whole, where the individuals are aspects of the whole (Simpson, 2009). Trans-action viewed as holistic relationality accentuated participations as continuous flowing sites of meaning sharing. Trans-action permitted a process-oriented or “performative account” (Gherardi, 2016; Gherardi & Perrotta, 2016; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 572). Such a perspective illuminated the means through which new actions can keep changing, that is, how creative action occurs (Gherardi, 2016; Gherardi & Perrotta, 2016; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

Thirdly, sensitised by the perspective of trans-action and the insight into how trans-action acts as a potential site for incremental change, the properties and their dimensions were characterised as either primarily *divergent* (toward novelty and transformation) or *convergent* (toward equilibrium and stability) (Simpson, 2009). It was concluded that the properties “Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental symbols” and “Engaging customers” were primarily divergent in character. For example, it was argued that participants can be viewed as ‘pursuing’ their customers through the dimensions: “Confronting the need for customer-relevance”, “Increasing the opportunity for service-based experiences” and “Reaching toward the customer’s individual world”. “Engaging staff” and “Acting to satisfy personal

meaning” were seen as primarily convergent in character. The dimensions showing the actions to satisfy personal meaning were congruent with the managers’ professional purpose, or identity. The dimensions of the property “Engaging staff” showed how managers attempted to unify staff around a common but manager-centric view of the world. (See Table 12, p. 180).

Analytical focus was also given to how these re-orienting trans-actions were dynamically influenced by, that is, linked to, the experienced context and to managers’ sense of meaning. Analysis constructed linkages between experienced context (Sub-core category 1) and re-orienting actions (Sub-core category 2). Linkages were made between properties and dimensions of each category. (See Figures 10 & 11. p. 176 & 178 respectively). Both social processes “Engaging customers” and “Engaging staff” were clearly influenced by the experience of context but these actions were also clearly shaped by managers’ sense of meaning, discussed within the property “Acting to satisfy personal meaning”.

The reported properties of the Sub-core category “Re-orienting meaningfully” represented different trans-action types, being characterised as either primarily divergent or convergent. Through the divergent dynamic, managers were actively challenging their own knowing (meaning) through a range of processual actions that in effect, sought to close a perceived ‘gap’ between their own worldview and the worldview of their customers. The divergent dynamic was not only proposed as potentially creative over time, but as representing the means through which managers’ understanding changes over time, in relation to their customers. This is the most fundamental form of learning (Sandberg & Targama, 2007). Through the convergent dynamic, managers were actively grooming and tidying the worldviews of their staff, toward their own understandings of the moment, that is, toward unity. While the dynamics of divergence showed potential for creativity and transformation, the dynamics of convergence showed the potential for coherence and control.

The summary of the final Sub-core category “Inquiring” accentuates a range of social processes (trans-actions) that are particularly divergent in character. This final theoretical pillar more fully explains how managers renew their knowing (meaning), therefore getting to the heart of how managers manage capably in a world that changes from moment to moment.

Sub-core category 3: Inquiring

In Chapter 7, the Sub-core category “Inquiring” was developed through two explanatory properties, “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting”, and their dimensions. It was explained that the term “Inquiring” is a key theme in Pragmatist philosophy and has particular meanings. Inquiring refers to acts of seeking, or searching for something not at hand. The meaning of inquiry relies on understanding social processes as continually unfolding sites where meanings are constructed and re-constructed, through engagement with other people. That is, social processes are a site for learning, adaptation and change. As with the other two Sub-core categories, three syntheses were offered which together show something of how managers learn on-the-go. These insights further contribute to an understanding of the accomplishment of managerial capability.

Firstly, the dynamic linkage between the managers’ inquiring practices and their experience of the emergent context was discussed and figuratively represented in Figure 13, (p. 213). Utilising the wisdom of the Pragmatist philosopher Dewey, the connection between managers’ experience of business context and their “Inquiring” practices was explained as fully relational and dynamically to-and-fro in time. New knowing (meaning) develops and changes within the continually emerging context. Learning was explained as the discovery of the ‘connection of things’, achieved through the actions of “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting”. It is through these emergent constructed connections, managers find their way as new conditions arise.

Secondly, the analysis prioritised the Pragmatist perspective of ‘trans-action’ to emphasise a holistic social level of analysis. Through this perspective the dimensions were explained as practices with mostly divergent character, toward novelty. (See Table 18, p. 216). This demonstrated how change unfolds in a social-relational world through a blend of both purposive and purposeful ongoing actions. Through the divergent dynamic, managers were actively challenging their own knowing (meaning) through a range of inquiring practices.

Finally, the analysis theoretically explained how temporality, that is past, present and future are seamlessly interwoven into the emerging moment of present action. In doing so, the ever-present anticipation of the future, so evident in the grounded dimensions, was shown to shape emergent action. But at the same time, the actions themselves along with past experience, shaped unfolding anticipations. Further, strategic advancement is both consciously considered but was also immanent, emerging

simultaneously with managers' responses to situations as they unfolded (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). Life is lived forwards into the future where anticipations contain past experiences. Action unfolds together with inherent anticipation, that is, with a continuous connection to the future. The descriptions of the properties, through their dimensions showed *how* managers learn through continuous searching, and social and experimental processes. These processes result in the continuous acquisition of more varied predispositions to act.

When considered together these three "Inquiring" insights show how managers learn continuously through their habits and practices of inquiring. Learning is achieved as an effect of the habit of relentless searching, engagement in a range of social practices and purposeful experimentation. The processes and practices are divergent in character providing ample potential for highly relevant reshaping of meaning (knowing). Anticipation of the future is enfolded in all actions at the same time that past experience and the lessons from mistakes are remembered.

The summary and synthesis of the three Sub-core categories have been reduced into a range of propositional statements of theory that are offered as an initial outline of a theoretical conception of managerial capability. The outline is provided in Table 21.

Table 21: The range of propositional statements of theory summarising the key theoretical findings of this study.

Criterion	Theoretical proposal	Reference of evidence from this study
Experience of context	Managers are immersed and act within an experienced-world including managers' sense of meaning, emotions, tension and suspense.	The experienced context is explained through the properties and dimensions of Sub-core category 1 (Chapter 5), and through the experience of managers' own sense of meaning. Sense of meaning is explained through the property "Acting to satisfy personal meaning", which is the fourth property of Sub-core category 2 (Chapter 6).
Experience of movement	The experienced-world is a world of ceaseless movement and flow through time, so that managers experience life as a flow-of-movement from which new interpreted and meaningful contextual dispositions arise, that both enable and constrain unfolding managerial actions.	Properties and their dimensions have been coded in the form of gerunds accentuating movement and process in the data. This technique is consistent with the research paradigm and methodology as explained in Chapters 2 to 4. Theoretical descriptions using this analytical style accentuate how actions are always in-the-making, adapting and evolving (Bjorkeng et al., 2009; Carlsen, 2006).
Trans-action within social arena as the basic level of analysis	The emerging world of managers unfolds as a social arena (Strauss, 1993), which is constituted by relational trans-actions: a dynamic network of comings and goings, doings and sayings, in time. Trans-actions rather than individuals form the relevant level of analysis.	Managers are themselves at the centre of their own social arenas, in trans-actional engagement with the worlds of their staff and their customers (explained in Sub-core category 2, Chapter 6), and through their "Inquiring" practices which involve "Learning continuously" and "Experimenting", (explained in Sub-core category 3, Chapter 7).

Continued next page...

Table 21: The range of propositional statements of theory summarising the key theoretical findings of this study.

Criterion	Theoretical proposal	Reference of evidence from this study
Divergent and convergent dynamics of trans-action as sites of meaning-sharing	<p>Relational trans-actions occurring as a social-arena, unfold dynamically in time, and are the sites for meaning-sharing across the life-worlds of the individuals. Trans-actions are either primarily divergent (toward novelty and transformation) or convergent (toward equilibrium and stability) in character. The divergent dynamic is potentially creative and represents the means through which managers' understanding changes over time. The convergent dynamic delivers a more stabilising outcome, preserving existing meanings and the managers' world views. The tension between divergent and convergent outcomes appears to be immanently balanced.</p>	<p>The divergent and convergent characters of reported actions are explained through the properties and dimensions of Sub-core categories 2 and 3 as explained in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively. (See Table 12, p. 180 and Table 18, p. 216).</p>
Learning as an on-going unfolding effect	<p>Managers' learning occurs both in relation to the perceived emerging context and as an effect of participation, through a range of both purposive and purposeful on-going actions. Their actions, understood within trans-action, are characterised as mostly divergent in their outcome and prospective in their on-going intent. Managers reach into the unknown and sense their way through iterative but processual inquiring and relational practices.</p>	<p>The properties and dimensions of Sub-core category 3, "Inquiring" demonstrate the divergent character of actions from which learning emerges as an effect. The dynamic relation between the emerging context (Sub-core category 1) and "Inquiring" practices (Sub-core category 3) are figuratively demonstrated in Figure 13, (p. 213).</p>
Experience of time	<p>Managers act in temporal-continuity through 'sensing backward' while 'living forward' (Guiette & Vandenbempt, 2016). The past, present and future are seamlessly interwoven in the emerging moment of present action. The interplay between past and future illustrates temporal continuity within action (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Mead, 1959).</p>	<p>The prospective, expectant character of practices (dimensions) constituting the properties "Learning continuously" and "Experimenting", were explained in Chapter 7. The findings demonstrate that such actions come from something, such as an understanding of the past, or a perplexing change from what used to be stable. The described actions (dimensions) show how managers 'reach into' the future, evident in the nature of their actions, with a hope or expectation that they will find something useful and helpful there. Such actions are either purposive, and therefore immanent, or purposeful and thus intentional.</p>

THE CORE CATEGORY: “WAYFINDING – KNOWING AS YOU GO”

The proposals in Table 21 resonate with the insights of Cook and Brown (1999), discussed in Chapter 2. Cook and Brown distinguish between “knowledge *used in action*” and “knowing used as *part of action*” (p. 383, italics original) and suggest that they are dynamically and generatively linked. They identify the former as an example of an epistemology of possession, and the latter as an example of an epistemology of practice.

To illustrate their viewpoint, the example of bicycle riding was used. They conceptually separated ‘knowledge’ as possessed (explicit and tacit knowledge about how to ride a bike), from knowledge-in-action which is only accessible to an individual through some act of ‘doing’, such as actually riding a bicycle. Bicycle riding they claim, requires interaction between the possessed-knowledge of how to ride with the actual activity of being in motion on a bicycle. Possessed knowledge is continuously constituted and re-constituted through flowing moment to moment actions. These flowing moment to moment actions could include flowing balance-corrections and re-corrections entwined with unfolding experience and environmental context. This knowledge-in-action is considered by Cook and Brown as “a form of knowing” (p. 383).

Following the Pragmatists’ perspective, the concept of ‘knowing’ is founded upon the notion that human action is always imbued with and shaped by internalised meaning. ‘Knowing’ refers to an aspect of action itself and can be understood as enacted meaning. ‘Knowing’ is considered as neither something to be used to effect action, nor something which forms the foundations of action (Cook & Brown, 1999). Citing the Pragmatist philosopher Dewey, Cook and Brown (1999, p. 387) assert that “Knowing is literally something that we do, not something that we possess”.

In this study, the three Sub-core categories as explained through their properties and dimensions can be construed as a description of patterned consistencies of action or knowledge-in-action (knowing), which explains the ways in which the managers act routinely in achieving particular divergent and convergent outcomes. In the case of this study, guided by the epistemological perspective of the Pragmatist philosophers, the focus is on what managers are doing, or *how* they know, rather than what they know. Such a perspective illuminates the *modus operandi* of “knowing”, that is dynamic, concrete and relational (Cook & Brown, 1999).

A further insightful perspective which resonates with the theoretical perspective offered in this thesis arises within the anthropological literature, through the writings of Ingold (2000, p. 219-242). Coming from a background of anthropology including ecological, technological and historical perspectives, Ingold conceptually expands ideas concerning the challenge of accounting for the human skills of orientation, and what he calls “wayfinding” in continuously changing and shifting environments. Ingold references studies examining how early Micronesian seafarers find-their-way in open ocean travel. In doing so, structural theories, which favour navigational methods to explain how travellers negotiate appropriate movement from point-to-point across space, are contrasted with process theories which suggest that it is the environmentally situated and unfolding movement itself, which is the key to wayfinding. Favouring process-explanations, Ingold (2000, p. 220) suggested that wayfinding can be understood as “...a skilled performance in which the traveller, whose powers of perception and action have been fine-tuned through previous experience, ‘feels his way’ towards his goal, continually adjusting his movements in response to an ongoing perceptual monitoring of his surroundings.”

Ingold conceptually views wayfinding as an accomplishment that is continuously forming as people move about within their environment. This viewpoint highlights the idea that “*we know as we go, from place to place*” (p. 229, italics original). Ingold’s concept of “knowing”, as being environmentally situated, carried out along paths of travel and unfolding over time, intersects neatly with “knowing” as explained by Cook and Brown (1999). The outcomes of this grounded study reflect both of these conceptual viewpoints which come from very different literature.

The congruence between aspects of Ingold’s conceptualisation of how Micronesian mariners find their way in ocean travel, and the grounded findings of this study strengthen the credibility of this grounded research, by acting as a point of verification (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 274). The empirical grounding that this study provides establishes the ‘concreteness’ of the dynamism and relationality that is implied by the non-grounded conceptualisations offered by theorists such as Cook and Brown (1999) and Ingold (2000). The substantive theory presented in this thesis demonstrates and explains managerial capability as a process of knowing, occurring through patterned participations within multiple relational trans-actions through time. This thesis has further developed the concept of “Wayfinding” into theory by specification of the patterned human actions in relation to the emerging context.

The terms “Wayfinding” and “Knowing as you go” are used for their elegance and economy and are put together as the title for the theoretical Core category for this study. The title “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” firstly represents a re-statement of the phenomenon of ‘managerial capability’ in the gerund “Wayfinding”. Secondly, the BSP through which it is enabled is reflected in the phrase: “Knowing as you go”. Together, “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” forms a meaningful statement for the Core category which brings together the integrated explanations provided through the three Sub-core categories: “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”, “Re-orienting meaningfully” and “Inquiring”. Simply put, it is proposed that we can understand managerial capability in the context of this study as “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”.

This proposal enables a refined and final statement of theory explaining managerial capability for this study:

Managerial capability, in relation to effective community pharmacy management, can be understood as a process of wayfinding which is accomplished as an effect of endless participation within multiple relational trans-actions through time. Managers are immersed and act within an experienced-world, including managers’ sense of meaning, emotions, tension and suspense. Managers experience life as a flow-of-movement within dynamic and changing social arenas, from which new interpreted and meaningful contextual dispositions arise. Such emerging dispositions both enable and constrain unfolding managerial actions. Managerial action is understood through clusters of dynamic relations that have a character that is mostly divergent (toward novelty), but also convergent (toward stability). Managers’ attention as well as their actions and relations are guided by the need to act to satisfy a sense of personal meaning, which results in attempts to narrow the perceived widening gap between themselves and their customers, but on the customers’ terms. Other actions and relations seek to unify staff around the worldview as experienced by the managers. Managers advance through this world of movement, continually reaching out into their environment through relational habits of inquiry. Their path is understood as exploratory relational movement where forms, patterns and connections-between-things are ‘felt’ as each moment arrives. The managers’ ‘knowing’ undergoes continuous creation and re-creation, correction and re-correction, through time. Managers find-their-way by knowing-as-they-go.

This statement of theory is represented diagrammatically in Figure 15.

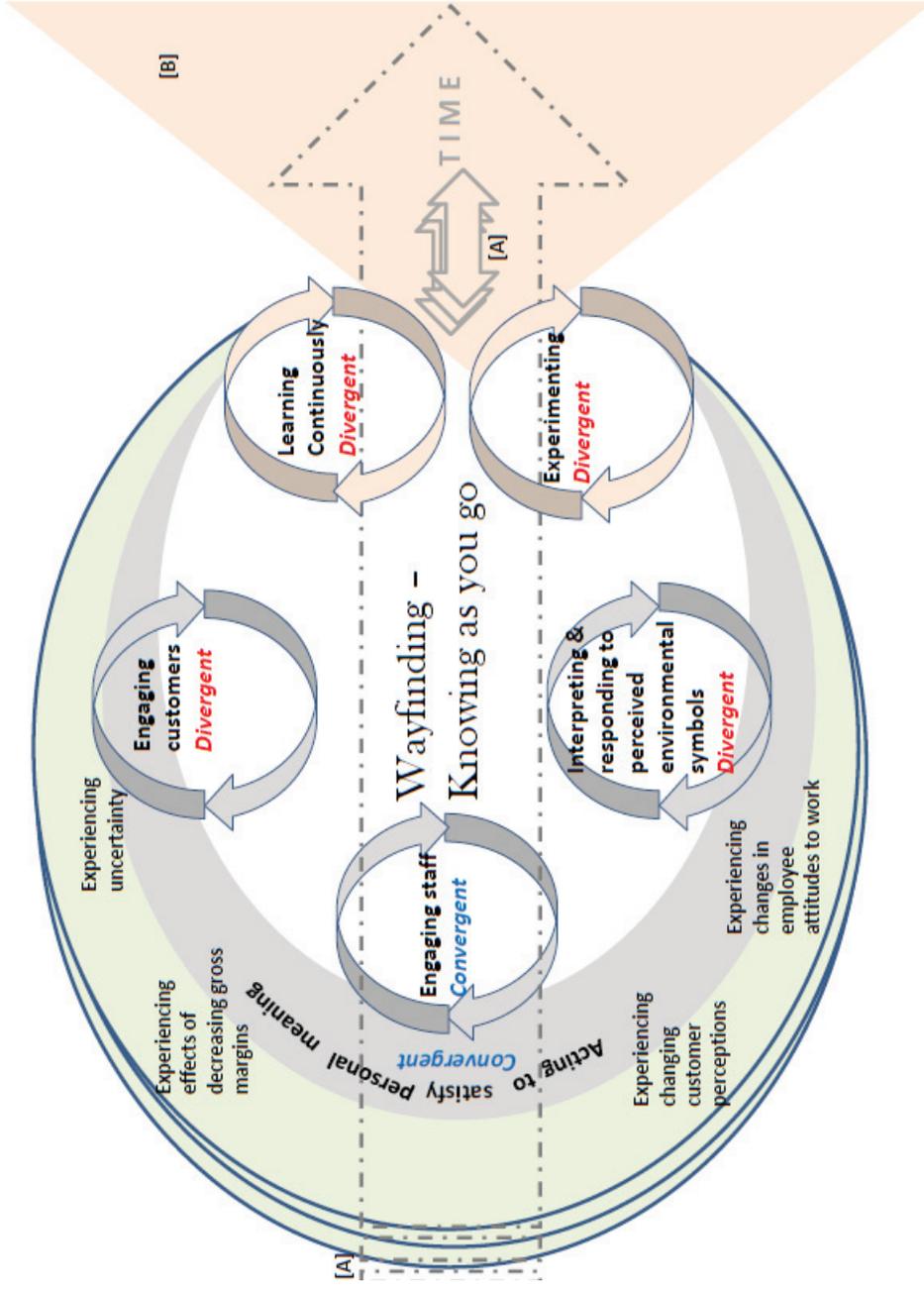


Figure 15: Representation of the grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”. The figure represents a demonstration of a nexus of patterned relations occurring in an unfolding social arena through time.

As with the prior incremental developments of what is now presented as Figure 15, consistency has been preserved in design. Recursiveness is maintained and marked with the notation “[A]”, representing dynamism and movement. The open end of the circle on the right hand side represents openness to the future and the recursive two-way arrows represent continuous anticipation of what is to come. The wedge of colour extending to the far right of the figure, marked with the notation “[B]”, represents anticipation and the prospective nature of the actions and practices, as explained in Chapter 7.

The grounded theory presented here addresses *how* managers move capably into unknown futures. The interpretivist and process-philosophical approach explained in this study, offers a grounded theory of managerial capability, in the context of effective Australian community pharmacy management. It is proposed that capability arises through the perceived experiences, personal meaning, and repertoire of mostly social practices, that is, *what managers do*. The changing context is shown as self-interpreted and understood as an ‘experienced’ context intertwined with managers’ sense of meaning of what they are really trying to achieve.

Flowing incremental actions arise from managers’ interpretations of context and sense of meaning as they experience their unfolding world. Such actions are expressed through engagement in an unfolding nexus of on-going but particular practices and social processes that are both divergent (toward novelty) and convergent (toward stability) in character. Learning is evident in divergent processes, and is considered as a mostly social process that is inseparable within an ongoing life-world. What is learned occurs through a changing of enacted meaning, or knowing (Cook & Brown, 1999; Sandberg & Targama, 2007).

Past, present and future (time) is embraced in this theoretical explanation as managers act in the present moment through ‘sensing backward’ while ‘living forward’ (Guiette & Vandenbempt, 2016). Anticipations of this future shape the outcomes of present actions (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011, p. 66). This is an understanding that demonstrates and develops *how* capable managers ‘know-as-they-go’. The idea of ‘knowing-as-you-go’ can also be understood as ‘wayfinding’ (Ingold, 2000), and represents the title given to the Core category and BSP in this presentation of a substantive grounded theory.

Most previous studies have theorised managerial capability in various ways as skills, abilities and characteristics possessed by people or groups of people. In these studies, the important skills and abilities are those that are purported to make people

‘capable’, that is, to be able to rationally respond to an external changing context. It is proposed that they do this by some form of navigation and through taking sensible actions in direct and logical response to observed stimuli. With this view, the changing context is regarded as an independent external variable and while not entirely knowable, is able to be consciously and rationally assessed and responded to after appropriate learning. Learning is considered as the accumulation of objectified knowledge deemed relevant to the rationalised situation at hand. Correct actions are assumed to arise through logical deduction after such knowledge is consciously and rationally considered. This is an understanding that assumes managers ‘know-*before-they-go*’ (Ingold, 2000). From this view, the nature of capability depends on sighting and using context, having abilities, accumulating learning and respecting time, all of which are seen as variables. But the capability concepts themselves do not include *how* these are involved in performing capably.

‘Wayfinding’ as explained in this thesis captures in a word the patterned human actions that show *how and why* managers re-orient themselves and their businesses meaningfully within a nexus of human relations, in challenging times. ‘Wayfinding’ also captures the learning that arises as an effect of engaging in inquiring social processes.

EVALUATING “WAYFINDING – KNOWING AS YOU GO” AS A CORE CATEGORY AND BSP

The purpose of grounded theory is to advance a theoretical explanation for an identified phenomenon deserving a better understanding. The identified phenomenon in this project is “managerial capability” as it relates to the effective management of community pharmacies in Australia in recent times. In Chapter 4, it was discussed how care was taken to only sample managers who held prominent reputations and recognition within the community pharmacy industry as being highly effective managers over time. This criterion was implemented through discussions with a range of professional peak body representatives and other experts. As theoretical sampling became a more prominent motivation, reputational checking was continued to ensure that all sampled participants held a reputation for surviving and thriving through tough times. Sampling selection therefore ensured that the phenomenon of “managerial capability” was being investigated among a group of managers reputed and known to be effective managers.

This Chapter has theoretically integrated three Sub-core categories (processes) in the proposal of a single Core category, which is titled “Wayfinding”. “Wayfinding” is a re-titling of the phenomenon of “managerial capability” under investigation. As such, “Wayfinding” captures the events and happenings interpreted through the data set (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and delivers a different and insightful understanding for the phenomenon as a whole. The means through which the phenomenon arises is explained through a grounded theorisation of a Basic Social Process (BSP). The integration of the three Sub-core categories is represented by the single statement of BSP, “Knowing as you go”. Together as a complementary pair, “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” represent the pinnacle of theoretical development for this project.

In Chapter 3, the criteria for evaluating a grounded theory study were preemptively outlined. These criteria have been described by Strauss and Corbin (1998), and focus on two key evaluative areas. The first relates to “credibility” of the descriptive findings and theory constructed through the research process. The second relates to evaluating the empirical grounding of the study. These areas are addressed next.

NOTES SUPPORTING “CREDIBILITY” OF THIS STUDY

Seven evaluative criteria to clarify research process credibility are suggested as a series of questions by Strauss and Corbin (1998. p. 269). The questions are listed as follows:

Criterion 1: How was the original sample selected? On what grounds?

Criterion 2: What major categories emerged?

Criterion 3: What were some of the events, incidents, or actions (indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?

Criterion 4: On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? After the theoretical sampling was done, how representative of the data did the categories prove to be?

Criterion 5: What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (i.e., among categories), and on what grounds were they formulated and validated?

Criterion 6: Were there instances in which the hypotheses did not explain what was happening in the data?

Criterion 7: How and why was the Core category selected? On what grounds were the final analytical decisions made?

These questions are addressed as follows:

Criterion 1: How was the original sample selected? On what grounds?

The approach to sampling and the key analytical operation of cyclical theoretical sampling is introduced in Chapter 3. While theoretical sampling processes guided the majority of the sampling choices, to commence the study, a purposive sampling process was used to select the first few participants. The approach and criteria for selecting the first few participants are explained in Chapter 4. The required sampling ideals, specified by the grounded theory methodology, have been faithfully observed.

Criterion 2: What major categories emerged?

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are dedicated to explanation of the three major Sub-core categories. These are titled “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”, “Re-orienting meaningfully” and “Inquiring” respectively. The first addresses the experienced emerging context, the second addresses the managerial actions which integrate with the experience of context, and the third emphasises how learning and divergence were achieved.

Criterion 3: What were some of the events, incidents, or actions (indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?

The data analysis process, using open, axial and theoretical coding, and other devices, such as coding for process, using gerunds and continuous inclusion of emergent context is described in Chapter 4. These techniques delivered the major conceptual findings (Sub-core categories) described in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The Sub-core category constructions are grounded upon and within the authentic statements of participants. Review of these chapters demonstrates the events, incidents and actions (indicators) that in-turn are conceptualised into properties through the variety of their dimensions. The summarised map of the Sub-core categories, their properties and dimensions are offered in Table 20, in Chapter 8.

Criterion 4: On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? After the theoretical sampling was done, how representative of the data did the categories prove to be?

As described in Chapter 4, the key theoretical ‘turns’ in sampling were stimulated by two needs identified in the construction of the Sub-core category “Re-

orienting meaningfully”. The first need identified was to ensure that the emerging focus on “Engaging customers” (Property 2), was thoroughly constituted by *meaningful* dimensions. The phrase ‘customer engagement’ is a widely used, even clichéd term, and most often refers to some form of surface relationship where successful service engagement is considered to be established by a fixed set of external dimensions such as technical quality, reliability, responsiveness et cetera. (Schembri & Sandberg, 2011). Analysis of the interviews of the first few managers revealed a far more meaningful approach to their customer engagement, explained through the dimensions such as “Bringing pharmacists to the fore”, “Reaching into the customer’s world” and “Seeing customers as defensive advocates”. The emergence of these concepts sensitised the researcher toward a sharper conversational focus on how managers reported engaging customers and then sampling new managers who had particular reputations for being “close” with their customers. This theoretical ‘turn’ in both focus and sampling direction was very fruitful in enabling clear linkages with the property “Acting to satisfy personal meaning”, as the fourth property of “Re-orienting meaningfully”.

The second ‘turn’ in both sampling strategy and interview conversation focus occurred later in sampling when concepts developed concerning how managers learn on-the-go. It is clear that the descriptor “Re-orienting” implies that change and learning must be involved. This is particularly expressed through the properties “Interpreting and responding to perceived environmental changes” and “Engaging customers”. But it became evident that inquiring practices were far deeper and more thorough than the dimensions constituting these properties. In the final interviews, managers were chosen who not only fulfilled other necessary theoretical criteria, but also were known for their inquisitiveness which gave them a reputation for being innovative. This theoretical sampling strategy was also fruitful in more deeply developing the properties of the third Sub-core category, “Inquiring”. The theoretical Sub-core categories now offered as the foundation for the Core category “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” are thoroughly grounded in the data which includes all managers interviewed.

Criterion 5: What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (i.e., among categories), and on what grounds were they formulated and validated?

The three Sub-core categories address an explanation of the phenomenon now titled “Wayfinding”, the Core category. The explanation purports that “Wayfinding” is made possible through a range of integrated and inseparable social processes. “Wayfinding” arises as an effect of “Knowing as you go”. “Knowing as you go” is

explained as meaningful re-orientation of actions (and therefore meanings) that flow incrementally through the ongoing experience of emerging context and through continuous habits of inquiring. The hypotheses which underpin such a proposal, which deliver the seamless linkage between the three Sub-core categories, have been explained throughout Chapters 5, 6, and 7. These hypotheses have been grounded within the wisdom of Pragmatist philosophy.

For example, the linkage of the first Sub-core category “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity” with the second, “Re-orienting meaningfully” is based on the philosophical hypotheses that action is infused with meaning (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Mead, 1934) and action both constitutes and is constituted by, emerging context, through time (Mead, 1959). Also, the linkages between the third Sub-core category “Inquiring” and the other two, are based on the Pragmatist philosophical ideal that learning is a creative and habitual social process that remains open to continuous change (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Ideals and hypotheses such as these, formulated through, and grounded in the tenets of the Pragmatist philosophers, are woven into the explanatory analysis of Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Validity of the connection between the Sub-core categories relies on the strength of wisdom of Pragmatist philosophy, as well as the completeness of the research process and the common sense ‘fit’ of the theoretical proposals delivered. Grounded research findings should speak for themselves (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Criterion 6: Were there instances in which the hypotheses did not explain what was happening in the data?

In hindsight, it appears that the very nature of this project is most suited to interpretation through the Pragmatist philosophical lens. The Pragmatist perspective delivers a refined view of how to “see” human action in time. This study has selected real people, experiencing their own ‘reality’ and has collected authentic stories and then reflected these stories through analysis and synthesis in its theoretical outcome. As put by Elkjaer and Simpson, (2001, p. 55), the Pragmatist perspective permits “a temporal view of social practice in which selves and situations are continuously constructed and reconstructed through experimental and reflexive processes of social engagement.” There were no significant disconnections between what was happening in the data and the hypotheses required by the philosophical and analytical approach. Such an outcome is an indicator that the ‘fit’ between the research question, philosophical foundation and methodology was optimal.

Criterion 7: How and why was the Core category selected? On what grounds were the final analytical decisions made?

As discussed in Chapter 3, the constructionist modes of the grounded theory methodology encourage familiarity with the literature so as to facilitate a more flexible pathway toward analysis (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). This approach enables the utilisation of insights from many and varied sources (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As concepts and categories arose through analysis, unification of concepts and integration to theory was catalysed through a range of stimuli, including the literature (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 109).

The selection of the Core category “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”, its meaning, and therefore the connection to the three Sub-core categories has been explained in Chapter 8. The discovery of the work of the anthropologist Ingold (2000) and use of the terms “Wayfinding” and “Knowing as you go” occurred very late in the analytical and synthesis processes. The analysis of the data into a synthesis of theory was already complete before Ingold’s insightful writings played a part. The challenge faced by the researcher before Ingold’s work was read, was that of finding an elegant and economic way to represent the substantive grounded theory in words.

The terms “Wayfinding” and “Knowing as you go” fulfil requirements for elegance and economy, albeit originating from a very different branch of social science. More poignantly, each term neatly and respectively fits both the phenomenon and BSP as described in this study. The comparative congruence between aspects of Ingold’s theorisation of how Micronesian mariners find their way in ocean travel, and the grounded findings of this study strengthen the credibility of this grounded research, by acting as a point of verification (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 274).

NOTES SUPPORTING THE EMPIRICAL GROUNDING OF THIS STUDY

Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 270-272) propose a set of criteria, also posed as questions, to be considered in addressing the empirical grounding of a grounded theory. The eight evaluative criteria are listed as follows:

Criterion (i): Are concepts generated?

Criterion (ii): Are the concepts systematically related?

Criterion (iii): Do the categories have conceptual density?

Criterion (iv): Is variation built into the theory?

Criterion (v): Are the conditions (context) under which variation can be found built into the study and explained?

Criterion (vi): Has process been taken into account?

Criterion (vii): Do the theoretical findings seem significant?

Criterion (viii): Does (or will) the theory stand the test of time?

These questions are addressed in what immediately follows with the exception of Criterion (vii) relating to the significance of the theoretical findings in this study. The significance of the theoretical findings is discussed in the next section. Many of the evaluative criteria are addressed throughout the monograph, so responses below are provided as succinctly as possible, with references to previous chapters.

Criterion (i): *Are concepts generated?*

Explanation of how concepts were developed in this study, including demonstrations of examples, is covered in Chapter 4 and associated appendices. Application of coding methods to build progressively more abstract concepts was undertaken through the use of open, axial and theoretical coding methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Details of how the Sub-core categories came together are discussed throughout the Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Criterion (ii): *Are the concepts systematically related?*

The Sub-core categories act as common gathering points for related subsidiary concepts reported as dimensions and properties. Then, within each Sub-core category chapter, linkages through and between property and dimension sets were argued and demonstrated. For example, Figures 10 and 11 in Chapter 6 show how re-orienting actions link to experience of context, through the influences arising from a need to act to satisfy personal meaning. These linkages and others are an essential aspect for developing the resultant dynamic, but grounded, theory.

Criterion (iii): *Do the categories have conceptual density?*

The families of constituent properties and their dimensions demonstrate the richness and density of the constructed theoretical foundations, that is, the three Sub-core categories, (see Table 20). All Sub-core categories are constituted by at least two conceptual properties, most of which have come together from three or more dimensions. It was the experience of the researcher, that conceptual saturation within this study was veritably complete by the end of the seventeenth or eighteenth interview. Subsequent interviews were completed thoroughly but while some yielded better verbal descriptions of existing concepts, no new concepts or valuable variation emerged.

Criterion (iv): Is variation built into the theory?

A key approach undertaken in the grounded theory methodology has been to seek maximum variation in all important concepts. This variation is revealed, for example, in the array of dimensions which constitute each property (see Table 20). The array of properties account for the variation in each Sub-core category, and so on. Formulation of ever more abstract concepts from the lower dimensional examples, through to the highest Core category, followed a requirement to ensure that each higher-level abstraction accounted for all of the variation included under it. Variation is built into this proposed grounded theory.

At the same time, the researcher had to make continuous analytical judgements along the way, to decide where to draw-the-line on what variation should be included (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Human life is hugely complex and not all aspects of human action and practice can be accounted for in a single contained study. The researcher sincerely believes that enough important variation has been included so as to produce a substantive theory which suitably addresses the research question, and in an interesting and insightful way.

Criterion (v): Are the conditions (context) under which variation can be found built into the study and explained?

A major intended outcome of this study was to produce a theory that explained managerial capability in relation to the emergent context through time, discussed in Chapter 2. This was approached by developing an understanding of how managers experienced their perceived emerging context, through careful selection of an appropriate research methodology, situated within a process-philosophical paradigm. Chapter 5 discusses the findings relating to experience of context. A necessary response to this particular evaluative query somewhat overlaps the response given addressing Criterion 5. The response to Criterion 5 concerns some of the hypotheses about the relations between concepts and categories. Context and more importantly, managers' experience of context formed one of the three Sub-core categories for this study, and is wholly integrated into the resultant theory.

Criterion (vi): Has process been taken into account?

Another major intended outcome of this study was to produce a theory that explained managerial capability by preserving process, and therefore dynamism. As

discussed earlier, coding for processes, using gerunds and continuous inclusion of emergent context and time were techniques used during the coding, analytical and synthesis activities for this project. These techniques were described in Chapter 4. Descriptions of application were given in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. A consequence of adhering to this process-approach is that resultant theorisation accounts for *how* action unfolds under changing conditions. A further important theoretical consequence of the process-approach is the inclusion of time, through the perspectives of the managers. This is discussed in Chapters 7, and 8.

Criterion (vii): Do the theoretical findings seem significant?

This criterion is addressed in the next section titled: “THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GROUNDED THEORY “WAYFINDING – KNOWING AS YOU GO”.

Criterion (viii): Does (or will) the theory stand the test of time?

The grounded theory is titled “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” and is constituted by the three Sub-core categories “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”, “Re-orienting meaningfully” and “Inquiring”. The researcher believes that the grounded theory explained through this research presents a new and interesting conceptualisation of managerial capability that will be useful for further research in the same or different professional contexts. It also contributes a new perspective useful for management training.

The researcher also acknowledges that highly contextualised process-theories are also limited by the ‘here-and-now’ unique context that managers were experiencing at the time of the research. At the same time, it can be acknowledged that a benefit of the type of theorisation offered here (that is, process-theory), is that its closeness to actual practice develops a knowing that is very near, or the same as the knowing that is being experienced by engaged practitioners, in their own emerging worlds (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). The theory therefore remains open-ended as a permanent invitation for researchers and practitioners to revisit and revise toward an ever better understanding of capable managerial practice.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GROUNDED THEORY “WAYFINDING – KNOWING AS YOU GO”

In Chapters 1 and 2 of this monograph, the importance and necessity of managerial capability in an ever-changing world was emphasised. For the purposes of

this project, the domain of Australian community pharmacy management was chosen as the particular area of interest. As was demonstrated in the literature review and analysis, the phenomenon capability has hitherto been explained and defined indirectly. The phenomenon has been described by identifying the ‘things’ that are believed to be important for its enactment, thus producing a static and rather lifeless understanding of the phenomenon, but not its actual enactment. As stated by Stephenson (1992, p. 1), capability “is easier to recognize it than to measure it with any precision.” To surpass these limitations, different approaches to investigation and reporting have been considered here, to emphasise action which is shaped by identity, unfolding situational context and relation to time. That is, *how* to study the phenomenon needed to be considered before *what* to study in relation to the phenomenon.

This study, albeit limited to its particular community pharmacy context, seeks to create a much closer, more direct explanation of the phenomenon of managerial capability. In addition to, and as a result of the development of a theory of managerial capability, the study has brought into view *how and why* managers perform so as to produce personally sensible outcomes in a changing world. In addition to the theory itself, the fundamental significance of this study lies in three integrated areas:

- Utility of methodology;
- Originality of findings and
- Practical utility for pharmacy management training and practice.

Utility of methodology

The first contribution of significance is in the justification for, and use of the methodology which is founded on a particular philosophical perspective. As discussed in Chapter 2, literature commentary highlights gaps between many management theories and actual managerial practice. This accentuates a lack of resonance between what managers *actually do* in their real worlds and explanations *about* what they do. There are growing calls for better theorisation through exploration of how managerial practices are enacted (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). Further, to achieve this, there have been growing calls for actual field-studies utilising appropriate methodologies that can deliver better, more useful theory (De Paula, Maciel, De Brito, Boas, & Cappelle, 2015; Ensign, 2008; Higgins & Aspinall, 2011; Langley et al., 2013; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Simpson, 2009).

The rising popularity of what is called ‘practice theory’ (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2016) has seen significant contributions offering insights about how to satisfy the need

for better theories that are closer to actual practice. These contributions have been mostly contingent on the works of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1990), Giddens (Giddens, 1984) and Schatzki (Schatzki, 1996), all reliant on the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. (A useful review of these and other contributors to practice theory is provided by Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2016).

Less commonly, but more recently there have also been calls to draw on the philosophy of Pragmatism and the Pragmatist thinkers such as Dewey, James, Mead and Pierce, to develop theories that are a closer derivative of practice (Elkjaer, 2004a; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009). The study reported here has followed this lead and delivered a theorisation of the *enactment* of managerial capability, utilising the Pragmatist philosophical framework of understanding.

This study contributes significantly by adding a needed field-study concerning managerial practice and by offering grounded theoretical findings interpreted through the Pragmatists' philosophical lens. Reliance on the philosophical tenets of Pragmatism has allowed the construction of a theory of managerial capability that integrates the fluxing experience of managers, with clusters of unfolding social actions that operate as sites for the continuous movement of meanings. The utilisation of a constructionist mode of grounded theory methodology has delivered the means through which the researcher's critical analysis connects closely with the managers' lives, thus illuminating the managers' actions and their perspectives (Charmaz, 2016). Significance here therefore lies in *how* this study achieves its theoretical outcomes.

Originality of findings

The second significance of this study lies in its real and potential contribution to management theory. The fruit of this study is a substantive reconceptualisation of the phenomenon of managerial capability. The theory is captured verbally in the expression "Wayfinding – Knowing as you go". The substantive grounded theory "Wayfinding – Knowing as you go" offers a novel understanding of the phenomenon, managerial capability, as an accomplishment or performance and represents a genuine theoretical contribution (Corley & Gioia, 2011).

Through the philosophical paradigm, and by methodological design, the theory has been constructed 'from the ground up', through the voices of the participants. The novelty of approach to construct the theory has been achieved through both the use of the Pragmatist philosophical paradigm as well as the integration of previous conceptual thoughts from diverse academic domains such as anthropology. The substantive theory

is original in the way that concepts and ideas are integrated, to produce a new and grounded understanding of managerial capability. This study in its approach and resultant theory will benefit both theoretical and empirical studies in the future. This contribution is expanded in the next chapter.

Practical utility for pharmacy management training and practice

The third contribution of significance is for those concerned with Australian community pharmacy managerial practice and pharmacist management education. As discussed in Chapter 1, and parts of Chapter 2, the pharmacy profession has remained relatively isolated from the concerns for, and necessities of ‘good management practice’. Recently, substantial disruptions affecting community pharmacy business sustainability have sharpened attention for research that will contribute to improved pharmacy management practice in difficult times.

In particular, there have been calls within the domain of pharmacy practice research for the implementation of better methodologies that deliver new ways to explore the “complexity which manifests within social phenomena” (Scahill, 2013, p. 3). This study is significant in its response to this call by delivering a reconceptualisation of managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management. Descriptions and conceptual explanations of practice are derived directly from pharmacist practitioners themselves, and are relevant to a context that they will recognise.

As such, the findings and resultant theory hold potential for pharmacy management education. Management training seldom lacks a list of what ‘knowledge’ may be required for effective management. Training seldom offers a meaningful description and explanation of what forms of ‘knowing’ are required to enact necessary knowledge. Such ‘knowing’ is captured in the explanations of clustered actions and practices (properties and dimensions) showing how managers live and learn in their daily lives. The theory delivered here, supported by its grounded explanations, provides a rich and complementary addition for the managerial training of community pharmacists.

The three issues of significance delivered by this study and summarised above, will be further developed in the next and final chapter which addresses the implications which arise through the findings and theory offered.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has addressed the purpose of the research in providing a new theoretical understanding of managerial capability as it relates to effective community pharmacy management. The research aim of reconceptualising managerial capability from an interpretive and process-philosophical perspective has been achieved. The reconceptualisation provides a grounded explanation enabling a direct and performative understanding of the phenomenon of managerial capability: “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”.

To bring the grounded theory into focus required the integration of the three Sub-core categories, which were developed and synthesised in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively. Managers’ experiences of their emerging context (Sub-core category 1) were related and integrated with the recognised actions of re-orientation (Sub-core category 2) and their social and experimental learning habits (Sub-core category 3). Together the integration, interpreted through the lens of Pragmatist philosophy, shows how managers are able to continually acquire more varied dispositions to act through time, in direct relation to their experienced context. In brief, the substantive theory shows how managers find-their-way.

The Core category, “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” expresses both a re-titling of the phenomenon ‘managerial capability’ in “Wayfinding”, and its enabling BSP in the phrase “Knowing as you go”. Together, “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” provides an elegant and economic reconceptualised title for managerial capability in the stated context. The reconceptualisation is stated in words earlier in this chapter (p. 243), and diagrammatically in Figure 15 (p. 244).

This chapter then addressed criteria for evaluation of the grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”. Following criteria suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998), seven criteria relating to “credibility” of the penultimate theory and the underpinning research processes have been addressed. A further eight criteria concerning evaluation of the empirical grounding of the study were also addressed. Together the responses offer a demonstration that the resultant grounded theory is authentic, original, credible and therefore trustworthy. The chapter concluded by outlining three contributions of significance relating to Utility of methodology, Originality of findings and Practical utility for pharmacy management training and practice. These contributions are expanded in the next chapter.

The next and final chapter discusses the exploratory interpretations and implications that arise through addressing the research question and the presentation of the grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”. Implications relating to the selection of research methodology, management theory and pharmacy managerial practice are further considered. Limitations of this study and opportunities for further research are also discussed.

Chapter 9: Exploratory interpretations and implications

...Our chance is on the crest. Our living and our inventive path follows the fringed, capricious curve where the simple beach of sand meets the noisy rolling in of the waves (...) An organization is born from circumstances, like Aphrodite rising from the sea. (Serres, 1982, p. 127).

INTRODUCTION

Managerial capability is an important phenomenon because in its broadest sense, its meaning links knowledge and action in the business context. A better understanding of how knowledge and action interrelate gets to the heart of understanding how desired managerial performance outcomes might be achieved (Adner & Helfat, 2003; Boyatzis, 1982; Cairns & Stephenson, 2009; Coombes, Bates, Duggan, & Galbraith, 2011; Sandberg & Targama, 2007; Teece et al., 1997). This thesis has offered a grounded reconceptualisation of managerial capability as it relates to effective Australian community pharmacy management, and unifies the dichotomy of knowledge and action, through the notion of knowledge-in-action, or knowing.

The study commenced with a synopsis outlining how Australian community pharmacy is presently experiencing unprecedented disruptive change from a range of forces. Effective action to meet changing environmental circumstances requires capable managers. By critically probing the research paradigms which underpin different literature-based conceptions of capability, the review revealed indirect and incomplete theorisations of the concept 'capability'. Conceptualisations of *how* managers manage capably in unpredictable emergent environments have remained elusive.

Most explanations concerning managerial capability arise from a positivist research paradigm, which fail to address i) the meaningful contextual totality in which individuals are immersed within a life-world, ii) the situational uniqueness of context as it relates to individuals and what they do, iii) time as experienced by individuals within their unfolding life-world, and therefore iv) movement, relationality and dynamism within resultant theory (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). Positivist research has delivered something of 'the what' of the concept 'capability' but an indirect and incomplete understanding of 'the how and why'. The review of the literature revealed how undertaking social research through an interpretive research paradigm can deliver findings which describe and explain patterned consistencies of action (Carroll, Levy, & Richmond, 2008; Chia & Holt, 2006; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Explaining the

dynamic patterns of action that people engage within their worlds gives insight into ‘the how and why’ of human performance (Chia, 1995; Stacey, 2011).

Given the unfolding challenges confronting Australian community pharmacist owner-managers, improvement in understanding the phenomenon of managerial capability in this context is timely. This thesis has addressed the research question: *How can we understand managerial capability in relation to effective community pharmacy management?*, with the aim to explore and reconceptualise the phenomenon of managerial capability as an ongoing accomplishment in the given context. A response to the research question has been presented in this thesis through an interpretive reconceptualisation of managerial capability, in the substantive grounded theory titled “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”.

What follows in this chapter is a commentary on the exploratory interpretations made from the research findings and the theory delivered through this thesis. Exploratory interpretations are then followed by a discussion of the potential implications that arise from this research. Implications arise for three areas of consideration. These are methodological implications, theoretical implications and pharmacy practice implications. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the limitations relating to this research and its findings, and then suggestions regarding future research directions and approaches.

EXPLORATORY INTERPRETATIONS FROM THE RESEARCH

Analysis and synthesis of data collected from participant managers shows how managerial capability emerges as an effect of endless participation within multiple relational trans-actions through time. Through this unfolding nexus of relationships and action, managers incrementally find-their-way. Forms, patterns and connections-between-things are ‘felt’ as each moment arrives. How managers experience their emerging environment is reflected in the properties and dimensions of the Sub-core category “Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity”. What managers do in relation with this experience is reflected in the properties and dimensions of the Sub-core categories “Re-orienting meaningfully” and “Inquiring”. Managerial actions and practices are reported as clusters of dynamic relational actions which together explain how managers know-as-they-go. The managers’ ‘knowing’ undergoes continuous creation and re-creation, correction and re-correction, through time. Interpretations about the nature of managerial capability can be drawn from the grounded theory

explained in this thesis. A summary of exploratory interpretations is provided in Table 22. Each of the exploratory interpretations is developed and elaborated in what follows.

Table 22: Summary of exploratory interpretations drawn from the thesis: *“Pharmacists managing capably: Exploring and reconceptualising managerial capability”*.

Exploratory interpretations

Exploratory interpretation 1: “Wayfinding” (managerial capability) occurs as an effect of patterned relationality, involving relationships that unfold within an emergent and continuously changing social arena.

Exploratory interpretation 2: Managerial capability in the given context is understood as “Knowing as you go” which delivers an effect of finding-one’s-way (Wayfinding) in emergent environments through time.

Exploratory interpretation 3: Managers learn and find-their-way as an effect of a variety of social and experimental processes, which result in continuous acquisition of more varied predispositions to act.

Exploratory interpretation 4: In the context of meeting deficits of Australian community pharmacy management research, the grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” explains (a) how effective pharmacy managers manage capably, to deliver continuous operational adaptation over time, without underpinning assumptions of *what* they should do and (b) how managerial capability is understood as an holistic emergent processes that includes experience of changing context, emergent social relations and time.

Exploratory interpretation 5: The theory complements previous knowledge. It is not put forward to supersede previous knowledge. The grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” is therefore open-ended and available for evolutionary reinterpretation.

Exploratory interpretation 1

Understanding the nature of the phenomenon managerial capability, newly theorised here as “Wayfinding”, begins with understanding that its explanation is not a theory-of-action for the *individual* pharmacy manager per se. As was initially introduced in Chapter 6, the Pragmatist notion of trans-action is provided as a more relevant and appropriate focus for analysis when considering how people relate and alter meanings (knowing) within their unfolding life-worlds. As explained in Chapter 6, the idea of trans-action is an ontological shift that views individuals as aspects of a dynamic and integrated whole (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Trans-action therefore becomes the wholly integrated site for meaning-sharing (Simpson, 2009).

The grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” emphasises that to understand managerial capability requires an understanding of the highly relational

nature of emergent action. New meanings arise within the dynamism of unfolding relationships, shaped by the experience of context and individual identity. When new meanings arise, new and different action is made possible. The first exploratory interpretation therefore is that Wayfinding (managerial capability) occurs as an effect of patterned relationality, involving relationships that unfold within an emergent and continuously changing social arena. The figurative demonstration of a network of patterned relations occurring in an unfolding social arena is shown in Figure 15 (p. 244), in the previous chapter. Put simply, “Wayfinding” is understood as an accomplishment of ‘we’ rather than a possession of ‘I’. This understanding has important consequences for how management training might be better approached, and is discussed later.

Exploratory interpretation 2

The grounded theory explained in this thesis enables alternative and thorough explanations for certain characterisations that have been previously used to define the phenomenon of capability. Cairns and Stephenson (2009) have pointed out that most dictionary definitions include “unused capacity” as being part of the meaning of an individual’s ‘capability’. This infers that capable individuals are holding some sort of “potential ability” which remains latent until needed.

Precisely what this ability is, or how and why it emerges to do the right thing at the right time remains unexplained. Such an explanation expressing that some ability sits in the background, and is therefore difficult to see, describe and measure is a consequence of viewing the phenomenon of capability as a behaviourist conception of individual human agency. Humans viewed this way are seen as rational responders to external stimuli. Behaviour is therefore accounted for through measurement of regularities of input and output. Certain outputs that cannot be explained presently, remain in an as-yet unpacked “black box” (Tsoukas, 1996) waiting for newer, more fine-grained methods to be able to fill-in the missing explanation.

As demonstrated in this thesis, explanations can be sought through a different philosophical understanding of how human agents live and engage in their worlds. The grounded theory explaining managerial capability as “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” looked for explanations of capable “outputs” by looking into what-managers-do, or their knowing. A rich selection of ‘doings’, thickly described, are represented in this thesis by the array of properties and their dimensions constituting the Sub-core categories. The clusters of moving social relations described from the data constitute the

social arenas of action, which are continuously forming and reforming. As explained in Chapters 6 and 7, and summarised as a synthesis in the last chapter, trans-actions constituting a social arena *is* the ‘knowing’. It is this knowing that is *generative* of new meanings and therefore potential new action.

Looking back to Cook and Brown’s (1999) example of bike-riding, it is understood that the knowledge *about* bike-riding and the ‘knowing’ of *actually riding* a bike mutually constitute each other. That is, “the interplay of knowledge and knowing can generate new knowledge and new ways of knowing” (Cook & Brown, 1999 p. 381). Similarly, the ‘doings’ explained in this study are generative of new knowledge, leading to new ways of knowing.

This view understands that important ability is not ‘stored’ in the individual in the form of unused capacity or potential ability, waiting for the right circumstance to emerge. Rather, ability is continuously generated, fresh and in tune with the perceived context-of-the-moment, as an effect of endless participation within multiple relational trans-actions through time. This forms the second exploratory interpretation for this study: managerial capability in the given context is understood as “Knowing as you go” which delivers an effect of finding-one’s-way (Wayfinding) in emergent environments through time. This understanding also has important consequences for how management training might be better approached, and is discussed later.

Exploratory interpretation 3

This thesis enables an alternative interpretation about how learning is initiated and continues in changing environments where both context and new ‘problems’ are emergent. As discussed in Chapter 2, previous conceptualisations of capability have invoked Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory to explain the strong self-initiated learning character of so-called capable individuals (Cairns & Stephenson, 2009). Social cognitive theory arises from the traditional scientific perspective and seeks to apply principles of logic to produce theory that is directed towards improved ability to ‘control’ new situations (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) is a construct offered by cognitive science that operates as a variable in social systems. Variation in individual self-efficacy is proffered as an explanation of variation in the confidence an individual has about their capacity to perform tasks (Raelin, 2007). Social cognitive theory and self-efficacy have been used to explain how and why individuals self-initiate learning and control in emergent environments. Self-

efficacy is described as a necessary competency for the capable person (Cairns & Stephenson, 2009; Hase & Tay, 2004).

The very different conceptualisation of managerial capability as “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” avoids emphasis of powers that may be contained within individuals, but at the same time does not deny the existence of such powers or the potential for their importance. The key focus for the grounded theory offered here is relationality, and how relationality unfolds in managers’ lives and operates as a generative producer of new knowing and knowledge. As explained in the previous chapter, managers’ experience of emerging contexts is deeply integrated with their habits and actions of “Inquiring”. Clusters of unfolding relations and actions become the sites for meaning-sharing and meaning-making. Learning is described as the ongoing discovery of the ‘connection of things’.

Learning is therefore not understood as initiated by a highly self-efficacious individual who uses conscious observations of an external environment and rational logic to plan and to do the next right thing. Rather, learning arises as an effect of engaging in ongoing habits and practices that have a mostly divergent character, toward novelty. These practices are made explicit, for example, through the dimensions of the two properties “Learning continuously” and “Experimenting”, constituting the Sub-core category “Inquiring”. This study illustrates how learning is in-the-doing and develops the third exploratory interpretation: that managers learn and find-their-way as an effect of a variety of social and experimental processes, which result in the continuous acquisition of more varied predispositions to act.

Exploratory interpretation 4

This research addresses two identified deficits within Australian pharmacy management research, discussed in Chapter 1. The first deficit highlighted that recent research has been concerned primarily with professional pharmacy practice change, rather than fundamental management practice which underpins the successful community pharmacy enterprise. Research has been primarily directed toward development and implementation of ‘professional pharmacy services’. Research initiatives have been driven by an *a priori* assumption that ‘services’ development is the point of any transformative outcome. The discussion in Chapter 1 acknowledged that development of new services is likely to be very important in providing successful adaptive outcomes for the industry. However, there is little if any research exploring *how* effective managers manage capably, to deliver continuous adaptive viability over

time, without the underpinning assumptions of *what* they should do. The grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” addresses this identified deficit in contemporary pharmacy management research. The deficit is addressed by delivering a theory derived from paying fine grained attention to descriptions of what managers actually do from their own perspective, without *a priori* assumptions.

The second deficit identified in Chapter 1 was that relevant pharmacy management research findings to date contribute knowledge developed within a functionalist paradigm (realist ontology and positivistic epistemology). As was discussed in Chapter 2, knowledge produced through this perspective is undeniably useful, but the perspective brings its own limitations in how we know what we know. In previous research, some explicit deficits pertaining to pharmacist managerial capability and capacity have been generally identified. But research of this type has limitations in that knowledge created this way is disconnected from the environmental and social context and temporal dimension within which the managerial phenomena under investigation exists (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011).

The grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” also addresses this identified deficit in contemporary pharmacy management research, by delivering theory that includes i) the meaningful contextual totality in which individuals are immersed, ii) the situational uniqueness of context as it relates to individuals and what they do, iii) time as experienced by individuals within their unfolding life-world, and therefore iv) the generative effects of unfolding relationality and dynamism.

Exploratory interpretation 5

While it is important to make meaningful interpretations that arise from the grounded theory developed from this research, it is also important to make conclusions about what the theory does *not* do. The grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” is not offered as *the* theory explaining managerial capability, but as *a* theory. The theory is offered as an interpretation which shapes and extends our understanding of the phenomenon in the given context. The theory complements previous knowledge. It is not put forward to supersede previous knowledge.

A crucial contribution offered by this theoretical rendition arises through the explicitness of its epistemological approach, which invites further extension and re-interpretation. Concepts which have been used to construct the theory are all interpreted emergent enactments. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011, p. 352) remind us that concepts as emergent creations are not “connected to the empirical world in a definite manner.”

Concepts describing enactment are open-ended in nature and context specific. Resultant theory is therefore also open-ended in that the theory reflects current enactments (properties and dimensions) that constitute broader context-dependent practices.

The grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” is therefore open-ended and available for evolutionary reinterpretation. It is offered more as a fruitful perspective than a fixed representation. It stands as a complimentary perspective to add to existing knowledge and ways of knowing, about the phenomenon of managerial capability. The theory illuminates the “how” of the phenomenon. The theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” is offered as one response to the question that began this research: “*How can we understand managerial capability in relation to effective community pharmacy management?*” Broader implications concerning the methodology, management theory and practice are discussed next.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The implications of this research touch three areas of academic and practical concern. Implications arise through the choice of philosophical perspective and methodology as well as through the development of the substantive grounded theory. Together these implications generate further implications for pharmacy management practice and for pharmacy management education. Each of these implication-sets is now briefly discussed in turn.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The research and theory implications which come from the choice of philosophical paradigm and accompanying suitable methodology have already been thoroughly discussed and explained throughout the chapters of this thesis. The thesis as a whole delivers an illustration of the application of a suitable qualitative methodology (grounded theory) nested within a particular process-philosophical perspective, fundamentally informed by the Pragmatist philosophers Dewey, Mead, James and Pierce (Charmaz, 2008; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009). Grounded theory is regarded as “a direct methodological descendent of the Pragmatist tradition” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 5). Together the Pragmatist tradition and the grounded theory methodology, as illustrated in this study, provide important implications for future research.

Illuminating meaning (identity) in action, and the inclusion of context

Pragmatist philosophy understands action as an expression of meaning (Musolf, 2003). Action and meaning dynamically reconstitute each other, and both are embedded in the emergent context of the moment (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). As illustrated in this study, meaning is a part of trans-actional engagements, and as trans-actional engagements necessarily change direction through time, identity becomes vulnerable to reconstruction, and vice-versa. Grounded theory provides the means of showing how meaning (identity), context and action influence each other to produce divergent new directions and convergent security.

The implication for research is that when action is understood as enacted meaning, the logic within action is more clearly revealed. Meaning, action and events can be considered as an indivisible emergent whole enabling a closer understanding of how new and sometimes unpredictable actions emerge on-the-go. For research seeking to illuminate strategy enactment, the approach illustrated here allows for focus on flowing emergent outcomes rather than preconceived and logical intended outcomes.

Including temporal flux and the flow of movement

The Pragmatist perspective from its origins has been concerned with the development of a philosophy of practical action (Simpson, 2009). Broadly, the Pragmatist view honours what we all experience in our ‘real’ unfolding lives, that is, that nothing much stays still and time is always passing. Flow of movement and inescapable temporality combined with scepticism about absolutes, wholes, certainties and finalities are said to be the common grounds binding the ideals of the Pragmatists (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). The Pragmatist view is that lives are lived in the present moment where meanings are enacted by simultaneously drawing on past experience to anticipate a future. Past, present and future are all conceived as constituting action in the present (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

As has been illustrated in this study, grounded theory enables the collection of data with an assumption that reality is fluid and unpredictable. The use of gerunds in the research coding and analytical process delivers a story of movement-in-time, to better approach the experience of the managers. Prospect and anticipation of the future are embedded in most of the codes and concepts, especially those constituting the Sub-core category “Inquiring”, explained in Chapter 7. Historically shaped identities are revealed and included in the theory. The resultant theory evokes emergence and openness, where

the explanation of managerial action is not separated from the managers themselves or their experience of their worlds. Continuity is preserved.

The implication, illustrated by the use of this process-philosophy and the grounded theory methodology, is that an explanation of ongoing action is made possible in the form of a meaningful dynamic relational theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”. Calls for the use of methodologies to accomplish such outcomes have come from reviews of sensemaking research (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014), leadership (Carroll et al., 2008), strategy (Vaara & Whittington, 2012) and management practice theory (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). As illustrated by this study, Pragmatist philosophy and grounded theory together have much to offer management and organisation theory development (Buch & Elkjær, 2015; Charmaz, 2008; Cook & Brown, 1999; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY

The grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” illuminates implications for management theory, but the cited implications are reliant on both the philosophical paradigm and methodology, from which the research findings originate. The implications described below, overlap with those just described.

Reconceptualisation of ‘managerial capability’ as “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go”

This thesis contributes a new substantive theorisation of managerial capability, albeit limited to its context, which offers a new perspective for understanding managerial capability. The choice of philosophical paradigm and research methodology has afforded the development of a theory that explains how managers find-their-way through ongoing participation in actions and relations that constitute their knowing-as-they-go. This theory varies greatly from previous explanations and theories concerning capability which were summarised in the literature review of Chapter 2. Its difference lies in the following areas.

Firstly, the theoretical account focuses on the ongoing relational totality of the managers. The theoretically constructed, but grounded clusters of actions and social processes show how the relational totality is accomplished. The findings demonstrate how managers, participate and learn in distinct ways. Actions are shaped by their experience of the emerging context and their sense of meaning or identity. Previous explanations of capability, reviewed in Chapter 2, suggest that capability consists a

collection of attributes (competencies or capacities) or operates as a system or complex system. The previous descriptions and explanations do say something of *what* might be involved, but the explanations are also indirect and remain silent about *how* managerial capability is accomplished day-to-day.

The grounded theory proposed here offers a new and closer explanation of *how* managerial capability is accomplished in the stated context. The theory does not explain the phenomenon as a list of discrete competencies, or systems within systems which become contingently related to each other. Rather, this theory delivers a holistic performative account constituted by a nexus of ongoing actions and social processes, and the relations among them. This view includes the influence of context, time and identity. The first implication of this research is that the new theoretical understanding of managerial capability, expressed as an accomplishment of “Wayfinding”, enhances previous theoretical understandings, by showing *how* managerial capability is accomplished.

Secondly, in addition to developing theory that demonstrates the dynamism of accomplishment or performance, the theory offers a specific micro-process perspective which is highly context specific. As suggested by Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011, p. 353), theories explaining performance or practice provide an orientation to better understand emergent patterns of human action that constitute the performance. They also explain the more fine-grained contextual specificity through which enactment of social processes takes place. As illustrated in this study, the latter offers specific grounding for the former, therefore developing considerable refinement in the presented theory (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011).

Theories that are built from the ground up, or from lower situationally specific actions to a higher performative theoretical account are claimed to be of use in guiding other researchers who may see “family resemblances” (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011, p. 353), within another organisational domain. That is, other researchers may see both similarities and differences (for example, in the types of social processes and their purpose), between their own collected data and the grounded theory presented here. The substantive grounded theory presented here cannot be used as a generalisation outside of its given context. However, the second theoretical implication produced by this study, is that the proposed grounded theory may act as a heuristic guide for similar social research (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Tsoukas, 2009).

Thirdly, a stated theoretical aim of this study is to understand the phenomenon of managerial capability by bridging the gap between i) the theory of knowledge

purported to make it happen, and ii) the practice of its enactment. The grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” bridges the theory/practice gap by presenting a clear and direct understanding of the enactment of managerial capability within the chosen managerial group. The theory has not been developed by studying detailed patterns of cause and effect. Rather, the Pragmatist perspective collapses the need for a cause-versus-effect analysis by promoting the notion of “knowing” as enacted meaning. Knowledge and action are thus fused through the concept of knowing.

Theory that is developed directly from the sayings and doings of participants achieves the desired closeness of the theory to enacted day-to-day practice. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011, p. 353) call this “theory-as-elucidation”. Theory-as-elucidation provides the theoretical foundations (concepts) which should be recognisable to researchers who wish to extend and refine the theory, and to practitioners and educators. It is the action-logic of the practitioner which has been raised into theory, not the logic of the researcher (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011).

In the case of this study, the elucidated theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” is offered as an insightful interpretation of what is happening in the community pharmacies belonging to the managers. The theory interprets what’s *really* going on. The third theoretical implication which arises from this study is that the theory presents a grounded, clear and conceptually recognisable starting point for continuing theoretical research in the community pharmacy sector or in other domains.

Finally, the substantive grounded theory offered here, and its methodology based on the philosophy of the Pragmatists, contributes to emerging theoretical debates concerning how human action and human knowledge can be more closely understood. The common grounds between various contributions are understandings that i) social action constitutes and is constituted by emergent context, ii) theoretical explanations need to avoid ontological dualism invoking contingent relations between causes and effects and iii) social relations between people are mutually constitutive (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011).

Research is evolving utilising the perspectives of thinkers such as Bourdieu and Heidegger (Chia & Holt, 2006), Giddens (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Whittington, 2006), Vygotsky (Jarzabkowski, 2003), Wittgenstein (Shotter, 2006) and Schatzki (Jørgensen & Messner, 2010). Pragmatism and its inspired methodologies are considered as being a useful additional resource for studies that seek to understand action-transformation in unpredictable environments (Buch & Elkjær, 2015). A fourth theoretical implication

arising from this study is that it provides one such illustration of the resourcefulness of the Pragmatists' perspectives, through the grounded theory methodology.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The key implication for practice is that the grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” reveals a theory with an accompanying narrative that shows *how* managerial capability is accomplished within time. Together, the theory and narrative show what’s happening when Australian pharmacist owner-managers are managing capably, in relation to their experience of the emerging context. Far from lists of required skills, abilities and attitudes, conceptually disengaged from the context in which they are to be of use, the theory enables a view into *how* deeply situated and meaningful actions take place.

The theory highlights managers’ emotional experience of their emergent world, rather than just a list of troublesome occurrences. The theory also specifies the key relationships within which managers engage, but more importantly *how* they engage meaningfully in those relationships. The theory highlights what is important to them in the relationships. Vitality, the theory shows the generative learning-power that “Inquiring” practices create. In short, the theory and its narrative present usable knowledge from the “real world” of pharmacy managers. Relevance and contextual authenticity are built into the theory as a result of the theory’s grounding in real-life narratives.

As described in Chapters 1 and 2, the pharmacy profession in Australia requires that pharmacists are trained and then perform their practice (including leadership and business management) according to highly specific competency standards (PSA, 2010b). The comprehensive list of prescribed competencies, and the standards to which they are directed, are devoid of context. It is assumed that practitioners will interpret the right meaning of what is required in the standards in relation to whatever context arrives. The list of competencies has much to say about *what* must be done, but little about *how*, especially in changing contextual circumstances.

The substantive grounded theory offered here shows what forms of managerial “knowing” are involved, (through the various properties and dimensions), which include the emerging context. The theory shows *how* pharmacist managers use knowledge and meaning in their actions of “knowing”, and conversely, how their knowledge and meanings are potentially changed through their ongoing actions of “knowing”. The theory’s contribution for practitioners and students is therefore

grounded in its authenticity, and puts ‘doing’ alongside *what* needs to be done, and so offers a complimentary perspective of how managerial capability can be understood. A closer and dynamic understanding may aid development of better managerial practice. For example, comparative practice-analysis utilising the grounded theory as a guide may highlight important micro-practice variations in the use and intent of social practices. Reflection about such variations may lead to experimental change in management practice in some contexts.

The theoretical perspective “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” may also enhance perspectives for training and educational programs for pharmacists, improving educational design. Strident calls for more and better management training for pharmacists have been echoing for several years (Benrimoj et al., 2010; Bond, 2003; Faris et al., 2005; Jesson et al., 2004; Loader & Rogers, 2004; Mospan, 2017; Ottewill et al., 2000; Warner & Gerrett, 2004). Management training has often been viewed as “a dreaded, dry, and often neglected aspect of pharmacy curricula” (Mospan, 2017, p. 171). Management knowledge which is passed on to students, without the urgency and relevance of current context, can indeed be seen as dry and boring.

Alternative and complimentary perspectives that show ways-of-knowing as well as domains of knowledge may well be productive, especially as students seek to ‘ground’ their new knowledge and knowing through experiences in the training-workplace. In the substantive grounded theory, micro-processes of the day-to-day practice of managers are brought into view with dynamism. The grounded theory may well help students to recognise ‘what’s going on here?’ more quickly when exposed to real-life experiential practice in the latter stages of their training, and at the commencement of their careers.

While the three sets of implications emphasise the potential advantages of the research outcomes, there are also a range of limitations which must be taken into account. These are discussed next.

LIMITATIONS

This project is primarily exploratory in its nature. Social exploratory research seeks to illuminate how people get along in a specified context or circumstantial setting. Illumination usually means the use of qualitative methodological approaches to gain an understanding of what meanings infuse people’s actions in relation to how they ‘experience’ the world. The exploratory approach looks for dynamic influences rather than fixed and absolute causes. Analysis of process can develop theory “about a

constellation of forces shaping the character of the process and perhaps explaining differences in outcome” (Pettigrew, 1992, p. 8). The goal of social exploratory research is “...to learn 'what is going on here?' and to investigate social phenomena without explicit expectations" (Schutt, 2011, p. 14).

Qualitative research involving interpretive methodologies seeks to blend the scientific grounded-ness of transparent procedures and thoroughness of method with creative thinking and “disciplined imagination” (Weick, 1989). The quality of findings should be judged by the appropriate and balanced application of both rigorous scientific procedure with artistic endeavour (Seale, 1999, 2002). These statements provide the context for understanding the limitations of exploratory and interpretive social research. Several important limitations of the thesis presented here follow.

Firstly, as explained earlier, the grounded theory is a substantive theory which limits the findings to the selected group in the context they were experiencing at the time of the research. This seems to be a serious limitation. However, given that the developed theory represented here is comprehensive, complete and saturated for the group explored, it is reasonable to assume that the phenomenal knowledge gained from the theory holds relevance and applicability across members of the same group, that is, Australian community pharmacist owner-managers (Morse, 1999). Morse (1999, p. 5) suggested that thoroughly grounded substantive theories may well have useful applicability beyond the immediate group of concern. The theory may provide helpful insights to people in similar contextual situations, or who are experiencing similar challenges, “regardless of the comparability of the demographic composition of the groups”. This resonates with other commentaries that point out that interpretive theory may act as a heuristic guide for similar social research (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Tsoukas, 2009).

Secondly, the grounded theory has relied on informant-interview accounts. There was thus a reliance on retrospective reporting of their managerial lives. Observational data were also collected as reported in Chapter 4 (Table 5, p. 63), but observations were secondary to verbal accounts. This reliance on retrospective verbal accounts limits the strength of the collected data, despite earnest researcher attempts to ‘ground’ various participant-claims by seeking further explanation with examples. A better grasp of authentic micro-processes represented by the ‘doings’ of managers could be approached by even closer observation on-the-job. This implies a more ethnographic research style which will be expanded in the next section concerning future research suggestions.

Thirdly, qualitative approaches generally, and grounded theory methods specifically, rely on rich and thick descriptions to support their explanations. Variation is a vitally needed inclusion, further deepening the explanatory offer. While such explanations deliver the potential advantage of up-close authenticity and practitioner relevance, they also leave the reader to do the hard work of wading into the richness and depth, to build specific practice relevance. As described by Johnson, Melin and Whittington (2003, p. 12), such a task “may be food for reflection, but the fare has been pretty indigestible”. The limitation of having to digest high volumes of qualitative description can be a significant one. The substantive grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” may be a fruitful perspective, but does require motivation and persistence to fully grasp its knowledge contribution. Further work needs to be done to transform the theoretical contribution into a helpful educative contribution for practice (Johnson, Melin, & Whittington, 2003).

A fourth limitation is that while the new theory of managerial capability assists in understanding the phenomenon more clearly, the theory emphasises dynamic generative processes rather than *specified* consequential outcomes of the processes. This was the exploratory intent of the guiding research question, but it remains a limitation, thus highlighting future research needs. The clarity of the process perspective and the theoretical terms that have been introduced should be helpful to guide further research, which is discussed briefly next.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The construction of the substantive grounded theory “Wayfinding – Knowing as you go” serves as an illustration of the application of the Pragmatist process-philosophical perspective in conjunction with a constructionist version of the grounded theory method. Commentary concerning pharmacy social research emphasises that new methodological approaches are needed to extend current managerial knowledge but particularly to better understand complex social phenomena (Scahill, 2013). The study serves as a guide for further research which can build theory concerning how managers go about managing capably in rapidly changing times.

Productive research endeavour in both the sciences and humanities produces plausible propositions that are made available for scrutiny (Strübing, 2007). The aim of grounded theory is particularly directed toward this outcome, as expressed by Strauss and Corbin (1994, p. 278):

Theory consists of *plausible* relationships proposed among *concepts* and *sets of concepts*. (Though only plausible, its plausibility is to be strengthened through continued research.) Without concepts, there can be no propositions, and thus no cumulative scientific (systematically theoretical) knowledge based on these plausible but testable propositions. (Italics original).

Grounded theory is constructed as open to the testing of its propositions, but to proceed with testability requires considering the ontological and epistemological criteria that will govern the ‘validity’ of how theoretical proposals are tested. As pointed out by Strübing, (2007, p. 559), for theories that are “‘burdened’ with processuality and perspectivity, the traditional mode of theory testing does not seem appropriate.” Pragmatist philosophy understands that knowledge is not devoid of action and action is not devoid of context and perspectives. As put by Corbin (2008, p. 4), “acts of knowing embody perspective” ...and ... “what is discovered about ‘reality’ cannot be divorced from the operative perspective of the knower”.

Strauss and Corbin (1994) light the way regarding how to progress the interrogation and further development of grounded theory and its constituent propositions by re-focusing on the Pragmatist ideal of usefulness:

We follow closely here the American Pragmatist position [...]: A theory is not the formulation of some discovered aspect of a pre-existing reality ‘out there’. To think otherwise is to take a positivistic position that [...] we reject, as do most other qualitative researchers. Our position is that truth is enacted [...]: Theories are interpretations made from given perspectives as adopted or researched by researchers. To say that a given theory is an interpretation—and therefore fallible—is not at all to deny that judgments can be made about the soundness or probable usefulness of it (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 279).

Future research utilising the theory and propositions delivered in this thesis relies on the core of the Pragmatists’ claim that “the proof of every proposition lies in its practical consequences...” (Strübing, 2007, p. 560). This study illustrates that focusing on the rich idiosyncrasy of data, collected from a specified group, and utilising a suitably justified interpretive perspective is productive. Meaningful, dynamic patterns of actions have been illuminated so as to produce a plausible but substantive theory with a supportive and trustworthy narrative. Clearly, the theory is ultimately more valuable than the data because of the explanatory power of theory (Johnson et al., 2003). Improving theory so as to break through the limitations of substantive theory requires more or larger studies, or both, that look into similar issues across broader fields of

human concern. In this way, limited substantive theory can become more generalisable formal theory. Formal theory has greater explanatory power across a range of situations (Goulding, 2002), and is often an outcome of suitably designed longitudinal studies (Goulding, 2002).

The advantage of longitudinal studies is that they can be designed to monitor the development of patterns that constitute a phenomenon over a period of time, rather than depend on retrospective verbal accounts (Hofer & Bygrave, 1992). Longitudinal studies that include real-time observations, both intermittent and regularly scheduled, also capture data through time giving findings a more dynamic temporal character (Pettigrew, 1990). Longitudinal studies may also discover specified consequential outcomes of observed processes, as well as the processes themselves. This would address the limitation of this study raised earlier. A range of qualitative methodologies, designed to get much closer to the agent under study, are suitable to match with a study based on longitudinal data collection. Methodologies include participant observation (Samra-Fredericks, 2010), action research (Heracleous & Jacobs, 2008), video-ethnography (Liu & Maitlis, 2014) and work shadowing (Jarzabkowski, 2008), as examples (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011).

The emphasis on process-analysis through time brings action, directionality and anticipatory decision-making into the foreground and holds the promise that research may be able “to catch reality in flight” (Pettigrew, 1992, p. 10). Extending our understanding of *how* people know in addition to *what* they know must surely enrich and extend our understanding of “real managerial work” in “experienced managerial worlds”. This study has sought to move in this direction and in its own way has been another exercise in “Wayfinding” into the complex phenomenon that we have recognised as managerial capability.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

A summary of methodological issues which are clarified by Juliet Corbin in the introductory pages of the third edition of the text 'Basics of Qualitative Research' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

Issue	Corbin's Clarification
On critiquing and labelling of grounded theory methodology	Corbin cautions against the use of "simple terms" as a means of critiquing and labelling methodologies and methods. She identifies her own ideas and self (p. 9-10) in a quote from Denzin (1998, p. 338): "Clearly simplistic classifications do not work. Any given qualitative researcher-as-bricoleur can be more than one thing at the same time, can be fitted into both tender- and tough-minded categories."
On ontology	Corbin reveals her relativist ontological orientation in acknowledging "there is no one 'reality' out there waiting to be discovered, however, I do believe there are external events, such as a full moon, a war, and an airplane crashing into a building" (p. 10). While Corbin agrees that concepts and ideas are constructed by both researchers and the research participants, the constructed concepts and ideas also relate to things or circumstances which are 'real' in the world, demonstrating relativist ontology;
On philosophical foundations	Pragmatist philosophical roots are demonstrated in Corbin's view that analytical work requires some degree of conceptual language to permit talk about "findings" (p. 10). Absence of concepts strips away the basis for discussion, which is necessary to satisfy one of the key purposes of the grounded theory methodology – that of delivering practical utility, for example, the development of knowledge-based practice. Her motivations relating to knowledge are clear, as indicated in this statement: "I want to develop knowledge that will guide practice" (p. 11); (A more detailed explication of the underpinning philosophical tenets is given in Appendices 2 and 3.)
On 'formalisation' of the grounded theory research process	While acknowledging that the analytical process is mostly "beyond the ability of a person to articulate or explain", some formalisation of analytical process is necessary, not to deliver a post-positivistic (recipe) formula, but as an aid in "teaching persons how to think more self-consciously and systematically about data" (p. 9), in the production of credible theory;
On knowledge, its nature, origin and purpose	Emphasising her professional nursing background, Corbin asserts that practitioners must have "a disciplined body of knowledge, along with experience, as a basis for their actions" (p. 11). She acknowledges that knowledge is ultimately an individual construction and is not a mere mirror of the world (Alvesson 2003), but knowledge does help to understand the experienced world;

Issue	Corbin's Clarification
On the orientation and role of researcher-analyst	Corbin concurs with feminist tenets which hold that researchers cannot separate who they are as persons from the research and analysis they undertake. This acknowledgement brings to the foreground the interactive process that occurs between the researcher and the researched and the responsibility that the analyst has for self-reflection and analytical reflexivity. The role and purpose of the analyst writing memos (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1994; 1998) is thus both accentuated and epistemologically clarified.

APPENDIX 2

The philosophical foundations of Pragmatism

The contribution of what has become known as Pragmatist philosophy, or just Pragmatism, is attributed to the works of Charles Peirce, William James, George Mead and John Dewey (Charmaz, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009). Pragmatism is considered as having much to offer organisation studies (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011), especially for scholars seeking to better understand dynamic processes in managerial and organisational contexts (Buch & Elkjær, 2015). Scholars of Pragmatist philosophy point to at least four key themes in Pragmatism that aid in the transcendence of the duality of person and their organisational context. These four themes are proposed as “‘experience’, ‘inquiry’, ‘habit’ and ‘trans-action’” (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011, p. 63).

Pragmatism understands that all human action is infused with meaning (Blumer, 1969; Simpson, 2009) and eschews ontological duality. Action can be understood as enacted meaning. ‘Experience’ therefore is understood not as the growing accumulation of sequential experiences over time, but “comprises both passive effects of situations upon selves and active influences of selves on situations” (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011, p. 64). The Pragmatist idea of experience therefore fuses experienced context, meaning and action and considers them to be mutually constitutive (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

As meaningful actions unfold in the moment between past and future, experience “is the process of constructing and reconstructing of *both* selves and situations” (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011, p. 65, italics added for emphasis). Histories are reconstructed in the actions of the moment to understand the present (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Continuity, dynamism and unfolding temporality are all brought into the foreground through this understanding. Context is not ‘out there’ to be met, rather, it is understood as experienced context that both shapes and is shaped by action (enacted meaning).

‘Inquiry’ refers to actions and practices that arise from experience of doubt and uncertainty, or a breakdown in the expected flow of life or circumstance (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Inquiring is a process characterised by seeking, searching and experimenting actions directed toward resolution of “...a felt (‘emotional’) encounter...” (Buch & Elkjær, 2015, p. 5). Inquiring in the Pragmatist sense is to try to understand emerging experience and in doing so reconstruct meaning (Buch & Elkjær, 2015).

'Habits' are described as "acquired dispositions to respond in certain ways in certain circumstances; they allow us to anticipate our own and other persons conduct in a given situation, as well as how a situation may unfold" (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011, p. 68). Habits enable us to 'go on' as we do, and much of ordinary human behaviour is considered habitual and mostly beyond conscious consideration (Gross, 2009). The Pragmatist view of 'habits' considers them repetitive processes and enablers of mutual anticipation of action in the flow of social relations. Habits therefore have the effect of regulating mutual conduct within social relations so as to deliver mostly anticipated outcomes (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). But habits are also considered as changeable and emergent and inseparably connected with the unfolding and often surprising context of life. Thus the Pragmatist understanding of 'habit' is strongly connected to the notion of 'inquiry' (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). When the anticipations of habit are thwarted, inquiring actions are amplified (Buch & Elkjær, 2015). Inquiring actions can be quite non-intentional and therefore immanent (Simpson, 2009).

'Trans-action' is a Pragmatist inspired concept which revises how social action between participants is understood. The notion of 'trans-action' reconceptualises how to understand sociality. Credited to Dewey and Bentley (Dewey & Bentley, 1991/1949), the more usual idea of social 'inter-action' between physically and mentally separated people is refined by the notion of 'trans-action' which considers relationality as indivisible and whole. Relations can be considered as occurring seamlessly *across* people rather than exchanges *between* them (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Simpson, 2009). As put by Elkjaer and Simpson (2011, p. 69-70), "...when selves and situations are related to each other on the basis of trans-actional understanding, they may be seen as mutually constituting aspects of an integrated unity." From this viewpoint, continuously emergent social practices become the construction site for both social selves and social situations (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011).

The four themes 'experience', 'inquiry', 'habit' and 'trans-action' are the important philosophical tenets of Pragmatism. These understandings are put to work in this thesis, particularly in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, as a guide to data analysis and theoretical synthesis. The key point here is that the Corbin and Strauss (2008) mode of grounded theory is founded on the philosophical principles of the Pragmatists (Charmaz, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). But the development of grounded theory also relies on the philosophical and practical contributions of the 'symbolic interaction' movement which is discussed next.

Grounded theory and 'symbolic interactionism'

The Corbin and Strauss (2008) mode of grounded theory, evolved primarily through the conduit of Anselm Strauss, utilising the philosophy of Pragmatism. The method is described as a means by which theory is developed giving explanation to common social life patterns (Annells, 1996). Grounded theory relies not only on the philosophy of Pragmatism but also on the theoretical refinements delivered by the methodological movement of 'symbolic interactionism' (Blumer, 1969). The interaction between people is viewed as symbolic because the trans-actional processes use the symbols of language, words and interpretation. Blumer, (1969, p. 19) describes his meaning of symbolic interaction as follows:

The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or 'define' each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their 'response' is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions.

Meanings guide what actions will be taken toward objects or situations (Locke, 2001). The idea that 'meaning' precedes and infuses action is an important one. For example, Blumer (1969) points out that phenomena such as attitudes, perception and cognition have been used in psychology to account for human behaviour. Similarly, sociology has used values, culture and status to achieve the same ends. Blumer, (1969, p. 3) suggests that such strategies in both psychology and sociology are examples of the ways in which meaning is "swallowed up" and therefore "bypassed" in the resulting explanations.

Meaning does not arise only within an individual alone, but from "the social interaction one has with one's fellows" (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). This emphasises the importance of social relations in the creation of meaning, rather than considering meaning as being derived from objects themselves. Meaning is therefore situated within a social context, and arises through people as they relate (Blumer, 1969, p. 5). For meanings to arise this way, Blumer (1969) explains that both the self and the other(s) are simultaneously involved, through the process of interpretation. In this case, 'self' has a meaning different to that of psychology, in that through social relations, the 'self' becomes a social trans-actant, and thus defined and redefined through social relations (Mead, 1934). Symbolic interaction carries the Pragmatist notion that individuals act outwardly toward others and inwardly toward themselves (Blumer, 1969; Charon, 1998).

The social process perspective: capturing processes, emergence and time

When individuals share common circumstances, (such as managing one or more community pharmacies), the individuals are likely to experience common perceptions, thoughts, behaviours and meanings (McCann & Clark, 2003a). But such individuals behave and act independently, guided by the importance each individual places on the meaning of the matter at hand. Meanings not only guide actions in the present, they also serve as a guide to future action (Blumer, 1969). The basis of grounded theory lies in these perceptions, thoughts, behaviours and meanings as they relate to historically shaped identity, present action and future anticipations (directionality).

The focus for the grounded theory method needs to include social process, social structure and social relations (Annells, 1997b), taking account of time. Benoleil (1996) points out that basic social process (BSP) implies temporal change. Actions, interactions and emotions occur over time, constituting courses of action which have directionality and differing durations. As described by Charmaz (2006), a 'process' is described as

...consist(ing) of unfolding temporal sequences that may have identifiable markers with clear beginnings and endings and benchmarks in between. The temporal sequences are linked in a process and lead to change. Thus single events become linked as part of a larger whole (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10).

Processes thus have a sense of purpose and continuity and are related to experienced context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Research analysis of the data arising from a process is to focus upon, and attempt to capture the dynamic quality of both social relations and emotions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). A key concern for the researcher is to determine how environmental context affects the identified social process (Benoliel, 1996). As stated by the Pragmatist philosopher Dewey (1929, p. 40): "Because we live in a world in process, the future, although continuous with the past is not its bare repetition."

Since the objective of grounded theory is to develop theory from the data of human processes, the methodology philosophically incorporates 'emergence' and the inclusion of time in the theory developed (Charmaz, 2008). Emergence is a temporal concept in that past, present and future are assumed in its meaning and it takes into account that the unexpected often occurs. Citing Mead (1959), Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 7) state: "Various actors' interpretations of the temporal aspects of an action may differ according to the actors' respective perspectives; these interpretations may also change as the action proceeds" (Mead, 1959). Understanding how and why actors'

interpretations change through emergent action is a crucial aspect for theory development in this thesis.

An expanded range of philosophical assumptions that specifically underlie the Corbin and Strauss (2008) grounded theory methodology are expanded in Appendix 3. While grounded theory methodology clearly has substantial strengths to offer theorists who seek to more closely understand enacted human accomplishments, the methodology has also had significant critics over the years. The criticisms of grounded theory were introduced in the manuscript titled “*Generating or developing grounded theory*” in Chapter 3.

APPENDIX 3

Philosophical assumptions which specifically background the Corbin and Strauss (2008) grounded theory methodology. (Reproduced from Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 6-8).

The reproduced table from Corbin & Strauss (2008, p. 6-8) has been redacted for copyright reasons. Please refer to original source.

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APPENDIX 4

CRITIQUES OF GROUNDED THEORY METHODS AND RESPONSES RELATING TO THIS THESIS

1. Overt interrogation of the literature: forcing outcomes or sensitising analysis and verifying theory?

The objectivist versus interpretivist perspectives was the main driver of the schism between the classic more positivistic version adhered to by Glaser (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), and the more constructionist version developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998).

For Glaser, the idea that the researcher-analyst should actively utilise knowledge from the literature, existing theories, and experience in and around the topic of research, was seen as a sure way to force contrived structures into both the research analysis and resultant theory. Further, Glaser asserted that such forced outcomes as well as Strauss and Corbin's focus on verification, delivered the positivistic approach that Strauss and Corbin declared they were seeking to avoid (Babchuk, 1996).

In response, Strauss and Corbin (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, 2000), insist that bringing the researcher's knowledge and perspectives to bear on the data enables an insightful and sensitive analysis of the data and prevents unnecessary duplication of studies. As discussed earlier, the notion of 'verification' as used by Strauss and Corbin refers in particular to the purpose of constant comparison. Constant comparison is undertaken throughout the research and is essential to the 'grounding' process within the grounded theory method. Constant comparison, (and other meticulously described techniques) when seen in this sense, is indeed a type of constant verification and differs from the positivistic notion of verification as quantitative proof (Annells, 1996).

2. Meticulous systematic procedures: Inflexible rigidity or clarifying elaboration?

The meticulous description of the research process that Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) developed, also caused criticism on two different but related counts. The first count was that the elaborate techniques and procedures described in the Strauss and Corbin version (1990; 1998) appeared to be rigid rules and procedures (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). The accusation was that the procedural rules and steps rendered the original purpose of grounded theory to a step-based formulaic approach and an impediment to emergent theory development (Charmaz, 2008; Glaser, 1992).

Strauss and Corbin have defended their version by pointing out that rigid adherence to procedures was not their intention (Strauss and Corbin 1998; 2000). Elaboration of the method in a detailed way was meant to clarify sampling procedures rather than to violate the original premises of grounded theory (Robrecht, 1995). Further, according to Kearney (2007), Strauss received great pressure from graduate students to make the grounded theory method more concrete for the novice researcher, giving a plausible and pragmatic explanation for the motivation to give such detail in the method.

The second count, relates to the poor implementation of the grounded theory method by researchers who utilised the carefully explained instructions of the Strauss and Corbin version in an unconsidered way (Schreiber, 2001; Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996). It is suggested that many used the procedures as a “cookbook” recipe for conducting qualitative analysis (Davidson & di Gregorio, 2011).

Researchers have also been accused of corrupting the method by adopting few of the essential methodological elements, or “(having) altered them beyond recognition as grounded theory” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 156). Further difficulties have also arisen when researchers undertake the method only in part (Benoliel, 1996), or produce a report of ‘meanings’ and call it theory, and/or report large tracts of narrative as findings that have not been analysed (Becker, 1993; Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996). These criticisms served to tarnish the reputation of grounded theory as a serious and rigorous method.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) also clarify that the method is not required to be implemented in a rigid way and that the explications are meant to provide a range of analytical techniques that researchers are encouraged to use in their own way, albeit not carelessly. Corbin’s personal reflection is that some formalisation of analytical process is necessary, not to deliver a positivistic (recipe) formula, but as an aid in “teaching persons how to think more self-consciously and systematically about data” in the development of credible theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 9). The poor and unreflective application of the grounded theory method cannot be justified but the highlighting of such flawed research techniques has served as a useful lesson to be heeded in this study.

3. Participants as knowledge sources: distant producers of facts or co-constructors of knowledge?

Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009), have described a range of criticisms concerning the grounded theory method, however most of their concerns were directed toward the

positivistic epistemology of the original Glaser and Strauss (1967) method, with some implications for the early Strauss and Corbin (1990) version. One issue that they highlight is their epistemological concern regarding the researcher's "distance to that which is studied" (p. 73). Alvesson and Sköldberg suggest that treating the research participant as a more distant producer of theory-free facts may render research findings as either "mere reformulations" of the participants' talk, or reformulations "of the researcher's own common-sense ponderings" (p. 73). While not discounting the grounded theory method as a whole, they call for an "epistemological break" with the participant (p. 73), so that theory does not remain shallow.

This "break" suggests that the research method would be better served if the participant was not treated so definitively as an epistemologically independent knowledge source, and that a move (break) toward constructionist epistemology should be tried. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) suggest a looser coupling to the data and a more reflective and reflexive focus on the data during analysis. They suggest that such a break should enable the development of formal grounded theory which would account for the "deep structure", while substantive theory would account for the "surface structure" upon which formal theory is based (p. 73). But perhaps Alvesson and Sköldberg are discounting the important Pragmatist philosophy and symbolic interactionism which leads to the essence of grounded theory.

The move away from the epistemology of positivism, toward social constructionism within the Corbin and Strauss (2008) revision, has been described in Chapters 3 and 4. Corbin (in Corbin and Strauss, 2008), has been explicit in her acknowledgement of the need to take account of postmodernist thinking and that "we don't separate who we are as persons from the research and analysis that we do" (p. 11). The requirement for self-reflection is firmly integrated within the method both explicitly in descriptive passages of the method (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), and implicitly in the requirement for and use of memos, as both data and analytical tools. Researcher reflexivity and the continuous attention to self-awareness is regarded as an important consideration and a valuable tool in the Corbin and Strauss method. Reciprocity of influence between the researcher and participant is fully acknowledged and research outputs arise from efforts of co-construction (p. 31).

Corbin and Strauss (2008) keep the foundational philosophical roots of Pragmatism and symbolic interactionism firmly in sight, where the utility of theory is treated seriously. People construct and interpret meaning through symbolic interaction with others (Mead, 1934). A participant incorporates the researcher within the dynamic

of symbolic interaction (Milliken & Schreiber, 2001), and vice-versa. Rather than separate formal and substantive theory on the basis of an epistemological division (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009) and “deep” and “surface” structures, Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain the main difference between formal and substantive theory more pragmatically as being one of scope, and therefore a distinction of generalisability.

The philosophy of the Pragmatists and the importance of symbolic interaction is evident in the following reflection by Corbin:

Though readers of research construct their own interpretations of findings, the fact that these are constructions and re-constructions, does not negate the relevance of findings, or the insights that can be gained from them. I believe that we share a common culture out of which common constructions are arrived at through discourse. Concepts give us a basis for discourse and arriving at shared understandings. (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 12).

This quote emphasises that useful communicative application of theory is a leading imperative of the grounded theory method, as explained by Corbin and Strauss (2008).

The purpose of this study was to develop a substantive theory to aid the understanding of managerial capability. The participants in the study are pharmacist owner-managers of pharmacies situated in the context of the Australian community pharmacy healthcare sector. Data have been collected from participants who own and operate community pharmacies across areas of diverse geography and demography. A research method which honours relativist ontology and an epistemology of social constructionism has been followed, along with data collection and analytical techniques which bring robustness to the methodology. While the research has represented managerial capability specific to this context, it may also hold insights for managerial capability in other contexts, however no such claim can be made.

The researcher believes that the call by Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009) for a reformulation of grounded theory toward a closer epistemological connection between researcher and the participant and the data, is embedded in the Corbin and Strauss (2008) method, and as carried out in this study. Greater researcher reflection and reflexivity in analysis, is very much a part of the Corbin and Strauss (2008) method, and was a vital activity in this study. Whether the theory developed from this study has accessed the “deep structures” referred to by Alvesson and Sköldbberg will be a matter of judgement for the reader, and no such claim is being made in this study. The purpose of the study was not to develop formal theory but to develop substantive theory, grounded

in Pragmatist philosophy and recognising the importance of symbolic interaction in all human phenomena.



APPENDIX 5

Title of research project :

Pharmacists managing capably: Exploring and reconceptualising managerial capability

INFORMATION SHEET

Who is conducting the research? **Senior Investigators:** Dr Rod Gapp & Dr Michelle A King
PhD Candidate: Mr Phillip Woods
School(s) / Centre(s): Griffith University Business School, Gold Coast campus
Contact Phone: (07) 55528767
Contact Email: r.gapp@griffith.edu.au

Why is the research being conducted?

The business and health system environments of community pharmacy in Australia are undergoing significant transformation. Fundamental change to Australia's health system is inevitable and inter-pharmacy competition has risen to unprecedented levels. These factors create strong pressure for community pharmacy enterprises to adapt to ensure survival. Dynamic business environments require managers with advanced management expertise to ensure commercial survival.

Limited research has been undertaken to advance a theoretical explanation of capable pharmacy management. Our proposed research seeks to better understand the management capability required by community pharmacists and how capability may be improved. To this end, we wish to address the following research question: *How can we understand managerial capability in relation to effective community pharmacy management?* Advancing understanding in this way will illuminate how the most relevant contexts, domains and processes of managerial concern are woven together by effective community pharmacy managers and how they are utilised to produce effective and evolving outcomes.

The study will contribute to both the management and pharmacy practice literature, by advancing both theory and understanding. These contributions will be useful foundations for the development of pharmacy management education curricula and management development methods. Understanding how community pharmacy management capability is constituted will also likely increase appreciation of the importance of the management discipline in the community pharmacy industry sector.

This research constitutes the research project for the candidature of Mr Phillip Woods, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, at the Griffith University, Gold Coast campus. Mr Woods is also a fulltime staff member of the Griffith University School of Pharmacy, where his major teaching and research interest is in the area of pharmacy management.

What you will be asked to do

We invite you to voluntarily participate in an informal (but confidential) discussion with Mr Woods and one other Griffith University investigator. While informal, the discussion will be semi-structured in that it will primarily concern topics surrounding the research question outlined above. In particular, we are interested in your perceptions

concerning a range of pharmacy management issues as well as your own approach to managing pharmacy business(es).

We anticipate that the discussion will take around 60 to 90 minutes. With your consent, the interview discussion will be audio-recorded, utilising a digital recording device. This recording is to facilitate a post interview transcription of the spoken text, to allow deeper consideration and analysis. No preparation is required by you. You are welcome to raise your own thoughts and ideas as the discussion progresses. The contents of the proposed discussion will be handled, analysed and stored in such a way as to preserve complete confidentiality. [See the ‘Your Confidentiality’ section below.]

The basis by which participants will be selected or screened

The focus of the project is a detailed exploration of how pharmacy managerial capability is constituted, from the perspective of pharmacist managers or business owners who have sustained their business advantage over time, in dynamic business environments. We believe you fit this criterion, and you have been selected from a cohort of such community pharmacy managers.

The expected benefits of the research

Several important benefits from the completion of our research are: 1) advancement in the understanding of what it means to manage pharmacies capably; 2) advancing understanding in this way will shed light on the most relevant and important contexts, domains and processes of managerial concern for Australian community pharmacy managers; 3) discoveries may be used to shape intra-industry discussion about what is important in contemporary pharmacy management; 4) this may contribute to an informed basis for the development of current and future management education and training for pharmacist managers.

Risks to you

The research team cannot locate any risk that warrants mention or management. [However, see note on ‘your confidentiality’ below.]

Your confidentiality

Ensuring confidentiality of the content of the discussion is one of our primary concerns. No participant in this research project will be identified in any subsequent reporting or discussion of the data, either by direct mention or through inference. The digitally recorded conversations will be de-identified at the point of transcription. That is, the conversion of the digitally recorded conversations to transcribed word-copy will code the participants to ensure complete anonymity. Both electronic-copy and hard-copy of transcribed conversations will contain no information to permit identification of the conversant. Audio recordings will be kept in a safe and secure place under lock and key during the research process.

Your participation is voluntary

Your participation is voluntary. Should you agree to participate, but subsequently change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any time.

Questions / further information

Should you have any questions regarding the project or matters concerning your involvement, please feel free to contact the research team. In the first instance you can contact Mr Phill Woods:

Email: Phillip.Woods@griffith.edu.au

Telephone: (07) 55528312

The Chief Investigator is also contactable:

Email: r.gapp@griffith.edu.au

Telephone: (07) 55528767

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Feedback to you

It is intended that the overall findings and interpretation of results of the research will be published in peer reviewed journals, and ultimately in the completed PhD dissertation by Phill Woods.

Privacy Statement

The research will not involve any identifiable information collection, access and/or use. The information collected will remain anonymous and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. Your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone (07) 37355585. Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. If potential participants have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project, they should contact the Senior Manager, Research Ethics and Integrity on (07) 37355585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.



Title of research project :

Pharmacists managing capably: Exploring and reconceptualising managerial capability

CONSENT FORM

Research Team

Senior Investigators: Dr Rod Gapp & Dr Michelle A King

PhD Candidate: Mr Phillip Woods

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Contact Phone: (07) 55528767

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By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include an informal (but confidential) discussion with Mr Woods and one other Griffith University investigator. While informal, the discussion will be semi-structured in that it will primarily concern topics surrounding the research question outlined above.
- I understand that the discussion will take around 60 to 90 minutes, unless otherwise mutually agreed.
- I understand that the interview discussion will be audio-recorded, utilising a digital recording device, and that participation and conversation content will be kept anonymous at all time during or after the research process.
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research (this may need to be modified for some projects);
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 5585 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

APPENDIX 6

List of participants interviewed in sequential order of interview.

Pseudonyms are assigned with a name commencing with a letter of the alphabet that corresponds to the sequence order of the interviews. For example, interview number 1 is assigned the name Adam, number two, Ben etc.

Interview Sequence No.	Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Primary Business Location	Business Scale (No. of Pharmacies Owned)	Ownership Structure (Solo, Partnership, Corporate-Style)	Use of a Centralised Head Office (Yes/No)	Approx. Duration as Owner-Manager
1.	Adam	Male	Gold Coast, QLD	3 community pharmacies	Partnership	No	20
2.	Ben	Male	Suburban Brisbane, QLD	3 community pharmacies	Partnership	No	8
3.	Charles	Male	Suburban Melbourne, VIC	1 community pharmacy	Partnership	No	15
4.	David	Male	Suburban Sydney, NSW	3 'discount' pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	30+
5.	Edward	Male	Regional QLD	1 community pharmacy	Solo	No	16
6.	Frederick	Male	Regional QLD	5 community pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	15
7.	Gerald	Male	Gold Coast, QLD	4 'discount' pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	26
8.	Harold	Male	Suburban Sydney, NSW	3 community pharmacies	Partnership	No	27
9.	Ian	Male	Suburban Sydney, NSW	6 community pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	30+
10.	Jeremy	Male	Suburban Melbourne, VIC	1 community pharmacy	Solo	No	30+
11.	Karen	Female	Suburban Melbourne, VIC	1 community pharmacy	Solo	No	20
12.	Letitia	Female	Suburban Melbourne, VIC	1 community pharmacy	Solo	No	18

Interview Sequence No.	Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Primary Business Location	Scale Business Interests (No. of Pharmacies Owned)	Ownership Structure (Solo, Partnership, Corporate-Style)	Use of a Centralised Head Office (Yes/No)	Approx. Duration as Owner-Manager
13.	Mark	Male	Suburban Perth, WA	5 community pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	13
14.	Noel	Male	Suburban Perth, WA	5 community pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	30+
15.	Oliver	Male	Suburban Perth, and Regional WA	10 community pharmacies mainly in WA, but also in eastern states	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	30+
16.	Peter	Male	Suburban Canberra, ACT	2 community pharmacies	Partnership	No	28
17.	Quintin	Male	Suburban Canberra, ACT, and Regional NSW	10 community pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	30+
18.	Robert	Male	Suburban Canberra, ACT	5 community pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	30+
19.	Sara	Female	Gold Coast, QLD	3 'discount' pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	7
20.	Tom	Male	Regional QLD	5 community pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	30+
21.	Ulrick	Male	Suburban Brisbane, and Regional QLD	4 community pharmacies	Partnership	No	10
22.	Vincent	Male	Suburban Brisbane, and Regional QLD	5 'discount' pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	Yes	14
23.	Walter	Male	Suburban Melbourne, VIC	1 community pharmacy	Solo	No	30+
24.	Xavier	Male	Suburban Melbourne, VIC	5 community pharmacies	Partnership, Corporate-style	No	30+
25.	Yates	Male	Suburban Sydney, NSW	1 community pharmacy	Solo	No	12

APPENDIX 7

Procedure for the first interview: ‘Adam’

The first interview was with the participant who was given the pseudonym ‘Adam’. Adam is a pharmacist owner-manager with over 20 years’ experience in pharmacy proprietorship and pharmacy-business management. The interview was undertaken on Monday April 11, 2011, commencing at 10am.

The participant suggested that it would be most suitable to him if the interview be conducted at his home, and suggested the suitable date and time. After the exchange of pleasantries, the researcher opened with a brief synopsis of the study as explained in the participant information sheet, particularly mentioning the researcher’s intent to audio-record the interview conversation. After a couple of general queries, and a confirmation that the participant had put aside up to 90 minutes for the interview, the informed consent paperwork was signed by the participant and given to the researcher. The researcher started the audio recording device immediately after assuring that the participant could ask for it to be stopped at any time. This provided a reassurance that he could speak frankly if he so wished, without being recorded. The interview flexibly followed the questioning themes outlined in Appendix 8 (Interview Guide). The interview content flowed seamlessly and was managed along the lines described in Appendix 9 (Interview Management).

The researcher recorded observations of the participant’s particular and subtle behaviours such as turns-of-phrase, expressions and gestures. The observations were recorded in very brief note form in a research note book, and every effort was made to not allow the brief note taking to become distracting to the conversation. The participant showed no sign of reluctance in answering the more specific and probing queries made later in the interview. The participant seemed to enjoy the interaction and looked calm and relaxed throughout the interview.

The interview finished cordially within the estimated time, taking a total of 85 minutes. The participant was assured that he could communicate with the researcher at any time to add or follow-up on specific details, ask further questions, or correct the record. A brief summary of measures to ensure confidentiality and anonymity for the participant was given before the researcher departed. Immediately after the interview, the researcher took time to more formally render the interview-observation notes into a memo, which can be reviewed in Appendix 10: Interview observations Adam.

The memo also contains elaborated thoughts on a range of interview related issues concerning reflections on participant dialogue, perceptions of how the first interview was conducted, and reflections on how the interview technique could be improved by the researcher.

APPENDIX 8

The original interview guide (ethics committee approved).

The guide shows the themes, thematic questions and (some) proposed interview questions. (Design after Kvale 2007, p. 59).

Theme	Researcher questions	Interviewer question-prompts
<p>1. Business-environment influences;</p>	<p>What does the subject conceive as the most important business-environment influences driving his/her responses to change, and why? (Health care environment, business environment or both).</p>	<p>(Intro): Can you tell me about what for you, are the biggest issues for your pharmacy business at the moment? (Follow up): What do you mean by ...? (Probing): Can you tell me more about ..., and why you think that affects your business?</p>
<p>2. Implications flowing from influences;</p>	<p>What does the subject conceive as the major business implications or consequences produced by the influences they find important, (and why)?</p>	<p>(Specifying): Can you relate a situation that demonstrates ...? Do you have other examples that relate to ...? Can you explain what you think are your priorities in the issues you have raised? Why do you have those priorities in that order? (Direct questions): When you mentioned ... (eg competition), do you think that the effect of competition is shaping your business development in a positive as well as a negative way? (Further probing) Can you expand on that?</p>
<p>3. Management approach to dealing with the implications;</p>	<p>What does the subject think needs to be done to deal with the major implications they are concerned about, and why? (industry level? Local business level?)</p>	<p>(Specifying): Can you tell me what you think needs to be done to deal with ...? (Industry or local level) (Follow up) What do you mean by ...? (Direct question): Can you expand on what approach you take to deal with ...? (Probing): Can you give an example of what you do to achieve ...? (Further probing): Can you expand on that example? Why do you think these issues need addressing the way that you have explained?</p>

<p>4. Management thought and action applied;</p>	<p>How does the subject go about implementing their management approach to achieve the outcomes they have described are necessary, and why? (what thoughts? what actions? other people, tools? et cetera)</p>	<p>(Specifying): How do you approach developing these ideas in your own pharmacy?</p> <p>(Probing): Can you explain what you mean by ...?</p> <p>(Direct question): Can you give an example of how you go about ...?</p> <p>(Further probing): How did (other person/people) have a role in that?</p> <p>(Indirect question) How do you believe those people saw their role in...?</p> <p>Can you expand on that?</p> <p>Why do you do this ... this way?</p> <p>Can you tell me how you learned to do things the way you have described?</p>
<p>5. Management approaches, thought and actions for the future.</p>	<p>How does the subject perceive the emerging managerial environment for pharmacy (5-10 year horizon)?</p> <p>Are the approaches and responses discussed sufficient to successfully manage within the emerging environments?</p> <p>How could pharmacy managers better prepare themselves to successfully meet the future?</p>	<p>(Specifying question): How do you think the influences you have mentioned will evolve for you over the coming 5-10 year horizon?</p> <p>(Probing): Do you think there will be other implications for you?</p> <p>Can you expand on ...?</p> <p>(Specifying question): Do you think the types of responses you have explained will be sufficient for you to meet the most important implications?</p> <p>Can you expand why you think ...?</p> <p>(Specifying question) How would you approach passing on your management (style/method/ideas et cetera) to your managers?</p> <p>(Probing question): If you have attempted this already, can you tell me how you went about it?</p> <p>(Indirect question): How do you believe the person (people) responded to this approach?</p> <p>(Further probing): How did this turn out?</p> <p>(Specifying question): How would you advise the industry to approach preparing others for these management challenges?</p> <p>So how would you go about doing ...?</p>

APPENDIX 9

Interview management details

The Appendix 8 Interview Guide demonstrates the framework that was used in the earliest interviews for the researcher to flexibly follow, and it was used as a means of keeping the researcher on track in the interview process, if needed. Directive-style questions were kept to a minimum in the first few interviews so as to not direct the interviewee, and to allow the interviewee latitude to set the direction of the conversation (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1997), within the themes of inquiry. This approach also allowed the researcher to become comfortable and familiar with the interview framework and to focus intently on the unfolding conversation, and notice the demeanour of the participant. As the number of interviews increased, the interview questioning became more narrowly focused regarding particular topics (Swanson, 1986), although the interview structure remained semi-structured and conversational in feeling.

Each interview commenced with light social talk, or sometimes informal talk about current pharmacy industry occurrences. This approach set the relaxed and conversational tone for the interview. The interview commenced with a question such as: “Tell me a little about yourself and your background that led you to become a pharmacy owner?” The semi-structured life-world interviews remained in a conversational spirit throughout, with encouragement for longer answers coming from the researcher (Kvale, 2007).

Techniques to encourage elaboration by the participant included following-remarks such as “umm, that’s interesting...” and “yes, I see...”, which conveys to the participant that close attention is being paid, and they have been heard (Kvale, 2007). Questions which follow-up on participant comments or probe into an aspect of what the participant raised became increasingly important as the interview numbers increased (Kvale, 2007). Examples of follow-up questions are: “So what happened then?” and “How did your customers respond to that?” Examples of probing-type questions are: “Can you tell me more about that?” and “Can you give me an example of that?”. Seeking clarification enables the collection of trustworthy information and adds credibility to the data gathered.

Occasionally it was necessary for the researcher to bring the conversation back with statements such as “That’s very interesting...but we were discussing before that...”. These occasional re-directions were carried out in the general flow of the

conversation, and on no occasion did the researcher feel that dislocation or rigidity was sensed by the participants as a result of the re-directions.

As each interview progressed the questions changed from general to the particular. Direct questions became important toward the end of each interview (Schreiber, 2001). Direct questions have the purpose of introducing specific issues that may flesh-out a conceptual property, or dimension. Examples of direct questions are: “When you mentioned (e.g. competition), do you think that the effect of competition is shaping your business development in a particular way?”, and “When you say you are curious, what do you mean by that?”. The researcher was careful not to allow the interview to take the form of a cross-examination at any stage. To accomplish this, the rate of questioning and follow-up questions was kept at an easy pace, with plenty of space to allow for periods of silence (Kvale, 2007). It was the researcher’s experience that periods of silence were mostly related to an obvious need for the participant to collect thoughts and undertake thoughtful reflection.

When the interview had drawn to a close, a debriefing discussion was offered to invite the participant to add anything further and to comment on their experience of the interview. In each case the researcher raised some of the main points that were discussed in the interview so that additional comments or corrections could be added. Each interview concluded with a remark and query such as: “I have no further questions. Is there anything else you would like to bring up, or ask about, before we finish the interview?” (Kvale, 2007, p. 56). Finally, an expression of sincere thanks to the participant for joining the research was given along with an offer of contact details of the researcher should the participant think of anything further. At the very end of the meeting, the researcher made a clear demonstration of the switching-off of the digital recorder.

The procedures undertaken in this interview were generally repeated for all interviews. It was the researcher’s experience that all participants enjoyed the interview conversations and had an enthusiastic willingness to converse, guided by the lines of inquiry. There were no exceptions.

APPENDIX 10

Expanded memo regarding interview observations: ‘Adam’

Interview memo: ‘Adam’

Date/Time Recorded: 27/04/2011 9:24:44 AM; Record time : 1:24:20; Recording file name : 110427_002; Interview location: ‘Adam’s’ home, Gold Coast.

Interview reflections: Consent document signed. Met at Adam’s house. Warmly welcomed. Adam offered tea/coffee and first few minutes – easy conversation. Interview setting – armchairs in his lounge. No problem with audio recording. Purpose/aim of project re-discussed briefly. Interview began with my invitation for him to summarise his ‘pharmacy-life’. Conversation tone eased even further. Body language neutral and relaxed. Practicing pharmacy for 27 years; As an owner since 1997. Owns two pharmacies in partnership.

Adam’s enthusiasm for conversation increased during the first 15 minutes, describing his passion for what he does. Described himself as a keen delegator. Questioning moved into ‘influences’ at about the 10 minute mark, away from life-story. Adam’s remarks were very candid about him being taken off-guard by some trends. I was reassured by his candour – a sign of authenticity. His continuing commentary became more expansive as he seemed to really engage the discussion topics. His body language remained easy – and his demeanour remained enthusiastic. I did not detect any sense of non-authenticity. Interview ended at 10:49am, with his welcoming remark to come back if needed.

Post-interview reflection: Returned to office and immediately transcribed the audio to Word® document. Some improvements to questioning process needed: i) Some questions contained a potential ‘lead’; ii) Some questions were too long – that is, a couple had qualifications at the beginning, making the question less clear; iii) Two questions were double-barrelled. These issues must be addressed in later interviews. It is also evident that the final section of the interview questioning – re management development for students, prior to graduation, is out of place. Give consideration to dropping this questioning process.

Key text is line 156-184, very frank and possibility for several codes re strain of “working harder for the same”. Around line 350: Coding Tip : Look for “historical” or similar words – frequently used – use as frame of reference for future plans? Coding tip: see lines 889-907, re bringing staff together. He seems to be continually in forward-motion with his attitude to work. See lines 932-933 re his continuous curiosity.

APPENDIX 11

An illustration of the use of the analytical tool, the ‘coding paradigm’, to bring context and temporality into analysis

In this study, the coding paradigm was used as a tool to assist analysis in identifying and understanding the relationships between conditions, processes and consequences throughout. The analysis begins by identifying a problematic event or incident (Strauss, 1993), which should constitute the starting point for analysis (Mead, 1938). Problematic events interfere with what would otherwise be routine actions and interactions of the participant and thus enable the participant to more easily consciously access and report incidents and events, that they find, or the analyst may find as critical (Hildebrand, 2007).

An illustration of the use of the coding paradigm is presented below using an extract from the interview transcript from the first interview. Adam, the first to participate in this study, had been asked by the researcher to describe what he thought were the most important influences on his pharmacy business. He said:

I'd say quite clearly at the moment the biggest issue, and I would use the word threat, to maintaining profitability and maximising returns in the pharmacy would be the ongoing discounting that's occurring in the industry. So we have extreme pressure on margins. So we're now at the situation, for the first time that I can recall in my managerial career where we're actually working harder, in a sense having a higher output, but not getting the same return. Or maybe getting the same return but working much harder. The impact of discounting is across the board, both from a retail perspective, in the retail goods in the business but also from the prescriptions. Our business isn't differentiated as a discounter, so to some extent our reaction in that area has been more reactive than proactive. And I would say to some extent perhaps we were a little bit slow off the mark maybe too, in recognising just how significant the impact would be on the Australian public's perception of pharmacy and the movement towards discounters. Having said that, we aren't directly trying to change our model of pharmacy in any way to...to, fight fire with fire. We're not really trying to take the discounters on. We see ourselves differentiated from that model but there's certainly a...a certain gap which can't be too wide as far as price differential is concerned, to lose our customers.

The open coding of the extract is illustrated in the right-hand column of Table A-1.

Table A-1: An illustration of how the open-codes from an extract of Adam’s interview are examined using the coding paradigm (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Strauss, 1987).

Coding Paradigm Component	Preliminary open codes
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the biggest issue; • maintaining profitability and maximising returns is threatened; • ongoing discounting in the industry is the threat • discounting threat is across-the-board • experiencing extreme pressure on margins • now at a situation for the first time • our business is not differentiated as a discounter
Processes (actions, interactions and emotions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we’re actually working harder • having a higher output but not getting the same return • getting the same return but working much harder • our reaction to the threat has been more reactive than proactive • we were a little bit slow off the mark in recognising
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slow off the mark in recognising the significance of the impact on customers perception of my pharmacy and the movement towards discounters • slow off the mark in recognising the significance of the impact on the Australian public’s perception of pharmacy and the movement towards discounters • we aren’t directly trying to change our model of pharmacy in any way • we are not fighting fire with fire • ...not really trying to take the discounters on • see ourselves differentiated from that discount model • having to mind the gap between our prices and the discounters prices • failing to manage the price-gap may mean we lose customers

For the purposes of illustration, the coding paradigm framework has been overlaid on the codes to show how it was used as an analytical tool. The tool helps interpretation of linkages between context (conditions) and process (actions/interactions/emotions), remembering it is not to be used as a directive for coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The ‘consequences’ show how the ‘conditions’ manifested themselves (Strauss, 1987). When the coding paradigm is applied as a way to ‘see’ the data, the conditional paths as perceived by the participant are revealed (Strauss, 1993). Conditional paths represent indicative courses of action that the individual participant connects to the perceived conditions (Hildebrand, 2007).

Perspectives of both directionality and future prospect are revealed when the data are split apart this way. An illustrative analytical summary of the use of the coding paradigm with this extract is given as follows.

The conditions.

From the illustrated analysis of the extract of Adam's interview, it is possible to access something of the emotional content that resides within Adam as he expresses the "threat" that he perceives is created by the competition from the (price) discounting within the industry. Adam explains his perception of conditions in terms of how he sees the proportion of this threat to "*maintaining profitability and maximising returns*", as being "*the biggest issue*" and as "experiencing extreme pressure on margins". The emotive implication of "threat" is added-to by his revealed naivety to the perceived situation-at-hand being, "*now at a situation for the first time*". The open codes, when seen as conditions reveal a range of conditions that might later bear significantly on the phenomenon of managerial capability, under study.

The actions/interactions/emotions.

Adam reveals the nature of his managerial actions at this time, referring to them as "*more reactive than proactive*", and that his recognition of the emerging environment around him was "*a little bit slow off the mark*". These codes, interpreted through the lens of the coding paradigm, give an indication of the nature and atmosphere of the actions and interactions that Adam is creating as a result of his perception of the conditions. His provisional assessment of where he and his business stand at the present is revealed in the description "*getting the same return but working much harder*", which implies a potential for frustrated emotions.

The consequences.

Adam reveals that he perceives the changes taking place at the micro scale in the minds of customers as, "*the movement towards discounters*" is a phenomenon occurring at a national (macro) scale, and not something just local and only pertinent to his business. The gravity of this perception is somewhat acknowledged in Adam's formative conclusions about his business trajectory at this point. Adam tries to balance several conclusions (consequences) about what his business is "not" with just one statement about what he thinks his business trajectory 'is'. For example, "*we aren't directly trying to change our model of pharmacy in any way*"..."*we are not fighting fire*

with fire”...and “*we’re not really trying to take the discounters*”, is balanced with “[we] *see ourselves differentiated from that discount model*”.

The nature of this collection of consequences reveals the formative state of Adam’s ideas at this point. His way forward is clearly shaped by the balance between the actions of his competitors and the perceptions of his customers. His statements reflect an understanding that this situation is not temporary but more of a permanent change to the rules of the game. The delicacy of his dilemma is reflected when he acknowledges his need to manage “*a certain gap which can’t be too wide as far as price differential is concerned*”. Adam perceives that failure to manage this “*gap*” may result in loss of customers, which resonates with the “*threat*” that was identified in the explanation of ‘conditions’.

Consequently, what were perceived as stable structures or conditions of the past, for example customer perceptions, are recognised by Adam as being in a state of flux. Adam’s actions are starting to take shape, but Adam hopes that his actions as they arise, for example, minding the price “*gap*”, will shape the conditions, for example not losing customers. As stated by Strauss (1993, p. 47): “The action is shaped by the conditions but in turn is shaped by active actors [participants]”.

APPENDIX 12

An illustration of the use of the analytical tool, ‘the matrix’ to link experienced conditions with action and consequences.

(Note: this appendix refers to ‘the matrix’ which is represented in Figure 4 (p. 79), in Chapter 4.)

Considering the case of Adam and the transcript extract illustrated in Appendix 11, one concept of focus identified in this passage was the analyst-created code “experiencing changing customer perceptions”. (This concept is fully explained as an integrated property in Chapter 5). The concept was one of several concepts derived through the axial coding process and reconsideration of the open codes illustrated in Table A-1, in Appendix 11. At the individual level of the matrix (level 8), Adam’s actions/interactions/emotions are represented in the centre, such as his assessment of “*threat*” and this threat being “*the biggest issue*” for him.

Moving through to the level of organisation (level 4), the researcher linked the concept of “*experiencing changing customer perceptions*” to the emerging conditions/consequences for Adam’s pharmacy organisation and staff team with the *in vivo* codes “*we’re actually working harder*” and “*having a higher output but not getting the same return*”. Adam’s words further link the concept of “*experiencing changing customer perceptions*” to the national context (level 2) with his quote “*...recognising just how significant the impact would be on the Australian public’s perception of pharmacy and the movement towards discounters.*”

In trying to determine how Adam perceived the threat to his desired trajectory and the scale of his responses, the researcher concluded that Adam perceives “experiencing changing customer perceptions” as a very substantial and quite possibly a permanent change in business circumstances. His responsive actions will likely be focused on differentiating his business. Indications of his likely conditional path, or the emerging course over time (Hildebrand, 2007), is shown by his reference to what path he will *not* take: “*...we aren’t directly trying to change our model of pharmacy in any way...*”; “*...we are not fighting fire with fire...*”; “*We’re not really trying to take the discounters on.*”

Further, directionality and future prospect (temporality) of his business intentions is revealed with his statement: “*We see ourselves differentiated from that model but there’s certainly a... a certain gap which can’t be too wide as far as price differential is concerned, to lose our customers.*” These data segments give an indication of directionality, or “trajectory” as described by Strauss (1993), and demonstrate how considerations of the future shape emergent actions of the present.

APPENDIX 13

An explanation of how text-data was recorded, managed and retrieved in the study “Pharmacists managing capably: Exploring and reconceptualising managerial capability”

The Microsoft Access® database system was used to flexibly store, locate and retrieve the growing key data for this study. The Microsoft Access® system was chosen due to its ability to support Object Linking and Embedding (OLE), allowing other documents to be embedded in the database, in addition to data recorded by the researcher. The basic design of the database system follows the lead of Fisher (2007).

Key data groups that were managed using the Access® system include the lists of participants and their particulars, the interview schedule, interview transcripts as Microsoft Word® documents and summaries of analysis recorded in Excel® database files. The Microsoft Access® database was set up with three tables titled “Interview Schedule”, “Interviews” and “Sub-core categories”.

The “Interview Schedule” lists the (de-identified) participant names, their primary business address, their gender, issued pseudonym, the interview location, date and time as well as other particulars. Each interview transcript in the form of a Microsoft Word® document was embedded in the “Interviews” table using the OLE function in Access®. The table titled “Sub-core categories” contains Excel® files recording how the Sub-core categories were constructed through their conceptual properties and dimensions.

The “Sub-core categories” table was designed with the following fields:

1. a sequential Sub-core category record number;
2. the Sub-core category name;
3. a description of the meaning of the Sub-core category, embedded as a Word® document using the OLE function,
4. an Excel® database record of the clusters of properties and dimensions which constituted each Sub-core category, embedded as an Excel® spreadsheet file using the OLE function and
5. a reflective memo concerning each Sub-core category and its constituent concepts, embedded as a Word® document using the OLE function.

The Access® database design of the table titled ‘Categories’ is illustrated in Figure A-1.

ID	Category No.	Category Name	Description	Excel File	Memo
1	1	Experiencing uncertainty, change and complexity	0(1)	0(1)	0(1)
2	2	Re-orienting meaningfully	0(1)	0(1)	0(1)
3	3	Inquiring	0(1)	0(1)	0(1)
*	(new)		0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

Figure A-1: An illustration of the design of the table titled “Sub-core categories” within the Access® database.

The Microsoft Excel® database file, referred to in item 4 above, was the recording tool used by the researcher to capture concepts that constituted each Sub-core category. Each Sub-core category had its own Excel® database file and each file has the following column-fields:

- a) the Sub-core category name;
- b) the Sub-core category description;
- c) the property names;
- d) the property descriptions
- e) the dimensions pertaining to each property and
- f) a reference to the participant and transcript quote-location (line number)

An illustration of the design of the Excel® database to record the conceptual breakdown of each category is shown in Figure A-2.

As the dimension fields were populated against each property, the participant transcript from which the dimension was located was recorded (that is, the participant alias identities), along with the transcript page and line-number from which the dimension was sourced. Thus, the development of Sub-core categories from properties and dimensions can be tracked back to the sources of data that the researcher used in his analytical development.

Clipboard		Font		Alignment		Number		Styles		Cells		Editing	
A2		F		3. Inquiring									
A	B	C	D	E	F	G							
1	Category Name	Category Description	Properties	Property/Description	Dimensional Aspect (constituting range)	Dimension	Text source (by line number)						
2	3. Inquiring	'Inquiring' refers to the 'acts of inquiring', a key theme in the philosophy of the Pragmatists (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011). Pragmatic inquiry involves acting (or practice) and thinking (Elkjaer, 2004). As put by Dewey, referring to the act of inquiring, "It is seeking, a quest, for something not at hand" (Dewey, 1916[1980]).	a. Learning continuously	Range of individual and social ongoing learning behaviours directed towards refreshing and renewing understanding and world view.	1	Continuously searching	[Adam] 932-933; 1340-1349; [Frederick] 397-408; 447-451; 521-542; 558-564; [Gerald] 232-239; 663-665; 670-672; [Harold] 537-541; 1019-1033; [Noel] 634-654; 678-694; [Oliver] 273-286; 716-727; 786-793; 842-847; 866-872; 890-907; [Peter] 348-351 and 352-426; 977-1003; [Quintin] (bookshop, restaurant, 3 degrees!) 587-588; 592-595; 611-614; [Robert] 619-622;						
3					2	Learning from 'smarter' people & consultants	[Adam] 646-648; [Edward] 892-896; [Harold] 1019-1028; [Ian] 323-329; [Jeremy] 924-937; [Mark] 184-190; 436-437; 769; [Noel] 331-336; [Peter] 926-934; [Robert] 538-546; 567-569;						
4					3	Learning from being a judge of business awards	[Harold] 644-650; 652-659; [Peter] 1307-1316;						
5					4	Learning by joining peak-bodies & committees	[Frederick] 387-397; [Gerald] 793-802; [Harold] 633-638; [Jeremy] 972-975; [Laetitia] 127-138;						
6					5	Learning by participating in non-pharmacy interests	[Frederick] 692-701; [Harold] 143-146; 253-263; 659-668; 668-681; 681-686; [Quintin] 492-498 and 498-508; 515-516; 950-960;						
7													

Figure A-2: An illustration of the design of the Excel® spreadsheet recording the conceptual breakdown of each Sub-core category.