

# **The complexity of change for Heads of Department in New Zealand universities**

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## ABSTRACT

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The aims of the study were to investigate two research questions. First, how Heads of Department (HoDs) in New Zealand universities perceived they could influence change and second, how they approached change. The research questions were investigated through a literature review and a mixed method study that included an online survey and five semi-structured interviews with HoDs employed in New Zealand universities. Two hundred and fifty-nine New Zealand HoDs were invited to participate with 59 respondents (39 male and 20 female). Interviews were conducted with Five HoDs (3 male and 2 females).

The literature review analysed both quantitative and qualitative research surrounding the HoD role finding that the role could be defined by the tasks required of the HoD and by the organisational context within which the HoD operates. The review identified four central causes of role tension, lack of authority, role conflict, inadequate training prior to entering the role and high workload associated with the role. Data from the review informed question development for the online survey and interviews.

Analysis of survey data revealed HoDs perceived their ability to stimulate change was based on their individual leadership characteristics, the availability of resources, the position of the department and the skills of the staff. HoDs perceived the core skills required to stimulate change included their individual ability, their personal qualities and their political awareness. HoDs identified that key elements in initiating change included the ability to set the scene, develop a strategy and clear communication and relationship building.

Four themes emerged from thematic analysis of the interview data, (1) areas of perceived influence over change, (2) the influence of the position, (3) approach to change and (4) barriers to change. Regarding their perceived influence over change, HoDs viewed they could exert influence in five areas, curriculum, staff, leadership characteristics, resource allocation and strategy. Relating to how the HoDs approached change, there was a commonality that communicating the high-level philosophy or vision surrounding change, communication and discussion surrounding change and gaining an understanding of the need for change were priorities.

Triangulation of survey and interview data revealed HoDs perceived they could influence change through four approaches, curriculum, staff, leadership characteristics and strategy. HoDs approached the change process with seven underlying concepts in mind, communication, developing a common understanding of the change, developing a hunger for change, being mindful of how the change will affect staff, having awareness of the importance of the timing of the change, using collaborative decision making and the use of networking. The success of change was balanced by restraints, owing to the multiple layers within which HoDs function. Identified restraints included, inequities in the workload balance between research, teaching, management and administrative duties and influential forces within their department, the wider university and stakeholders external to the university. A key finding of the thesis that enables the HoD to effectively work across the multi-dimensional aspects of the role and implement successful change is their networking skills. Networking provides a mechanism to obtain influence, adapt to and build support for change, within their department, within the wider university and externally with stakeholders. The HoD who is well networked is in the ideal position to enable their department to more readily implement and adapt to change.

It is clear the role places many stresses on the HoD. The recommendations arising from this study advocate that the role must be incentivised and seen as a career prospect, not a role that diminishes academic credibility or career progression. The scope of the role must be resized, context-based training provided, network development enhanced and a more shared approach to leadership adopted.

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## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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'I Matthew Richard Carroll hereby declare that the submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.'

**Student Name:** Matthew Carroll

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**Date:** 03/10/2018

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# Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Change has been a consistent feature of higher education, particularly since the mid-1980s. Key changes that have occurred in higher education since the mid-1980s include, increased competition for students between universities, reduced government funding, the introduction of a user pays higher education system and the adoption of strategies based in commercialism to generate new funding streams. These changes have stemmed from key tenets of neoliberal ideologies such as New Public Management theory (Ball & Junemann, 2012). Neoliberal ideology is based upon the principles of economic liberalisation and decentralisation, including: free trade, open markets, privatisation and deregulation (Giroux, 2002). Centralised state steering of the public sector within the neoliberal climate is commonly known as New Public Management. New Public Management involves discourses of management derived from the private for-profit sector, being introduced into public services in the quest to modernise, reduce spending costs and improve 'efficiency, effectiveness and excellence' (Deem, 2001). The range of neoliberal and New Public Management impacts on higher education have led to universities to assume more business-like and managerialist approaches to operation. New Public Management has become integrated in university bureaucracy and subordinated professionalism with practices drawn from the private sector management, such as, cost reduction, income generation, strategic planning, performance management, process standardisation, accountability and efficient resource allocation (Hotho, 2013; Preston & Price, 2012). These change forces have significantly impacted on university leadership and management at all levels, including that of the Head of Department (HoD) (Eley, 1994; Floyd & Dimmock, 2011). HoDs are

required to adopt managerialist approaches where by their role is to conform, meet targets and comply rather than to question. This managerialist approach to departmental management is being driven by a move to more hierarchical governance structures in universities, the growth of an audit and compliance based culture and the casualisation of the academic workforce (Ehrich, Kimber, & Ehrich, 2016). Consequently, the skill requirements of departmental leaders within higher education, particularly those who assume the role of HoD, have increased in importance (Berdrow, 2010).

In addition to the academic expectations to maintain a focus on teaching, learning and research development the HoD role places an further set of complex demands upon the role holder, requiring possession of foundational skills, such as personal management skills, communication skills, people, task management and leadership skills, including: the ability to lead peers, boundary spanning and the ability to mobilise change (Berdrow, 2010). However, many HoDs are appointed to the role with little or no formal leadership or managerial training (Potgieter, Coetzee, & Basson, 2011), and those appointed to the role do not necessarily do so willingly (Hotho, 2013). Subsequently, many HoDs experience the phenomena of role conflict, defined as incompatibility between the HoD responsibilities and the personal academic activities (Sotirakou, 2004). Workload balance, the balance between teaching, supervision, research and administration, and the erosion of external academic capital, through diminished ability to produce research outputs, are commonly cited issues creating role conflict (Floyd & Dimmock, 2011).

The complexity of the role and conflict experienced is further amplified by the multi-layered organisational dimensions and increased move to hierarchical structures within higher education. A wide range of structural and cultural factors influence departmental leadership, factors that are not found in commercial organisations (Marshall, 2012). Marshall (2012) depicts the HoD role as akin to being “caught in between, or sandwiched between senior management to whom they were accountable, lecturers whom they



described as colleagues or peers, and subordinates for whom they had some functional and often moral responsibility" (p. 503). Lapp and Carr (2006) parallel this scenario describing those in university middle management positions as both "masters and slaves" (p. 656), who move between the roles of subordinate, equal and superior. Sotirakou (2004) observed the complexity of the HoD role from an organisational perspective, whereby, the HoD is required to provide leadership to the academic staff, and at the same time, supervise the translation of institutional goals and policies into academic practice.

With the view that those in the HoD role are indeed caught in the middle, and the role is significantly influenced by the agendas and directives of senior management and external agencies (Hellowell & Hancock, 2001), the ability of the HoD to influence change must be questioned. Literature has only described the ability of the HoD to influence change in the areas of teaching and learning and in the advancement of core pedagogical principles (Clegg & McAuley, 2005), the contemporary HoD role now has a remit that extends beyond this pedagogical change focus. The role has advanced beyond that of an academic manager to one where the HoD is expected to function as a transformational leader (Berdrow, 2010). This includes stimulating creativity, bringing together appropriate resources for innovation, seeking and defining opportunities for change, encouraging risk taking and developing novel solutions (Berdrow, 2010).

My review of literature on HoDs reveals research has not investigated the degree to which the HoDs perceive they can influence change. Further to this, literature does not describe how HoDs approach change, whether they are conversant in the theories of change and what they perceive they can realistically change within the complex organisational structures of modern universities. The aim of the thesis was to address two specific research questions:

1. How do HoDs perceive they can influence change?
2. How do HoDs approach change?

## **1.2. The Head of Department in context**

The HoD is a role designated to individuals appointed to lead and manage an academic department within a university. The HoD title is synonymous with many other named roles including Department Chair, School Director, Head of Discipline, Discipline Lead, Head of School and Departmental Executive Officer. In addition to variation in role titles, there is diversity in responsibilities of the HoD between institutions. Some common examples include, variation in line management of staff, research and teaching expectations, administrative duties and budgetary responsibility and authority. For the purposes of this thesis the name HoD will be used to describe the role of an academic who leads a department.

The HoD role occupies a central position within higher education institutions, functioning simultaneously as a member of a Faculty/College or School who is devoted to a particular specialisation, and a leader, with responsibility for a wide variety of tasks, both administrative and management (Aziz et al., 2005). The HoD role has been referred to in terms of being a middle manager or middle leader (Branson, Franken, & Penney, 2016), reflecting the paradoxal nature of the role. The HoD has delegated administrative and managerial responsibility over departmental staff members and at the same time is accountable to senior management. The HoD holds a key position of information transfer within the organisation, playing a pivotal role through their ability to control and influence the flow of information between the academic department and senior management. However, whilst this organisational positioning of the HoD may be pragmatically sound, from an organisational perspective the role creates both personal and professional

tensions. Personal tensions relate to workload issues and the impact the role has on the HoDs ability to develop academic credibility as research capability is often diminished (Eley, 1994). Professional tensions originate from the HoD being hierarchically separated from academic colleagues, yet at the same time, being expected to work collegially as a departmental team member, undertaking many of the same academic responsibilities as their colleagues. Professional tensions are also created as the HoD is expected to be loyal to the directorates of the wider university as well as their department, even when these may not align. The HoD is caught between a university culture of line management within a hierarchical framework and the professional need for cooperation and collegiality within their department from those whom they line manage (Branson et al., 2016).

### **1.3. The Head of Department role: the New Zealand context**

In the context of the New Zealand university environment the HoD role is synonymous with many titles, which are described in Table 1. Although the titles may be synonymous there is significant variation of tasks within the role, most notably with regard to line management responsibilities. Examples include Canterbury University where academics carry the title 'HoD' but have no line management responsibilities. At Auckland University the HoD role has the designated title Head of Discipline, a position that again carries no line management responsibilities.

**Table 1.** HoD designations in New Zealand universities

University	Title
Auckland University of Technology	Head of Department
Otago University	Head of Department
Lincoln University	Head of Department
Otago University	Head of Department
Canterbury University	Head of Department (Programme Coordinator)
Victoria University	Programme Director
Massey University	Head of School
Waikato University	Convenor
Auckland University	Head of Discipline

## **1.4. Defining leadership, management and administration in the context of the university Head of Department**

In a corporate organisational context, Knight and Trowler (2001) define management as “the performance or delegation of operational tasks to accomplish predesignated goals” and leadership as “skilled or artistic performance of leading and the enactment of a formal or informal leading roles” (p. 28). They further characterise the difference between leadership and management as; the aim of management being to effectively maintain the status quo whilst leadership is concerned with change. Managers as viewed by Zaleznik (1977) are concerned with operations in the here and now, whilst leaders address the broader issues of direction and purpose through attempting to change the way people think about what is desirable and necessary. Leaders are viewed as those who create and articulate a vision, managers ensure it is put into practice. Fullan (2007) defined leadership as a process that relates to mission, direction, inspiration while management involves designing and carrying out plans, getting things done, and working effectively with people. However, when managing and leading are

considered as day-to-day practice, they are not considered as separate entities (Spillane & Coldren, 2015).

In contrast to a corporate setting defining leadership and management in the academic context is complex due to the numerous contextual organisational and hierarchical structures in which the HoD operates. This is highlighted by the nexus of many HoD appointments, whereby the academic is expected to both lead and manage the academic department. Consequently, academic leadership and management functions are closely integrated. Yelder and Codling (2004) postulated that the HoD is required to possess both academic and managerial leadership in the fulfilment of the role. Academic leadership has been defined as responsibility for development of academic direction, priority setting, providing direction and inspiration (Marshall, Fry, & Ketteridge, 2001). Academic management on the other hand, has been defined as managing finances, staff and space resources and operational planning (Marshall et al., 2001). Law and Glover (2000) suggest that leadership, management and administration require different, but overlapping skills, knowledge and abilities. Administration defined as the day to day operational tasks that underpin organisational policy (Yelder & Codling, 2004). However, these three roles are often poorly differentiated. The significant overlap of the three roles is a documented source of workload issues for HoDs (Seagren, 1993; Thornton, Walton, Wilson, & Jones, 2018). For the purposes of this thesis the following definitions apply:

- (a) administration - activities related to maintaining the objectives and policies of the academic department.
- (b) management - activities related to the staff HoDs line manage. Leadership, activities related to the development of academic direction, priority setting, providing direction.

## **1.5. Organisational change and models of change**

The following section will introduce the varying perspectives of organisational change and the change models and tools of strategic analysis that are referred to in the thesis.

### **1.5.1. Organisational change**

In the face of rapid changes in the tertiary sector such as increased competition, growth in technological innovation and the shifting needs of academic staff and students the leadership of organisational change is now a primary task of the university HoD. Whilst change is common place in organisations Balogun and Hailey (2004) report a failure rate of around 70 per cent of all change programmes initiated. This failure rate may be attributable to the lack of a valid framework of how to implement and manage organisational change (Burnes, 2004b).

When viewing change as a structure Senior and Flemming (2005) postulate change can be viewed in one of three categories. Change characterised by: (1) rate of occurrence, (2) by the scale of change and (3) by how change occurs. The two main types of change categorised by the rate of change include discontinuous and incremental. Discontinuous change defined as change which is marked by rapid shifts in either strategy, structure or culture, or in all three (Luecke, 2003). Incremental change defined by (Burnes, 2004b) as change in the individual parts of an organisation, dealing increasingly and separately with one problem and one objective at a time. Change characterised by scale can take the form of fine tuning, an incremental adjustment, modular transformation (changes within departments in an organisation) and corporate transformation (organisational wide change) (Dunphy & Stace, 1993).

Change characterised by how change occurs is dominated by planned approaches to change. Planned approaches to change attempt to explain the processes that bring about change. The use of planned approaches to change amongst HoDs was assessed in the online survey (Chapter 4). Section 1.5.2 introduces the planned models of change and strategy tools used in the online survey.

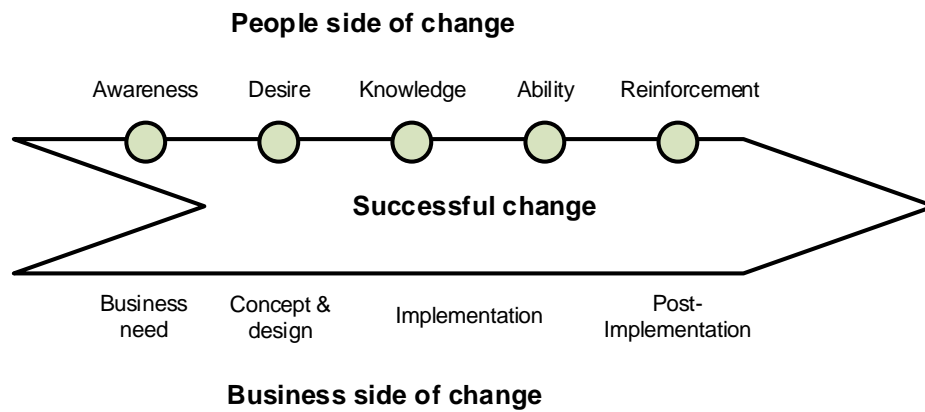
### **1.5.2. Change models**

#### *1.5.2.1. Prosci's ADKAR model*

The ADKAR model is a goal orientated model created by (Hiatt, 2006). ADKAR is an acronym for the five elements that individual must achieve to be prepared for change:

- Awareness of the need for change
- Desire to support and participate in the change
- Knowledge of how to change
- Ability to implement required skills and behaviours
- Reinforcement to sustain change.

The intention of the model is to provide clear goals and outcomes to drive change management activities. The model has a focus on the individual and draws attention to how change will affect the individual. The model views change to occur in two dimensions, the business side and the people side (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The ADKAR change model

Purported weaknesses of the ADKAR model include failure to address the emotional dimensions of change, particularly when moving between the awareness and desire phase. The model failing to place significance on the importance of “transition” where people may experience the feeling of loss. A further weakness is how the model views the final stages of change (implementation to post-implementation) as a set of tasks and that if conducted correctly will lead to successful change.

#### *1.5.2.2. Kotter's 8-step change model*

Kotter's model is an eight-step process designed to help manage change (Kotter, 1996). The model was developed around eight common errors organisations make when undergoing change. The eight steps of the model include:

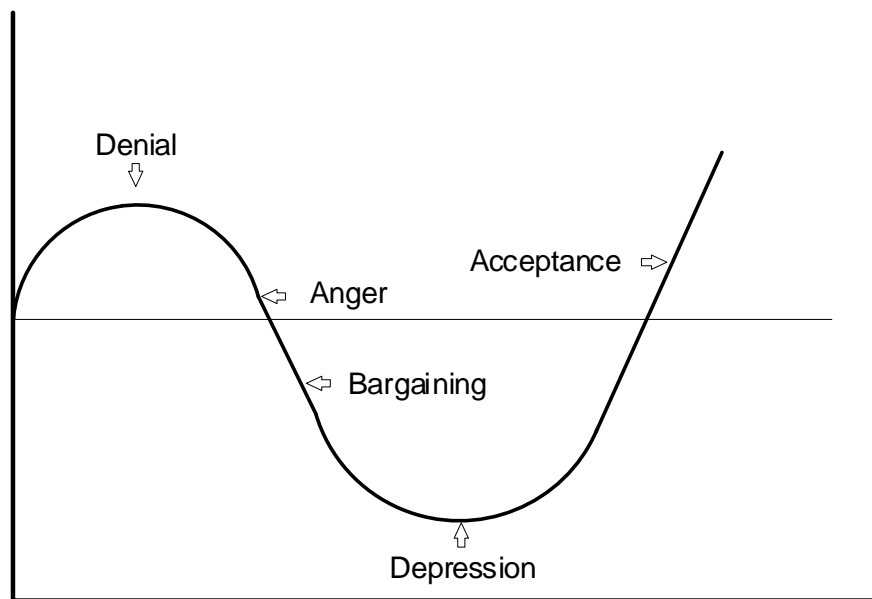
1. Establish a sense of urgency
2. Create a guiding coalition
3. Develop a vision and strategy
4. Communicating a change vision
5. Empowering employees to act on a vision
6. Generate short term wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in culture



The strength of Kotter's model lies first in the recognition that there is an emphasis and acknowledgement that employees or people who will be affected by change are integral to the success of the change initiative. Second, the model places importance on building acceptability for change, as opposed to focusing purely on the process of change. The model has been criticised for its step by step approach and the necessity to move from one step to the next. Missing a step may be problematic. The model also has a very top-down focus, not allowing for a collaborative approach to change processes.

#### *1.5.2.3. Kübler-Ross 5-step model of change management*

The Kübler-Ross model was first introduced in 1969, and founded on the five-steps people progress through when faced with terminal illness (Ross, 1969). The five-stages of the model are displayed in Figure 2. Shortly after the introduction of this model organisational theorists realised that responses to change mimicked the responses faced by this dealing with death. This led to the advent of numerous change models based on the Kübler-Ross concept (Cameron & Green, 2015). The strength of the model is contribution it has made to the understanding of why people resist change, perceiving breaks with the past as akin to a death. The model also highlights that healing must be allowed to occur when moving away from the past, if this is not allowed a deepening of resistance to change may occur.



**Figure 2.** Kübler-Ross model of change. Adapted from “Change leadership in higher education: a practical guide to academic transformation” by J. Buller, 2015, p.4

#### 1.5.2.4. Lewin's change management model

Widely considered as one of the founding paradigms of change management the Lewin's change model describes change in three stages, (1) freeze, (2) change (move), and (3) unfreeze (Lewin, 1947). The model focuses on behaviours associated with change and behaviour modification. Lewin viewed successful change as a group activity, because unless group norms and routines are also transformed, changes to individual behaviour will not be sustained (Burnes, 2004a).

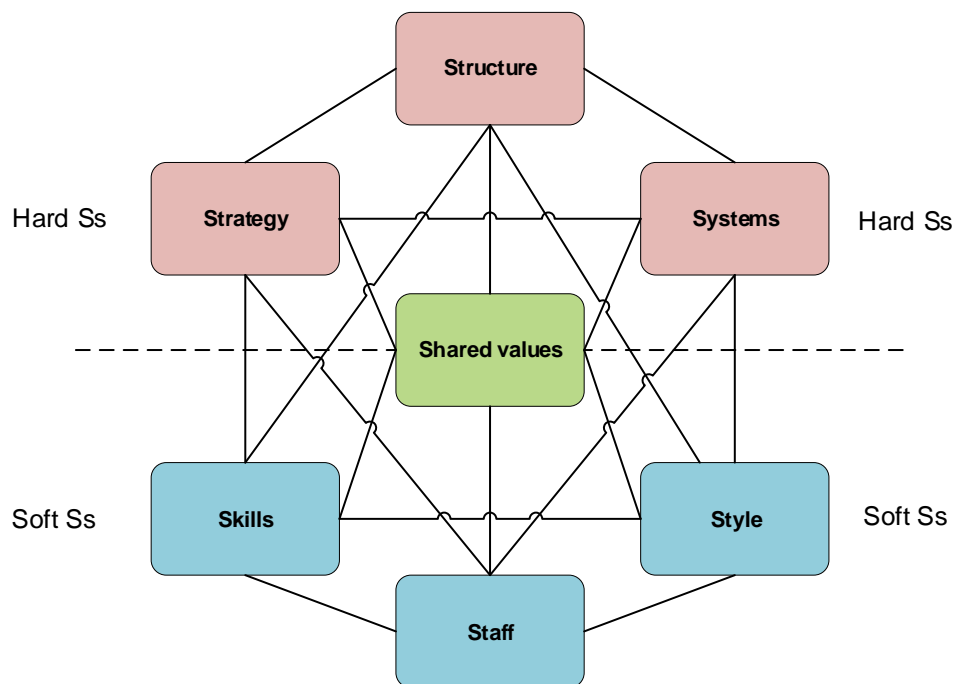
Stage 1 - Unfreeze stage: This stage emphasises the importance of communication to people affected by the change. Lewin posed that equilibrium needs to be destabilised (unfrozen) before old behaviour can be discarded (unlearned) (Burnes, 2004a).

Stage 2 - Change (move) stage: Change implementation in a short time period is advocated. The reasoning for this being that the longer change takes the more likely the relapse into old habits and rituals.

Stage 3 – Refreeze: The stage deals with change solidification. Evaluations and monitoring are advocated in order to quickly stabilise the change.

#### 1.5.2.5. McKinsey 7-S model

Developed by McKinsey consultants in 1982 the model analyses organisational design through examination of seven internal elements (Figure 3) (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The goal of the model is to show how the seven elements align together to achieve effectiveness.



**Figure 3.** Elements of the McKinsey 7-s model. Adapted from “Analyzing organizational structure based on 7s model of McKinsey” M. Ravanfar, 2015, p.2

The model divides the seven elements into “Hard Ss” and “Soft Ss”. The hard elements (strategy, structure, systems) are thought to be easier to identify and manage. The soft elements (style, staff, skills, shared values) thought of as harder to manage but more related to developing a competitive advantage. Ravanfar (2015) advocates a five-step process to apply the model whereby areas of alignment between the elements are

determined, the optimal organisational design is established, change decisions are made, changes are implemented and the 7Ss are continually reviewed.

### **1.5.3 Strategic analysis tools**

#### *1.5.3.1. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis*

SWOT analysis is activity undertaken by an organisation to identify internal and external forces operating on the business. The analysis conceptualises that good strategy means ensuring a fit between the external situation (threats and opportunities) and internal qualities and characteristics (strengths and weaknesses) of a corporation. The classical SWOT procedure involves detailed identification and classification of all phenomena and states affecting related to the identified factor. The issue or factor is viewed from two perspectives. First, the nature of the effect of actual or potential impact of a factor on the organisation. Second, The wider location of the factor within the organisation. From these two perspectives the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the factor can be derived (Nazarko et al., 2017).

#### *1.5.3.2. Threats, opportunities, weaknesses, strengths (TOWS) analysis*

TOWS analysis is a modification of the SWOT strategic framework. TOWS analysis is restructured to use organisational strengths to formulate strategy, to take advantage of opportunities and avoid threats (Panagiotou, 2003). The analysis is based around identification of strengths and opportunities, strengths and threats, weakness and opportunities and weaknesses and threats.

#### *1.5.3.3. Political, economic, social, technological (PEST) analysis*

PEST analysis is an acronym for Political, Economic, Social, and Technological analysis and describes a framework of macro-environmental factors used in the environmental scanning component of strategic analysis. The analysis is based on review of political economic, social and technological issues that may impact on the change strategy

## **1.6. Thesis overview**

The thesis is presented over the 9 chapters. Chapter 2 presents a literature review of both qualitative and quantitative research that has investigated the HoD role. The literature review analysed both quantitative and qualitative research surrounding the HoD role. Chapter 3 details the methodological approach taken for the online survey and semi structured interviews. Chapter 4 and 5 present the results of the online surveys and interviews. The discussion of the two research questions posed by the thesis are presented in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of the thesis with reference to the studies strengths and weakness. The chapter also presents recommendations for the HoD role and potential future research directions.

# Literature review: The University Head of Department, Typology and Tensions

## 2.1. Introduction

This review analysed findings from qualitative and quantitative based research and accounted for literature from past review articles surrounding the HoD role specific to universities. The aims were to, first, define the role of HoD based on typology. Second, to examine the key factors that cause tension in the HoD role. The rationale was twofold: firstly, previous literature reviews have only focused on the person-based qualities and attributes required for success in the HoD role and the conflicting demands of the role. Subsequently, the HoD role has only been previously described related to the importance of roles and tasks. Second, no literature review has examined the factors that create tension for those who assume the HoD role.

Past reviews of the HoD role have focused on skill and behavioural requirements for the role. A review by Moses (1985) highlighting that the functions of acting as an advocate for the department to the wider university, encouraging excellence in teaching and research were key to the success of the HoD. Two decades later, Bryman (2007) reviewed the styles and approaches to leadership that were associated with effective departmental leadership in higher education. The review identified 13 aspects of leader behaviour associated with departmental effectiveness. These behavioural characteristics included, providing direction and strategic vision, being considerate, trustworthy, acting as a role model and openly communicating departmental direction.

Brook and Davies (1994) review emphasised the diverse nature of the role and highlighting the continued expectations to research and teach as core to the role. Over a period of 20 years of research many of the roles and skills required as listed in the Moses article were common to the aspects of behaviour as detailed by Bryman (2007). The major contrast being that behaviours exhibited by the HoD such as trust development and collegiality were key in addition to many factors identified in the past reviews.

Blackmore and Blackwell (2006) investigated the concept of professionalisation of academic development roles such as that of the HoD role. They argued that the burden of HoDs to be increasingly expert in teaching, research, administration and a range of other duties simultaneously is unreasonable. The authors advocated for a holistic approach to the HoD role to be taken, accepting that not all activities can be performed excellently at once, and that the combination of activities will and should change over a career.

## **2.2. Methodology**

### **2.2.1. Sources of papers and search strategy**

The author selected through a systematic search of five electronic databases. Selected databases were ERIC (via OVID), Scopus, ProQuest Central, Web of Science and Google Scholar. Search terms applied to ERIC, ProQuest, Scopus and the Web of Science were (1) Head of Department (2) Head of School (3) Head of Discipline (4) Dean (5) Academic Leader (6) Academic Manager (7) University. These search terms were combined (1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4 OR 5 OR 6 AND 7) in keyword searches of article titles

for all databases with the exception of Google Scholar. In Google Scholar using the advanced search option the following strategy was applied: articles with all of the words “Head of Department”, with the exact phrase “university” where “my words” occur in the title of the article were searched.

### **2.2.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

I was the one rater who extracted data and assessed the eligibility criteria for all retrieved papers.

#### *2.2.2.1. Eligibility criteria:*

The review identified papers that explicitly investigated the role of a university HoD. The HoD was defined as an individual who was employed in the role of HoD at a public or private university. Inclusion criteria for studies were:

- a) published in English language;
- b) examined the role of the HoD or role equivalent role as previously defined either from a quantitative and/or a qualitative methodology or literature review;
- c) included HoD or similar titled roles in the university sector;
- d) were published between 1970 and 2017.

#### *2.2.2.2. Exclusion criteria:*

Exclusion criteria for studies were:

- a) studies that were a conference paper, proceeding, dissertations or doctoral theses.

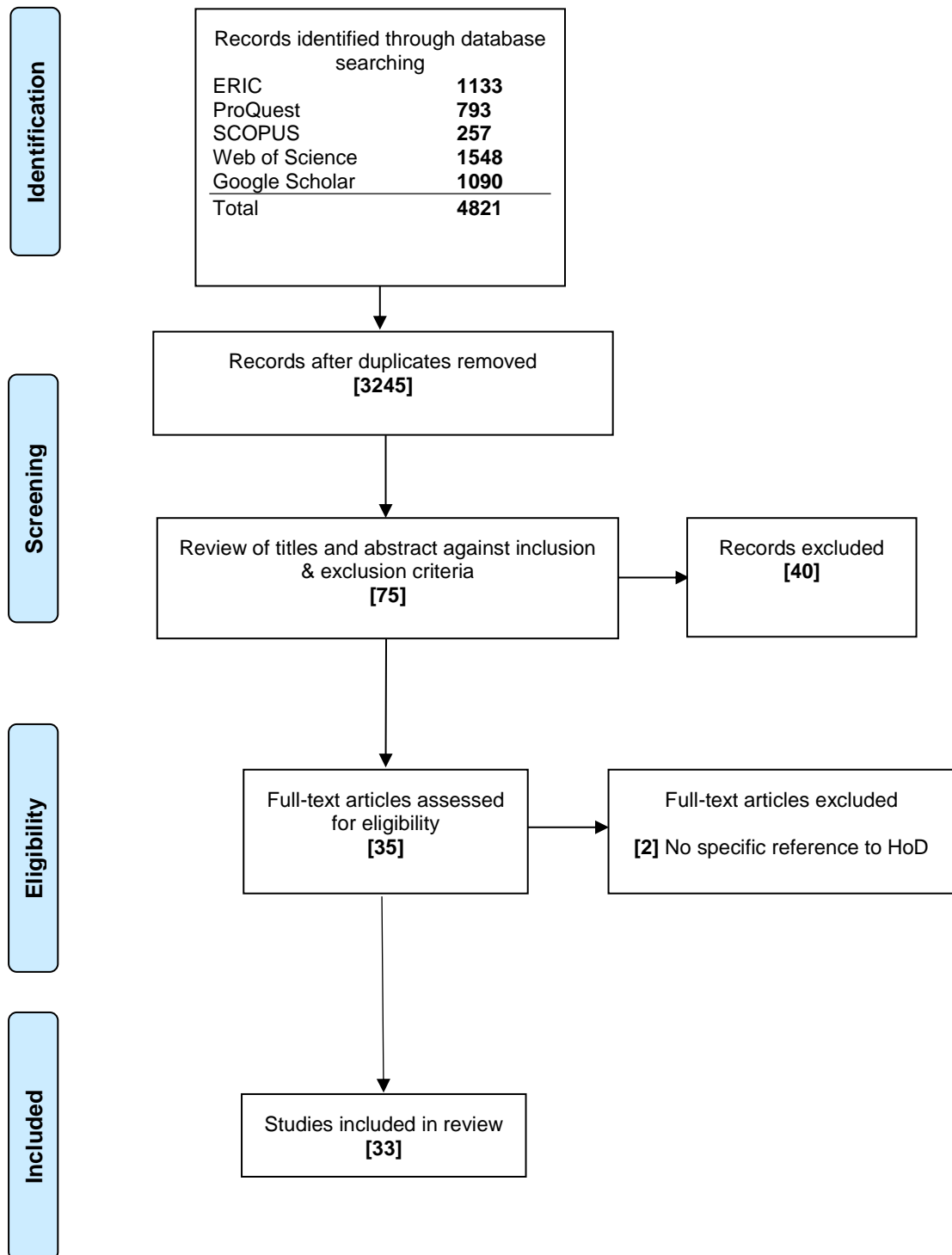


### **2.2.3. Search strategy outcomes**

The search of ERIC (via OVID), Scopus, ProQuest Central and Web of Science produced a total of 5194 papers (ERIC (via OVID) = 1133, ProQuest = 793, Scopus = 257, Web of Science = 1548). The Google Scholar search produced a total of 1090 papers. The titles of all articles generated were examined in relation to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, with abstracts of possible importance considered for inclusion. Seventy-five full-text articles were assessed for eligibility, 42 were removed following full-text review bringing the total papers included in the review to 33. Figure 4 summarises the search strategy and study selection.

### **2.2.4. Data Analysis**

All manuscripts were analysed using the six stages of thematic analysis as outlined by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was conducted by the author, and followed the process of familiarisation with the data, code generation, theme development, theme review, and final definition and naming of themes. Firstly, each manuscript was read, with the author noting potential themes and impressions of the data. Next, initial codes were generated based on the manuscripts by creating coding nodes for common themes using NVivo 11; these codes were then combined into preliminary themes. Finally, these themes were reviewed and refined, and extracts that illustrated them selected. All manuscripts were independently coded by the author.



**Figure 4.** Flow diagram of search strategy and study selection

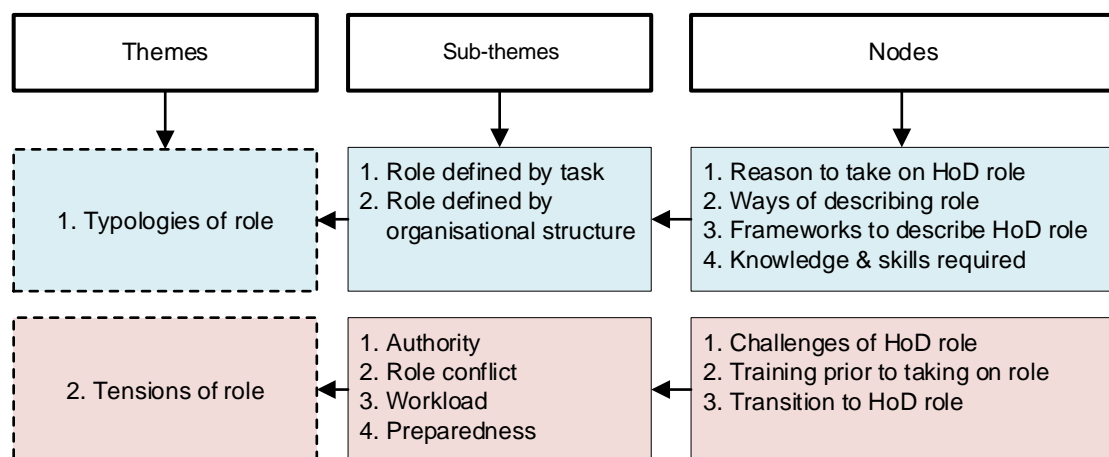
## 2.3. Results

Thirty-three manuscripts were included for analysis in the literature review, 26 research studies and seven review manuscripts. Fifty four percent ( $n = 14$ ) of the included research studies used a qualitative methodology and 35% ( $n = 9$ ) a quantitative methodology. Sixty five percent ( $n = 17$ ) of the research studies were conducted in the United Kingdom, with 23% ( $n = 6$ ) in the USA, 12% ( $n = 3$ ) in New Zealand and one in South Africa. Thirty one percent ( $n = 8$ ) of the research studies focused on the roles and responsibilities of the HoD role (Berdrow, 2010; Marshall, 2012; Mathias, 1991; Potgieter et al., 2011; Smith, 2002; Smothers, Absher, & White, 2012; Startup, 1976; Weinberg, 1984). Of the 26 research studies included for analysis 16 clearly identified the participants as being HoDs. The total amount of HoDs included in these studies were 597. Eight of the research studies included HoDs as participants but also included other middle managers, the specific number of HoDs in these studies were not specified (Bone & Bourner, 1998; Hancock & Hellawell, 2003; Hellawell & Hancock, 2001; Hotho, 2013; Inman, 2009, 2011; Marshall, 2012; Startup, 1976). Two of the included research studies did not state how many participants were included (Mathias, 1991; Weinberg, 1984).

A summary displaying the characteristics (author, year, study title, country, study type, participants and study objectives) of research studies included in the review are displayed in Appendix 1. A summary displaying the characteristics of the review articles included in the review are displayed in Appendix 2.

### 2.3.1. Thematic analysis

The data generated from thematic analysis of the included manuscripts demonstrated how substantive the role is from the perspectives of individuals in the role and the expectations from the institutions they work within. Two major themes emerged from the data; ‘typologies of the role’ and ‘tensions of the role’. Six sub-themes also emerged: role defined by task, role defined by organisational structure, authority/trust/power, role conflict, training and workload. A summary of the themes, subthemes and initial nodes used for coding via NVivo are displayed in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** Themes and subthemes following thematic analysis

### 2.3.2. Theme 1. The HoD role defined by typology

The first theme observed was how the HoD role could be viewed through two lenses and subsequently characterised by typologies:

1. Typology by task - This typology defines the HoD role through the lens of the numerous tasks and duties the HOD is required to perform.

2. Typology by organisational context - This typology defines the HoD role through the lens of intricacies created by the multifaceted nature of the role, and how the HoD copes within the organisational context in which they function.

#### 2.3.2.1. *Typology based on task*

The first theme that emerged in defining the HoD role was the role could be viewed through the lens of tasks and behaviours. The tasks performed by the HoDs can be categorised into four key roles: academic, administrative, management and leadership. Each of these four roles involve numerous key tasks that define the HoD role (Brook & Davies, 1994; Bryman, 2007; Moses, 1985). The tasks and behaviour expectations of the past research are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Tasks and behaviours expected of the HoD

Author	Roles, tasks and behaviours
Bryman (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide direction &amp; strategic vision</li> <li>- Provide direction to the department</li> <li>- Be considerate</li> <li>- Treat staff with integrity</li> <li>- Be trustworthy</li> <li>- Allow opportunities to participate in decision making</li> <li>- Communicate direction of department</li> <li>- Act as a role model</li> <li>- Create a collegial work atmosphere</li> <li>- Advance the departments cause both internally &amp; externally</li> <li>- Provide performance on feedback</li> <li>- Provide resources for adjusting workloads</li> <li>- Make academic appointments that enhance departmental reputation</li> </ul>
Brook and Davies (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching - personally and as a leader and manager</li> <li>- Research - personally and as a leader and manager</li> <li>- Representation of the department nationally and internationally</li> <li>- Representation of the department within the university general</li> <li>- Participation in internal decision-making structures</li> <li>- General counsellor and resolver of conflict</li> <li>- Planner and manager of human, financial and physical resources</li> <li>- Fund raiser; marketer of departmental services, internally and externally</li> </ul>
Moses (1985)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Serving as an advocate for the department</li> <li>- Encouraging good teaching in the department</li> <li>- Implementing long-range plans for the department</li> <li>- Stimulating research and publications</li> </ul>

#### *2.3.2.2. Typology based on organisational context*

The organisational environment influences and shapes the role of the HoD. Due to the complex organisational structure and the multiple demands placed upon the HoD the second theme that developed in defining the HoD was that the role could be viewed through a lens of organisational context. Floyd and Dimmock (2011) described three types of HoDs, portraying those in the role as either 'jugglers', 'copers' or 'strugglers'. Jugglers being those who could successfully manage and balance their multiple identities. Copers, defined as those who were fully extended by, but could just about 'cope' with, and accept, the identity conflicts and differences. Strugglers defined by their difficulties to accept, balance and manage their identities. Hickson and Stacks (1992) characterised the HoD as both an actor and agent within the institution (as cited in Berdrow, 2010, p. 500). As an actor, the HoD brings individual knowledge, skills, perspectives, experiences, expectations and objectives to the role. As an agent, the department Chair acts within the context of the institution. Marshall (2012) described the role of a HoD as being "caught in between", or "sandwiched between" senior management to whom they were accountable, lecturers whom they described as colleagues or peers, and subordinates for whom they had some functional and often moral responsibility. This parallels Lipp and Carr's (2006) description of middle leaders as being synchronistically, both masters and slaves enacting the complex roles of "living" as a subordinate, an equal and as a superior (as cited in Marshall, 2012, p. 503). These concepts are aptly summarised by the following excerpt: "Heads may find themselves mediating between the 'realities' of institutional life on the one hand, and the beliefs and values of faculty on the other" (Blackmore & Blackwell, 2006, p. 376).

### **2.3.3. Theme 2. Tensions of the HoD role**

The second theme observed were tensions associated with the HoD role. Within this theme four sub-themes emerged. Tensions related to, levels of authority, role conflict, training and the workload associated with the role.

#### *2.3.3.1. Sub-theme 1 - Authority*

Organisational structure, parallel hierarchies and relationships tied to hierarchy within departments and Faculties were identified as sources of tension and the genesis of many authority-based issues for the HoD. How HoDs experience authority is different, and predominately related to the existence of parallel and historical hierarchies that the HoD functions within. Tension due to parallel hierarchies are associated with the HoDs level of academic appointment relative to their departmental colleagues, which maybe be at the same, lower or higher academic level. Historical hierarchies exist within and beyond departments and are connected with characteristics such as long service within the institution and well-established networks of influence within and beyond the Faculty. Branson et al. (2016) noting a HoD is likely to experience instances in which established institutional networks were strategically utilised by staff to challenge or resist the authority of the HoD. This is further complicated by the limited scope of the HoD to reshape a set of relations that originate from a higher hierarchical position. This idea of having to mediate between the hierarchy above and departmental colleagues below is made all the more difficult because of the lack of authority (Preston & Price, 2012).

Tensions between authority based on power were also uncovered in relation to the ability to make decisions. The HoD is in a difficult position because their positional power is in effect limited, while their tasks are wide. The perception of reduced power or ineffective power was prominent in two areas. (1) The power to make decisions, (2) The ability to

contribute to strategy. The following exert from Marshall (2012) highlights the issue of power and decision making: “I have limited power or responsibility so like a lot of managers, decisions get made higher up and then I’m expected, in my role, to present those to the staff and to manage” (Marshall, 2012, pp. 513-514).

Authority connected to decision making is further impeded as decisions are often made by higher management and passed down to the HoD to initiate at the departmental level (Marshall, 2012). Consequently, the ability of HoDs to influence wider strategy in the university is compromised. The perceived lack of opportunity to contribute to strategy and the reality of having responsibility but no authority was noted by (Preston & Price, 2012). Sotirakou (2004) support this with their finding indicating HoDs were found to have limited power in the governance of their institution. Preston and Price (2012) relating the limited opportunity to influence strategy to the HoD being constantly embroiled in operational issues.

#### *2.3.3.2. Sub-theme 2 - Role conflict*

Role conflict, a term used by Sotirakou (2004), perhaps best describes the situation that occurs for academics who take on the HoD role. They are conflicted by the role as it often consumes their time and impedes on availability to teach and research. The time spent in the HoD role described by (Franken, Penney, & Branson, 2015) as a departure from the trajectory of their usual academic lives, “a duty to be fulfilled” (p. 190), that is potentially detrimental to research productivity. Floyd (2012), described the duties required of the role as reducing involvement in the very reasons they entered academia in the first place. The conflicting relationship between teaching and research is particularly acute for staff taking on management roles within a university (Smith, 2002, 2005). Floyd and Dimmock (2011) describe this dilemma in terms of academic career capital, suggest that the HoD role may not carry significant enough career capital in



institutions with research agendas to warrant a departure from the traditional teaching and research pathway. Further expanding on the concept of career capital, Eley (1994) separates the concept of career capital into two components, an internal and external identity. Those who assume the HoD role, develop internal academic career capital within the institution at the expense of external academic career capital, capital which is linked to research outputs and international profile. Adding to the issue of reduced career capital was the potential implications that a diminished research profile may have on the HoDs future aspirations of promotion. The HoD role is described as an unwanted interruption in a research career (Floyd & Dimmock, 2011). A common tone through the included studies was the view the HoD role was not a mainstream academic role and those who take on the role will only resume their normal academic career when their time as HoD ends (Hotho, 2013). Mathias (1991) also reports the view that the role is an interlude in academic life. Brook and Davies (1994) emphasise the issue of research and the HoD, observing that the pressures to maintain a research profile could make it difficult for HoDs to pay attention to the aspects of departmental leadership effectiveness.

#### *2.3.3.3. Sub-theme 3 - Training*

Data from the review indicated that training prior to entry into the role was either inadequate or irrelevant to the context of the position. Training for the role was viewed as important by Inman (2009) due to the large range of responsibilities placed on the HoD. However, inadequate and/or inconsistent training prior to assuming the HoD role is evident (Aziz et al., 2005; Smith, 2002). Franken et al. (2015) reported that some higher education institutions did not view leadership training for middle management as a priority or provide adequate training. Where formal learning systems were instigated they did not target what HoDs felt was necessary, with many new to the HoD role indicating they lacked knowledge related to the concepts of the role (Inman, 2009). Marshall (2012) highlighted a common issue regarding the appointment of HoDs

whereby many “fell” into the leadership position with no training. The issue of management training in universities was aptly summarised by the following exert from Inman (2009): “It is rather remarkable that higher education institutions, regarded as seats of learning, appear to lack commitment to the development of potential leaders within any form of a structured succession plan” (Inman, 2009, p. 430).

#### *2.3.3.4. Sub-theme 4 - Workload*

The amount of responsibilities in addition to the combined roles of teaching, supervision and research was revealed as basis of workload issues for the HoD (Floyd & Dimmock, 2011; Smith, 2002, 2005). Workload tension did not necessarily relate to the volume of work, but the amount of time spent on activities that HoDs did not want to spend time on, such as completing paperwork, attending meetings, dealing with rules and regulations and interference with personal time (Seagren, 1993). This view is also supported by Brook and Davies (1994) who note the problem is not more work, but the more diverse work that falls on the HoD. Adding a further dimension to this is expectations of those external to the university such as key stakeholders, funders and industry partners whom may exert a significant influence over the HoDs priorities.

## **2.4. Discussion**

This study has shown that the HoD role can be described by two typologies, typology by task, and typology by organisational context. The study also demonstrated that four main themes contributed to tensions for academics in the HoD role; authority, role conflict, training and workload.

HoD typology defined by task encompasses the tasks that are required to be performed and behaviours to be displayed that are associated with success in the role. The tasks or day to day activities the HoD is required to perform fall broadly under four main categories: academic, administrative, management and leadership. The summary provided in Table 3 highlights the variety of tasks and reinforces the behavioural expectations of the role. The tasks and behaviours are further heightened by how the HoD operates and copes within the organisational context in which their department is based. Characterising the HoD based on the two typologies highlights how contextual and individual the role is, there can be no one way of defining the HoD role. The typology that defines the HoD is also likely to be associated with how they experience the tensions in the role. These findings parallel the conclusions of Floyd (2012) whose research into the experiences of HoDs in the role indicated those who were more successful were more able to accept and cope with switching between multiple identities of being an academic, a manager, an administrator and a leader. The ability to balance and manage the conflicting identities exerted was a major influence on their views and experiences of being in the role. HoDs who struggled with the multiple roles were more likely to revert back to their previous positions, resign, or change occupation (Floyd & Dimmock, 2011).

With knowledge that there are numerous tasks associated with the HoD role, tension is inevitable, particularly where they are constantly juggling multiple roles to maintain the balance between professionalism and collegiality. Issues related to authority, role conflict, training and workload being prominent problems faced by the HoD. Authority, or more specifically the HoDs perceived level of authority, was identified as a major source of tension for HoDs. This is particularly pertinent as one of the key skills of the role is the ability to use authority to persuade others to bring about change. Unfortunately, many HoDs face the issue of trying to bring about change, persuade or influence beliefs and behaviours with little authority and recourse for reward (Berdrow, 2010; Branson et al., 2016). Authority is experienced in different modes by HoDs. These

are predominately related to their hierarchical positioning in relation to colleagues (Berdrow, 2010). Authority often being problematic when managing academic colleagues at a higher level of appointment or with well-established historical hierarchical networks beyond the department.

Perhaps the most powerful reason that a person may not assume the role of HoD presented by current research is the tension created by role conflict. This review indicated that those who assume the role perceive that research and teaching time will be reduced, the role is a departure from a usual academic role, and the role reduces career capital and ultimately effects the research profile through diminished external credibility. This eventually reduces chances of future career success (Floyd, 2012). Little research has investigated the counter argument to these points, only Floyd (2012) and Henkel (2002) report the HoD role may be beneficial with respect to future promotion. Importantly in the Floyd (2012), study the organisational context in which the HoD functions was highlighted as a point related to the positive acceptability of the HoD role. He notes that where a HoD role is more linked to research development rather than academic management the role was seen in a more positive light, due to alignment with the fundamental academic goals of research credibility. Paradoxically, Deem (2001) reported that some academics purposefully assume management roles to move away from teaching and research responsibilities.

Despite the data indicating that training for HoDs is poor and in some institutions not a priority, the perception that training is inadequate is contextual. Appointments based on previous leadership experience or made based on academic reputation may negate the need for possession of the necessary skill set, consequently, training may not be deemed necessary (Mathias, 1991). The results of this review provide insight into the directions HoD training programmes may take. Through defining the role based on typology and

tasks performed, and in view of the knowledge of role tensions, individualised based training programmes can be instigated that best suit the HoD. In essence these can be thought of as taking a situation-based solution to the development of training programmes. In alignment with Berdrow (2010) this approach would consider the capabilities of the HoD in the context of the existing staff, the stakeholders, the organisational complexity and socialisation into the role.

Tension stemming from workload identified in this review highlights that workload volume does not create tension but rather the concept labelled “role overload”, that is, having too many different things to do and/or increasing role diversity (Smith, 2002). The perception of workload is also intimately linked to the individual’s perception of the role and the tasks they are required to perform, how they cope with the multiple roles and the reasons or circumstance under which they were appointed to the role (Brook & Davies, 1994). Increased accountability placed upon HoDs has also led to increase workload pressures Deem (2000) found that increasing pressures of accountability placed on HoDs is linked to higher workloads and longer work hours (as cited in Floyd & Dimmock, 2011, p. 388).

## **2.5. Strengths and limitations of this review**

This study incorporated qualitative, quantitative research studies involving data from 597 university HoDs and used a detailed search strategy with systematic synthesis of literature in order to address the study aims. This review also considered findings from seven review articles. This approach of combining research and review studies allowed the reader to access the quality of the included studies and generalise to their own context. Comprehensive details were incorporated about the included studies encompassing the research team characteristics, participants, settings, and methods as

reported by the authors of each study. The studies that were more comprehensive in their reporting contributed the most to the development of the final themes and sub-themes identified by thematic analysis. The review was limited to English speaking studies, consequentially under-represents HoDs from non-English speaking institutions. Approximately two-thirds of the included research studies were from universities in the United Kingdom, therefore, the finding may not be representative of the context that HoDs operate within outside of the United Kingdom. Not all included studies explicitly identified university HoDs as the only study participants. Ten of the included research studies also included data related to other university middle managers, potentially altering the context of the findings in relation to HoDs only; however, the themes identified offer a higher level of thinking that may be applicable across all university middle management contexts.

## **2.7. Conclusions**

This thematic analysis of quantitative, qualitative and research studies on the typology and tensions of the HoD role showed that the typology can be viewed and defined through two lenses, one based upon tasks, and one based upon the organisational context of the department. The review also identified four major sources of tension for university based HoDs, how they perceive their authority, role conflict created by personal and professional pressures, inadequate training and workload.

# Methodology

## 3.1. Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the methodological design and approach used in the study. The chapter discusses the research philosophies and research design that underpinned the study. The methodology is described in two parts, Part A detailing the methodology related to the online survey and Part B the semi-structured interviews. The chapter concludes with discussion of the ethical principles and limitations of the methodology. The two studies detailed in this chapter were approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), Ethics Application 17/234 (Appendix 3).

## 3.2. Research epistemology

Hirschheim and Klein (1994) define ontology as the nature of reality and epistemology refers to the beliefs about how knowledge can be acquired. The two dominant ontological and epistemological ideologies are positivism and constructivism/interpretivism. The positivist believes there is a single objective reality to any research phenomenon regardless of the researcher's belief. Thus research is conducted in a structured approach through hypothesis testing and objectively acquired and measured using quantitative methods. Positivist researchers remain detached and use logical approaches and maintain objectivity upholding a clear distinction between science and personal experience. To uncover the single objective reality statistical and mathematical techniques are a central procedure. The goal of positivist researchers is

to make context free generalizations. They believe this is possible because human actions can be explained as a result of real causes that temporarily precedes their behaviour and the researcher and his research subjects are independent and do not influence each other.

In contrast to a positivist ontology and epistemology, interpretivists believe reality is multiple and relative. Knowledge is acquired from social construction rather than objectively determined. Interpretivists adopt research structures which are receptive to capturing meanings in human interaction and make sense of perceived reality. The researcher is open to new knowledge throughout the study and lets it develop with the help of informants. The use of such an emergent and collaborative approach is consistent with the interpretivist belief that humans have the ability to adapt, and that no one can gain prior knowledge of time and context bound social realities. Consequently, constructivists favour qualitative research methods (Cresswell, 2013).

The current research may be seen as utilising positivist approaches as it employs quantifiable measurement of variables and seeks to quantify the characteristics of change through the use of the online survey. It does not have other positivist characteristics, such as aiming to make context free generalizations. It also utilises interpretivist approaches as it employs qualitative methods, semi-structured interviews for data collection, to gain understanding of how HoDs perceive they can influence change. As the current study draws upon both positivism and interpretivism, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods the approach taken in the current study was founded upon pragmatism.

Pragmatism offers an alternative view to that of positivism or constructivism focusing on the problem to be researched, in the case of the current study, to gain understand of

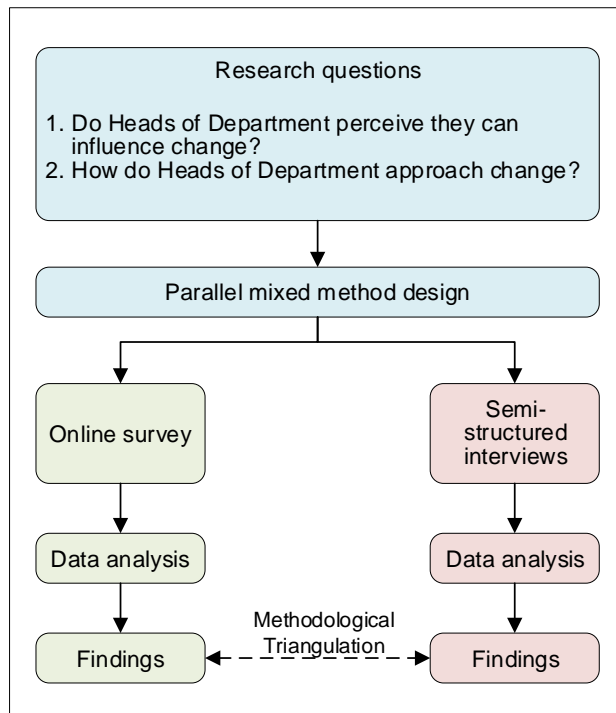


HoDs perceptions, behaviours and attitudes relevant to their influence on change. Pragmatism provides a set of assumptions about knowledge and inquiry that underpins the mixed methods approach and distinguishes the approach from purely quantitative approaches that are based on a philosophy of positivism and from purely qualitative approaches that are based on a philosophy of interpretivism or constructivism. Creswell (2013) noting that pragmatism sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality and orients itself toward solving practical problems in the “real world”. A concept advocated by (Morgan, 2007) who viewed the pragmatic approach to research as being informed by the belief that the practicalities of research are such that it cannot be driven by theory exclusively, which enables the researcher to move back and forth between induction and deduction through a process of inquiry.

### **3.3. Mixed methods design**

Mixed methods research has been defined as a philosophically underpinned model of inquiry combining qualitative and quantitative models of research so that evidence may be mixed and knowledge is increased in a more meaningful manner than either model could achieve alone (Creswell & Clark, 2011). To explore the issue of change amongst HODs, this study applied the principles of a parallel mixed methods design (Creswell & Clark, 2011), involving the independent collection and analysis of data from two theoretical paradigms: (i) quantitative data, drawn from an online survey and (ii) qualitative data, derived from semi-structured interviews (Figure 6). A parallel mixed methods design offers the ability to “obtain different but complementary data on the same topic” (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 77). This method of enquiry was best suited for addressing the research questions. First, there is little evidence if HoDs perceive they can influence, or effect change this supported the need for quantitative data to quantify this issue. Second, it is not known how HoDs approach change, this supported the need for explorative qualitative work aimed at describing this unknown

phenomenon. Acmixed methods research design was also chosen as it allowed for rich conceptualisation of the HoD as a change manager.



**Figure 6.** Overview of mixed methods study design

### 3.3.1. The use of methodological triangulation

The research design in this study drew upon the principles of methodological triangulation. The central tenet to triangulation is the use of several method-appropriate strategies to assess a phenomenon (Jack & Raturi, 2006). The purpose of triangulation is twofold; either for completeness or confirmation of data (Arksey & Knight, 1999). For the purposes of this study the use of triangulation was based upon an approach to obtain greater completeness of data. The data obtained from the survey were used to demonstrate commonalities amongst HoDs surrounding change. Data obtained from the interviews were used to learn about how HoDs experienced and approached change.

## **3.4. Part A – Online surveys**

### **3.4.1. Participants**

The target population for the study were people identified as leading an academic department at a New Zealand university. To achieve a representative sample of the target population it was necessary to select participants who were current HoDs at New Zealand universities. Consequently, purposive sampling was used to recruit potential participants. The main objective of a purposive sampling is to achieve a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

#### *3.4.1.1. Inclusion criteria*

To be considered for inclusion potential participants were required to be:

1. Currently appointed in the HoD role or a synonymous role whereby they were the academic leader of a specialised discipline.
2. Currently employed within a university in New Zealand.

### **3.4.2. Sampling procedure**

A spreadsheet of all current university HoDs in New Zealand and their email addresses was compiled. The spreadsheet was constructed by searching the individual department websites of the eight New Zealand universities. All academics who were designated as a HoD or a name synonymous with the position on the university website were included in the spreadsheet. The website-based search identified 239 HoDs (Table 3). Where the departmental website listed staff, but no staff member was designated as the HoD, no entry was made into the HoD spreadsheet. An email-based invitation was sent to all

potential study participants. The email introduced the study purpose, aims and evidenced ethical approval. The introductory email contained a link to the study for those who decided to volunteer, completion of the survey was deemed as consent to participate.

**Table 3.** Number of people identified as HoDs following a website-based search of universities

<b>University</b>	<b>Number of people identified as HoD</b>
Auckland University of Technology	31
Lincoln University	10
Massey University	24
Victoria University	20
Waikato University	20
University of Auckland	33
University of Canterbury	40
University of Otago	61
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239</b>

### **3.4.3. Online survey**

The instrument used to gather data for this study was a researcher designed survey. Qualtrics survey software (Qualtrics, 2015) was the platform used to construct and deliver the online survey. The survey was designed based on information from two main sources. First, from lecture material surrounding change, management, strategy and decision making that was provided as part of the coursework component in the Master of Educational Leadership in which I undertook. Second, from information obtained from the literature review in Chapter 2 of this thesis. The survey consisted of three sections with a total of 20 questions. The full survey can be viewed in Appendix 4.

Survey section 1 – The first section (Questions 1 - 10) contained questions surrounding demographic variables and participant characteristics. Full details of the questions in Section One are detailed in 3.4.3.1.

Survey section 2 – The second section (Questions 11 & 12) investigated the participants perceived and allocated workload characteristics. Full details of the questions in Section Two are detailed in 3.4.3.2.

Survey section 3 – The third section (Questions 13 - 19) investigated the participant's perceptions surrounding change. Full details of the questions in Section Three are detailed in 3.4.3.3.

#### *3.4.3.1. Survey section 1*

The questions in section one were designed to gain perspective surrounding the participant's demographics and role characteristics. Questions 1 to 4, 6, 8 and 9 required the participant to either provide a dichotomous answer or choose an answer based on a categorical variable. Questions 5 and 7 required the participants to tick as many answers as were appropriate. Survey questions in 1 to 10 are shown in Figure 7.

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your current academic position?
4. How long have you been employed with Universities?
5. Prior to being appointed HOD did you? (tick all that apply)
  - Possess a tertiary qualification relevant to leadership
  - Participate in higher education leadership seminars
  - Undertake self-guided research on leadership
  - Complete a formal leadership program provided by the university
  - Complete a formal leadership program provided by an external provider
  - Receive any formal mentoring or coaching
  - Receive any informal mentoring or coaching
  - Participate in leadership development programs that were customised to your needs
6. How many years have you held the role of HOD?
7. How many staff do you directly line manage?
8. What was your motivation for taking on the role? (tick all that apply)
  - You always aspired to take on the role
  - Felt it was a necessary progression of your career
  - Persuaded by others to take on role
  - Saw it as an ideal role to bring about change
  - There was no other suitable person to assume the role
9. What was the academic position immediately before your appointment as HOD?
10. How much longer do you see yourself in your current role as HOD?

**Figure 7.** Survey questions 1 - 10

#### 3.4.3.2. Survey section 2

Section 2 contained two questions that investigated the participant's actual and perceived workload regarding four categories: teaching, managing, administering and research. Participants were asked to slide the scale of each of the categories to the percentage they felt represented their workload. Participants were asked to ensure the 4 categories equate to 100%, representative of their total workload. Question 11 asked the participants to rate their workload allocation in relation to their agreed workload

document (Figure 8). Question 12 asked the participant to quantify their actual experienced workload between the four categories (Figure 9).

According to your workload document what is your allocation between teaching, management, administration and research? *(please move the slider to indicate your workload allocation, ensuring the the total of the 4 categories equals 100%)*

Percentage of workload allocation

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Teaching

Managing *(activities related to the staff you line manage)*

Administering *(maintaining the objectives and policies of your Department)*

Research

**Figure 8.** Survey question 11 agreed workload allocation

What is your actual experienced allocation between teaching, management, administration and research? *(please move the slider to indicate your workload allocation, ensuring the the total of the 4 categories equals 100%)*

Percentage of workload allocation

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Teaching

Managing *(activities related to the staff you line manage, leading change)*

Administering *(maintaining the objectives, polices finances auditing report writing)*

Research

**Figure 9.** Survey question 12 actual workload allocation

#### 3.4.3.3. Survey section 3

Section three contained eight questions specifically focusing on how the HoD viewed change. Question 13, 14 and 15 used a numerical rating scale (0 - 100). A score of zero indicating the participant perceived the item to have the lowest impact and a score of 100 the highest impact.

Question 13 (Figure 10) consisted of 26 items and asked, “How do you perceive the items impact your ability to stimulate change?” The question was constructed to gain insight into the effect of internal and external factors and how the HoD viewed themselves in the change process.

How do you perceive the items below impact your ability to stimulate change ?

- Funding
- Resources
- Competition from other national tertiary providers
- Competition from international tertiary providers
- The number of concurrent change initiatives in your University
- The strength of your Departments undergraduate programme
- The strength of your Departments postgraduate programme
- The number of research outputs produced by your Department
- The seniority of academics within your Department
- The skill level of staff within your Department
- Recruiting skilled staff
- Retaining skilled staff
- Support from you departmental colleagues
- High staff workloads within your Department
- Your staffs capacity to cope with change
- Your relationship with external stakeholders
- Administrative processes
- Strategies imposed from senior management outside of your Department
- Your networking skills
- Your personal workload
- Your level of authority
- Your ability to influence others
- Your ability to make hard decisions
- Your understanding of change management
- Your personal profile within your Faculty
- Your leadership credibility

**Figure 10.** Items included in question 13



Question 14 (Figure 11) consisted of 22 items and asked, “In your view how important are the core skills listed in order to manage change successfully?” The question was constructed to gain insight into the core skills the HoD perceived were important for change to be successful.

In your view how important are the core skills listed below in order to manage change successfully?

- The ability to influence peoples decisions in effective ways
- Ability to listen to different points of view
- The ability to develop networks
- Understanding how different groups in the University influence decisions
- Being transparent and honest
- Working constructively with resistors
- Motivating others to achieve positive outcomes
- Personal resilience
- Team building abilities
- Understanding of micropolitics
- Ability to stimulate motivation
- Ability to manage multiple tasks
- Ability to build trust
- Ability to clearly articulate a vision
- Ability to follow up on ideas
- Being organised
- Coaching skills
- An understanding of how to use power
- Ability to be decisive
- Conflict resolution skills
- Research skills and experience
- Teaching skills and experience

**Figure 11.** Items included in question 14

Question 15 (Figure 12) asked, “When you initiate change, generally how evident are the following?” The question was developed to gain insight into their perceptions surrounding the key elements of change initiation.

When you initiate change, generally how evident are the following?

- Articulate a rationale for change
- Assembling a team with power and influence
- Collaborative decision making
- Creating a vision of the change
- Communication of a vision
- Ensuring staff have the capacity for change
- Reward and recognition for those involved in the change process
- Recruitment of staff who can implement the vision
- Development of change strategy
- Review of organisational structure
- Review of organisational processes
- Conducting a stakeholder analysis, impact assessment
- Review of staff skills
- Review of organisational culture
- Review of shared values
- Working collegially
- Monitoring the impact of the change

**Figure 12.** Items included in question 15

Question 16 investigated the HoDs previous use of change models (Figure 13), Question 17 (Figure 14) and Question 18 (Figure 15), the use of strategic analysis in change, Question 19 (Figure 16), how strategy drove change for a recent change event and Question 20 (Figure 17), how decisions were made for a recent change event. In Questions 16 to 20 participants were asked to tick all items that applied to their situation.

For a recent change event you led did you apply any of the following models of change? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Lewin's change management model
- ☐ Kotter's 8-step change model
- ☐ McKinsey 7-S model
- ☐ Kubler-Ross 5-stage model
- ☐ Prosci's ADKAR model
- ☐ No model of change was used to guide the process
- ☐ Other

**Figure 13.** Items included in question 16

**For a recent change event did you apply any of the following strategic analysis models? (tick all that apply)**

- ☐ SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis
- ☐ TOWS analysis
- ☐ PEST (Political, Economic, Socio-cultural Technological) analysis
- ☐ No strategic analysis model was applied
- ☐ Other

**Figure 14.** Items included in question 17

**For a recent change event how did you develop the strategy that drove the change? (tick all that apply)**

- ☐ Strategy developed through a logical process of analysis and evaluation
- ☐ Strategy developed through peoples experiences, assumptions and ways of doing things
- ☐ Strategy developed through ideas from a variety of people in and around your Department
- ☐ Strategy developed through senior management exerting influence and power
- ☐ Other

**Figure 15.** Items included in question 18

**For a recent change event you led how did you make decisions? (tick all that apply)**

- ☐ **Individual advisory** - (You consulted with your colleagues individually who had expertise to make the decision, and then made a decision that may or may not have reflected their opinions).
- ☐ **Group advisory** - (You solicited the opinions of the entire group, discussed the implications of the groups suggestions, and then made the decision).
- ☐ **Group majority** - (You involved participants in the decision-making, and then the group decided by majority rule).
- ☐ **Group consensus** - (You involved participants in the decision-making, and then the group decided. All group members shared equally as they generated and evaluated the decision, but total consensus was required before the decision was made).
- ☐ **Unilateral decision** - (You made the decision without consultation).
- ☐ Other

**Figure 16.** Items included in question 19

For a recent change event you led did you use any of the following tools to assess the effectiveness of the team you led? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Belbin's team assessment tool
- ☐ Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) for teams
- ☐ SWOT analysis
- ☐ No team analysis tool was applied
- ☐ Other

**Figure 17.** Items included in question 20

#### 3.4.3.4. Survey piloting

The initial survey was piloted over a two-week period in August of 2017. The survey was piloted by two senior academics, one who had been a university HoD for 9 years and the second an expert in educational leadership, both with experience in survey development.

Following feedback from the piloting process the following changes were made:

1. A sliding scale was developed for the questions pertaining to workload (questions 11 and 12).
2. Definitions for management and administration were added to questions 11 and 12.
3. Items for questions 13, 14 and 15 that were common were combined to reduce the overall number of items in each of the questions.
4. Definitions for each of the decision-making categories were added to question 19 to ensure all participants understood the definition of each category.

#### 3.4.4. Data collection

The survey was launched September 2017 and remained open for four weeks, closing in October 2017. One reminder was sent to all participants who had not opened the survey after two weeks of receiving the initial invite. The reminder email was auto

generated by the Qualtrics® software and was only sent to invitees who had not opened the survey. When participants completed the survey, they were sent an auto generated thank you email.

### **3.4.5. Data Analysis**

#### *3.4.5.1. Analysis of Questions 1 – 10*

SPSS version 24.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) was used for all analyses. Descriptive statistics, including mean (SD), frequencies and percentages, were used to describe the demographic variables and participant characteristics.

#### *3.4.5.2. Analysis of Questions 11 and 12*

Means between actual and perceived workload allocation in the four categories, teaching, managing, administering and research were calculated. Between category differences were assessed using a paired samples t-test with an alpha level of less than 0.05 considered a statistically significant difference. Effect size calculations were calculated in Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Office 2013) using the following formula proposed by (Thalheimer & Cook, 2002).

$$d = \frac{x_t - x_c}{S_{pooled}}$$

Key to symbols:

d = Cohen's *d* effect size

x = mean (average of treatment or comparison conditions)

s = standard deviation

Subscripts: t refers to the treatment condition and c refers to the comparison condition (or control condition).

Effect size magnitudes were categorised according to (Cohen, 1992). Effect sizes of 0.2 to 0.5 were interpreted as small, 0.5 to 0.8 as medium, and 0.8 to 1.3 as large and above 1.3 as very large.

#### *3.4.5.3. Analysis of questions 13, 14 and 15*

Principal component analysis (PCA) was used to analyse the items in Questions 13, 14 and 15. The goal of PCA is data reduction, reducing a large number of variables to a smaller set of components that account for a large amount of observed variance (Jolliffe, 2011). Internal consistency of all items assessed in Questions 13, 14 and 15 was assessed through calculation of Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was interpreted by the following rule of thumb:  $\alpha \geq 0.9$  = excellent reliability;  $0.9 > \alpha > 0.8$  good reliability;  $0.8 > \alpha > 0.7$  acceptable reliability;  $0.7 > \alpha > 0.6$  questionable reliability;  $0.6 > \alpha > 0.5$  poor reliability;  $\alpha < 0.5$  poor reliability.

##### *3.4.5.3.1. Procedure for conducting principal component analysis*

All survey responses in questions 13, 14 and 15 were subjected to PCA using the following steps.

1. Sampling adequacy was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO). The KMO was conducted to determine whether adequate correlation existed between the individual items contained within the survey. The statistic also provides an initial test of whether items in a scale provide a sample adequate to conduct factor analysis (M. Kaiser, 1974). A KMO statistic less than 0.5 being unacceptable (H. Kaiser & Rice, 1974).
2. The Bartlett's tests for significance was assessed. The Bartlett's test of sphericity needed to be  $< 0.05$  (Bartlett, 1950).

3. The number of factors of interest was determined by examination of the Scree Plot and selected based on the Kaiser principle of accepting factors with eigenvalues  $>1$ .
4. After satisfying all the necessary tests detailed in points 1 to 3, the data were subjected to a second factor analysis using PCA, with Varimax (orthogonal) rotation. The model was then rerun based on the number of components selected following review of scree plot and eigenvalues. When the analysis was rerun small coefficients were suppressed (coefficients less than 0.3).

#### *3.4.5.4. Analysis of questions 16 – 20*

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to describe the raw data that described the type of change models used, models of strategic analysis, methods of decision making and the use of team effectiveness tools by the study participants.

## **3.5. Part B – Semi-structured interviews**

### **3.5.1. Participants**

A subsample of 5 participants were recruited to undertake the semi-structured interviews.

#### **3.5.1. Inclusion criteria**

Participants were only considered for interviews if in addition to the inclusion criteria identified in 3.4.1.1, they volunteered to participate in the interview by clicking a link that was contained in the last question of the survey.

### **3.5.2. Sampling procedure**

The final question of the online survey asked: “Would you be interested in participating in a face to face interview”. If the participant answered “yes” to this question they were taken to an email link that was constructed within a second survey. This question was embedded in a second survey in order to maintain the anonymity of the participant. This ensured that the participant’s response to participate in the interview could not be linked to their online survey responses. Upon receiving an email from a participant indicating their willingness to participate in a semi-structured interview, the author contacted the participant by phone to discuss the interview. Participants who agreed to be interviewed were sent an email with the following attachments: participant information sheet (Appendix 5), interview consent form (Appendix 6) and interview questions (Appendix 7).

### **3.5.3. Interview guide development and pilot testing**

#### *3.5.3.1. Interview guide design*

In this study interview questions were designed using a semi-structured format. The strengths of using a semi-structured interview are time efficiency, limitation of researcher subjectivity and ease of coding and data analysis, as the researcher controls the question flow and discussion topics (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The semi-structured format was also chosen for the ability to explore issues that arose spontaneously owing to the individual ways in which the HoDs have experienced change. An interview guide was used in order to enable consistency in questioning between participants and serves as a framework for the body of the semi-structured interview (Arksey & Knight, 1999). The interview guide (Table 4) was constructed based on the two research questions and information gained through development of the survey. The interview questions were designed firstly, to discuss how they felt they influenced change. Secondly, to reconstruct their experience of a change event.



**Table 4.** Semi-structured interview guide

Questions	Interviewer prompts
1. What areas of your role do you perceive you can influence change?	→ Examples Curriculum, Department, School, Faculty, Industry, Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feed up structures to the Faculty, are these effective?</li> <li>• Can you influence research?</li> <li>• Where do you perceive your workload fits</li> <li>• <b>Industry:</b> Does your influence come from your HOD role or your research profile</li> <li>• <b>International:</b> Does the HOD role afford you anything or is it just your research profile.</li> <li>• Do you feel you are autonomous in your role?</li> <li>• <b>Power:</b> How do you perceive your power?</li> <li>• <b>Trust:</b> How important is this</li> </ul>
When considering questions 2, 3 and 4 please draw on current and recent examples of a change event you initiated.	
2. How did you approach the change process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any particular model</li> <li>• Awareness of models</li> <li>• Training around change</li> </ul>
3. What did you see as the key components in the implementing of change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you know change has been successful</li> </ul>
4. What did you perceive as your biggest barriers to change	

### 3.5.4. Data collection

#### 3.5.4.1. Overview of data collection

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with five HoDs. The interviews took place between September 2017 and January 2018. Prior to the interview participants were sent a reminder email that contained the interview questions. Interviews were opened with a brief overview of the study and the purpose of the research and how the information obtained in the interview was to be used. During the interview, the interview guide was adhered to and used the probing guides developed when information was incomplete or to aid the participant to develop a concept surrounding change.

All interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes in duration. At the end of the interview all participants were asked if there were any further points they wished to elaborate on. All interviews were audio recorded and independently transcribed by a professional transcription service.

### **3.5.5. Data coding and analysis**

Braun and Clarke (2006) characterise three approaches to thematic analysis, coding reliability, codebook, and reflexive. The approach of thematic analysis followed to analyse data in the current study was reflexive. This method is a recognised approach to identify patterns of meaning within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In thematic analysis themes can be identified inductively or deductively.

The first phase of analysis involved familiarisation with the interview transcripts. Casual notes were initially made in the borders of the transcripts relating to key points and highlighting potential quotes that could be used to exemplify a specific point of view related to the two overriding research questions. The second phase of analysis involved the generation of codes. A deductive approach to coding was taken with the questions posed in Table 6 used as the basis for code generation. Key phrases related to each code were highlighted on the individual transcripts. Electronic versions of the interview transcripts were imported into NVivo 11. The codes were then created electronically and the excerpts related to each code created in NVivo 11. The eleven codes were:

1. Perceived influence on change
2. Influence on research
3. Workload
4. Industry
5. International

6. Power
7. Approach to change
8. Change models
9. Training for change
10. Key components for implementing change
11. Barriers to change

Themes were then constructed from the codes. The codes were used as a building block to construct the theme; however, codes were also promoted to themes where it contained a central idea that captured a meaningful pattern in the data. Finally, the themes were then revised and defined through reviewing all coded data related to the particular theme. An example of a coded transcript is contained in Appendix 8. An example of a codebook is contained in Appendix 9.

# Results – Online Survey

## 4.1. Introduction

Of the 239 survey invitations sent, 68 survey responses were received (28% response rate). Nine surveys were removed prior to final analysis. The nine surveys were excluded as they were opened but contained no data. Subsequently, 59 surveys were included in the final data analysis. The survey results are described under four main headings, (1) population characteristics, (2) employment characteristics, (3) workload allocation and (4) change management.

## 4.2. Population characteristics

### 4.2.1. Participant demographics

Sixty six percent (n = 39) of respondents were male, 44% female (n = 20). Sixty six percent of participants were aged 55 years old or younger (n = 39) with 44% of participants aged 56 years or older (n = 20). Sex and age characteristics are displayed in (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Sex and age categories of participants

		Age category (years)					Total (%)
		Under 36	36 - 45	46 - 55	56 - 65	Over 65	
Sex	Male	0	5	18	14	2	<b>39 (66)</b>
	Female	1	4	11	4	0	<b>20 (44)</b>
<b>Total (percentage)</b>		<b>1 (2)</b>	<b>9 (15)</b>	<b>29 (49)</b>	<b>18 (31)</b>	<b>2 (3)</b>	<b>59</b>

### 4.3. Employment characteristics

#### 4.3.1. Current academic position

Seventy six percent ( $n = 45$ ) of participants were currently appointed either at the level of Associate Professor or Professor. The frequency and percentage of participants related to academic position are displayed in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Current academic position of participants

Academic position	Frequency (percentage)
Professor	30 (51)
Associate Professor	15 (25)
Senior Lecturer	13 (22)
Lecturer	1 (2)

#### 4.3.2. Length of employment in University

Eighty three percent ( $n = 49$ ) of participants reported to have been employed in a university between 11 to 30 years. No participants were employed in a university for more than 50 years (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Years of employment in university

Years employed	Frequency (percentage)
1 - 5	2 (3)
6 - 10	4 (7)
11 - 20	24 (41)
21 - 30	25 (42)
31 - 40	3 (5)
41 - 50	1 (2)
> 50	0 (0)

#### **4.3.3. Years in the Head of Department role**

The majority of participants had been employed in the HoD role between 1 to 6 years (71%, n = 42), with only 5%, (n = 3) holding the position longer than 10 years. The years in the HoD role are displayed in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Years in HoD role

Years	Frequency (percentage)
Under 1	7 (12)
1 - 3	27 (46)
4 - 6	15 (25)
7 - 10	7 (12)
> 10	3 (5)

#### **4.3.4. Number of staff line managed**

The majority of participants 58% (n = 34) managed academic departments comprising between of 11 to 50 staff. Seventeen percent (n = 10) of participants reported managing more than 50 staff (Table 9).

**Table 9.** Number of staff line managed by HoD

Staff number	Frequency (percentage)
1 - 5	5 (8)
6 - 10	9 (16)
11 - 20	17 (29)
21 - 50	17 (29)
> 50	10 (17)

#### **4.3.5. Anticipated time left in Head of Department Role**

The majority of participants only viewed the role as a short-term position with 61% (n = 36) indicating they only see themselves in the role for 1 to 3 more years. None of the participants perceived they would be in the role for more than 10 years (Table 10).

**Table 10.** Years anticipated left in HoD role

Years	Frequency (percentage)
Under 1	13 (22)
1 - 3	36 (61)
4 - 6	8 (14)
7 - 10	2 (3)
> 10	0 (0)

#### **4.3.6. Training prior to appointment?**

Prior to being appointed 78% (n = 46) of participants reported receiving informal mentorship with 43% receiving formal mentorship. 41% of participants (n = 24) reported undertaking a formal leadership program offered by the university, with 23% (n = 13) reporting they undertook a leadership programme offered external to their university. Thirty one percent of participants participated in a customised leadership development

programme prior to appointment to the HoD role. The frequency and percentages for training received prior to appointment to the HoD role are presented in Table 11.

**Table 11.** Training offered prior to HoD appointment

Type of leadership training	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
Receive any informal mentoring or coaching	46 (78)	13 (22)
Participate in higher education leadership seminars	37 (63)	22 (37)
Undertake self-guided research on leadership	28 (47)	31 (53)
Receive any formal mentoring or coaching	25 (43)	33 (57)
Complete a formal leadership program provided by the university	24 (41)	35 (59)
Participate in leadership development programs that were customised to your needs	18 (31)	41 (69)
Possess a tertiary qualification relevant to leadership	14 (24)	45 (76)
Complete a formal leadership program provided by an external provider	13 (23)	44 (77)

#### 4.3.7. Motivation for taking on role

The motivations that led to the participants assuming the HoD role are displayed in Table 12. Thirty one percent (n = 26) of participant's accepted the role as they felt there was no other suitable person was suitable to assume the role. Approximately a quarter (n = 24) of participants were persuaded by others to take on the role.

**Table 12.** Motivation for taking on HoD role

Motivation	Frequency (percentage)
There was no other suitable person to assume the role	26 (31)
Persuaded by others to take on role	24 (28)
Saw it as an ideal role to bring about change	14 (16)
Felt it was a necessary progression of your career	11 (13)
Aspired to take on the role	4 (5)



Four participants also provided qualitative answers as to their motivation for taking on the HoD role which are detailed in Table13.

**Table 13.** Additional motivation for taking on HoD role

1.	Felt it was my responsibility in terms of service to the university
2.	Was interested in the challenge for the fixed-term period, and saw this as a pathway to securing a permanent academic position.
3.	It's one of those things that comes your way after being a member of the department for a long time.
4.	Was part of a job offer

## 4.4. Workload allocation

Participants scored the percentage of time they were allocated and their experienced workload time on four core work activities. (1) teaching, (2) managing (activities related to the staff they line manage), (3) administration (maintaining the objectives and policies of the department) and (4) research. No statistically significant difference was shown between the percentage of workload allocated to teaching ( $m = 24.43$ ,  $SD = 11.90$ ) and the experienced teaching workload ( $m = 22.73$ ,  $SD = 11.34$ );  $t(55) = 1.32$ ,  $p = 0.19$ , effect size small (0.15). Data showed a statistically significant difference between participants experienced and actual workload allocation regarding management duties. Participants perceived they spent more of their workload on management activities ( $m = 22.17$ ,  $SD = 13.85$ ) than their actual agreed workload allocation ( $m = 30.06$ ,  $SD = 5.40$ );  $t(51)$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , effect size medium (-0.54). A statistically significant difference was found with regard to perceived and experienced workload surrounding administrative duties. Data demonstrated participants perceived that they spent a greater proportion of their workload on administration activities ( $m = 24.14$ ,  $SD = 13.99$ ) than they were actually allocated ( $m = 32.88$ ,  $SD = 15.67$ );  $t(56)$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , effect size medium (-0.59). Data revealed a statistically significant difference surrounding research workload. Data demonstrated participants perceived they spent less time on research activities ( $m =$

28.81, SD = 14.36) than they were actually allocated ( $m = 19.31$ , SD = 12.57);  $t(54)$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , effect size medium (0.71). The mean percentage workload allocations and experienced workload allocations are displayed in Table 14.

**Table 14.** Differences between agreed workload allocation and experienced workload allocation

Work activity	Mean % of workload (SD)		Difference	P value	Effect size
	Agreed allocation	Experienced allocation			
Teaching	24.43 (11.90)	22.73 (11.34)	- 1.70	0.19	0.15
Management	22.17 (13.85)	30.06 (15.40)	7.89	<0.01	-0.54
Administration	24.14 (13.99)	32.88 (15.67)	8.74	<0.01	-0.59
Research	28.81 (14.36)	19.31 (12.57)	- 9.50	<0.01	0.71

## 4.5. Change Management

### 4.5.1. Factors that impact ability to stimulate change

The participants rated how they perceived the 26 items impacted their ability to stimulate change. The 26 items were scored using a numerical rating scale (0 - 100). A score of zero indicating the participant perceived the item to have the lowest impact and a score of 100 the highest impact. Personal workload, imposed strategies, leadership credibility, staff workloads and strategies imposed from above rating as the top five influencers. The means and standard deviations of work items and their perceived impact upon HoDs ability to stimulate change are displayed in Table 15.

**Table 15.** Mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha of work items and their perceived impact upon HoDs ability to stimulate change

<b>Question 13 items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Your personal workload	74.48	19.84
Your leadership credibility	68.21	27.71
High staff workloads within your department	67.54	25.79
Strategies imposed from senior management outside of your department	66.95	26.54
Support from you departmental colleagues	66.67	24.95
Resources	66.38	23.30
Your ability to influence others	64.00	25.28
Funding	63.62	25.53
Your level of authority	62.91	26.22
Your staffs capacity to cope with change	62.50	24.88
Administrative processes	60.34	24.98
Your personal profile within your Faculty	58.57	27.73
The skill level of staff within your department	57.90	25.69
Your ability to make hard decisions	57.68	29.73
Your networking skills	55.37	27.25
Retaining skilled staff	54.82	30.39
Number of concurrent change initiatives	54.48	29.27
Recruiting skilled staff	53.57	31.18
Strength of your departments undergraduate programme	50.86	28.79
The strength of your departments postgraduate programme	50.52	27.17
Your understanding of change management	50.18	29.41
The number of research outputs produced by your department	48.91	26.29
The seniority of academics within your department	45.09	23.72
Your relationship with external stakeholders	42.11	27.30
Competition from international tertiary institutions	30.19	23.83
Competition from international tertiary institutions	20.98	21.19
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.88	

#### *4.5.1.1. Factor analysis*

The 26 items assessed in Question 13 relating to the HoD's perceived ability to stimulate change were analysed using principal component analysis (PCA) with a Varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Using an eigenvalue cut-off of 1, there were 7 factors that explained a cumulative variance of 74.40% (Table 16). Following examination of the scree plot

(Appendix 10), 4 factors were retained that explained 52.35% of variance in the data. Factor 1 was labelled 'individual leadership characteristics' that impact on the ability to stimulate change due to high loadings on the following items: your personal profile within the faculty, your ability to make hard decisions, your leadership credibility, your ability to influence others and your understanding on change management. This factor explained 30.44% of the variance. The second factor derived was labelled 'resourcing' due to the high loadings by the following factors: resources and funding. The variance explained by this factor was 13.41%. The third factor was labelled 'departmental position' due to the high loadings by the following factors: the strength of your departments undergraduate program, the strength of your departments postgraduate programme. The variance explained by this factor was 8.48%. Factor 4 was labelled 'staff skills' due to high loadings by the following factors: skill level of staff within your department, recruiting skilled staff. This factor explained 6.85% of the variance.

The data were assessed as suitable for factor analysis with the KMO measure of sampling adequacy of 0.60 indicating data was sufficient for PCA. The Bartlett's test of sphericity  $\chi^2 = (325) = 759.127$ ,  $p < 0.001$  showed that there were patterned relationships between all items. Combined with the communalities of all 26 items being above 0.3, factor analysis was deemed suitable for all 26 items.

Subsequently, four key patterns of response were identified amongst the participants regarding their perceived ability to stimulate change: one pattern of individual leadership characteristics, one pattern of resourcing, one pattern of departmental position, and one pattern of staff skills. These four patterns are independent of one another (i.e. they were not correlated).

**Table 16.** Rotated component matrix with eigenvalues and percentage of variance for 26 items in question 13

	Loadings				<u>Communality</u>
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	
	Individual leadership characteristics	Resourcing	Departmental position	Staff skills	
Your personal profile within your Faculty	<b>.90</b>				.55
Your leadership credibility	<b>.88</b>				.58
Your ability to influence others	<b>.87</b>				.38
Your ability to make hard decisions	<b>.86</b>				.31
Your level of authority	<b>.81</b>				.16
Your understanding of change management	<b>.73</b>				.36
Your networking skills	<b>.65</b>		<b>.44</b>		.41
Your relationship with external stakeholders	<b>.56</b>				.29
Support from you departmental colleagues	<b>.43</b>				.23
Resources		<b>.89</b>			.41
Funding		<b>.87</b>			.37
Strength of your departments undergraduate programme			<b>.82</b>		.39
The strength of your departments postgraduate programme			<b>.81</b>		.29
The skill level of staff within your department				<b>.77</b>	.28
Recruiting skilled staff		<b>-.44</b>		<b>.71</b>	.26
Your staffs capacity to cope with change				<b>.55</b>	.55
Retaining skilled staff			<b>.48</b>	<b>.53</b>	.41
The number of research outputs produced by your department				<b>.51</b>	.59
Strategies imposed from senior management outside of your department		<b>.43</b>			.56
<b>Eigenvalues</b>	7.92	3.49	2.21	1.78	
<b>Percentage of variance</b>	30.45	13.41	8.48	6.85	
<b>Percentage of total variance</b>	59.20				

#### 4.5.2. Core skills required to manage change

The participants rated their perception of how important the 22 core skills listed in question 14 were in order to manage change successfully. The 22 items were scored using a numerical rating scale (0 - 100). A score of zero indicating the participant perceived the item to have the lowest impact and a score of 100 the highest impact. Being transparent and honest, the ability to influence people's decisions in effective ways, personal resilience, the ability to build trust and being organised rated as the top five core skills. The means and standard deviations of core skills items are displayed in Table 17.

**Table 17.** Mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha of core skills HoDs viewed as important in the management of successful change

Question 14 items	Mean	SD
Being transparent and honest	78.38	23.39
The ability to influence people's decisions in effective ways	76.78	16.95
Personal resilience	75.86	22.00
Ability to build trust	74.96	24.18
Being organised	74.65	16.45
The ability to listen to different points of view	74.53	17.62
Ability to follow up on ideas	73.51	24.42
Motivating others to achieve positive outcomes	73.16	22.48
Ability to clearly articulate a vision	72.78	23.35
Ability to be decisive	69.32	21.59
Ability to manage multiple tasks	68.05	25.89
Conflict resolution skills	65.96	26.08
Working constructively with resistors	65.50	23.09
Understanding how different groups in the university influence decisions	65.00	20.25
Understanding of micro-politics	64.44	25.40
Team building abilities	63.11	27.09
Ability to stimulate motivation	62.46	27.86
An understanding of how to use power	61.18	25.18
The ability to develop networks	58.88	26.35
Research skills and experience	51.11	29.49
Coaching skills	49.21	27.76
Teaching skills and experience	46.58	28.95
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.93	

#### *4.5.2.1. Factor analysis*

The 22 items in Question 14 relating to what the HoDs perceived were the most important core skills to manage change successfully were analysed using PCA with a Varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Using an eigenvalue cut-off of 1, there were 5 factors that explained a cumulative variance of 71.26% (Table 18). Following examination of the scree plot (Appendix 10), 3 factors were retained that explained 59.40% of variance in the data. Factor 1 was labelled 'individual ability' due to high loadings on the following items: motivating others to achieve positive outcomes, conflict resolution skills, team building abilities and ability to stimulate motivation. This factor explained 43.33% of the variance. The second factor derived was labelled 'personal qualities' due to the high loadings by the following factors: ability to listen to different points of view, the ability to influence people's decisions in effective ways and being transparent and honest. The variance explained by this factor was 8.72%. The third factor was labelled 'political awareness' due to the high loadings by the following factors: the ability to develop networks, understanding how different groups in the university influence decisions and understanding micro-politics. The variance explained by this factor was 7.34 %.

The data were assessed as suitable for factor analysis with the KMO measure of sampling adequacy of 0.82 indicating data was sufficient for PCA. The Bartlett's test of sphericity  $\chi^2 = (231) = 825.919$ ,  $p < 0.001$  showed that there were patterned relationships between all items. Combined with the communalities of all 22 items being above 0.3, factor analysis was deemed suitable for all 22 items.

Subsequently, three key patterns of response were identified amongst the participants with regard to what they perceive as core skills to stimulate change: one pattern of individual ability characteristics, one pattern of personal qualities and one pattern of political awareness. These 3 patterns were independent of one another (i.e. they are were not correlated).

**Table 18.** Rotated component matrix with eigenvalues and percentage of variance for 22 items in Question 14

	Loadings			<u>Communality</u>
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	
	Individual ability	Personal qualities	Political awareness	
Motivating others to achieve positive outcomes	<b>.89</b>			.71
Conflict resolution skills	<b>.85</b>			.75
Team building abilities	<b>.82</b>			.82
Ability to stimulate motivation	<b>.81</b>			.76
Ability to build trust	<b>.78</b>			.59
Ability to be decisive	<b>.76</b>			.67
Ability to clearly articulate a vision	<b>.72</b>			.85
Coaching skills	<b>.72</b>			.67
Working constructively with resistors	<b>.71</b>			.70
Personal resilience	<b>.66</b>			.65
Ability to follow up on ideas	<b>.65</b>			.71
Teaching skills and experience	<b>.62</b>	<b>.59</b>		.83
Being transparent and honest	<b>.57</b>	<b>-.41</b>		.75
The ability to develop networks	<b>.56</b>	<b>.41</b>	<b>.56</b>	.83
Ability to manage multiple tasks	<b>.55</b>			.48
An understanding of how to use power	<b>.55</b>			.70
Research skills and experience	<b>.53</b>	<b>.47</b>		.73
The ability to influence peoples decisions in effective ways	<b>.52</b>	<b>-.44</b>		.44
Ability to listen to different points of view	<b>.55</b>	<b>-.58</b>		.70
Understanding how different groups in the University influence decisions	<b>.51</b>		<b>.66</b>	.81
Understanding of micropolitics	<b>.47</b>		<b>.55</b>	.81
Being organised				.73
<b>Eigenvalues</b>	9.55	1.92	1.65	
<b>Percentage of variance</b>	43.33	8.72	7.34	
<b>Percentage of total variance</b>	66.20			



#### 4.5.3. Factors that impact change

The participants rated their perception of how evident the 17 key items detailed in question 15 were before they initiated change. The 17 items were scored using a numerical rating scale (0 - 100). A score of zero indicating the participant perceived the item to have the lowest impact and a score of 100 the highest impact. Articulating a rationale for change, monitoring the impact of change, ensuring staff have a capacity for change, creating the vision of change and collaborative decision-making ranked as the top five elements. The means and standard deviations of the key items prior to change are displayed in Table 19.

**Table 19.** Mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha of the key elements prior to initiating change

Question 15 items	Mean	SD
Articulate a rationale for change	76.05	20.54
Monitoring the impact of change	75.49	22.06
Ensuring staff have a capacity for change	71.14	24.67
Creating a vision of change	70.88	24.62
Collaborative decision-making	67.44	24.52
Reward and recognition for those involved in change process	60.45	24.50
Assemble a team with power and influence	56.27	27.63
Review of organisational structure	55.79	29.26
Recruitment of staff who can implement a vision	51.26	24.93
Conducting a stakeholder analysis, impact assessment	49.32	27.23
Review of organisational processes	48.46	25.99
Review of staff skills	48.45	28.23
Communication of a vision	47.17	33.32
Development of change strategy	47.17	33.32
Working collegially	47.07	32.97
Review of shared values	46.65	30.31
Review of organisational culture	46.52	28.38
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.95	

#### *4.5.3.1. Factor analysis*

The 17 items in Question 15 relating to what the HoDs perceived were key elements when they initiated a change process were analysed using PCA with a Varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Using an eigenvalue cut-off of 1, there were 3 factors that explained a cumulative variance of 71.39 % (Table 20). All three factors with eigenvalues above 1 were retained (scree plot, Appendix 10). Factor 1 was labelled 'setting the stage' due to high loadings on the following items: review staff skills, development of change strategy, creating a vision of change, review of organisational culture and review of shared. This factor explained 56.40% of the variance. The second factor derived was labelled 'organisational review and strategy' due to the high loadings by the following factors: review of organisational structure, review of organisational processes and review of organisational culture. The variance explained by this factor was 8.22 %. Factor 3 was labelled 'communication and relationships' due to the high loadings by the following factors: articulate a rationale for change, collaborative decision-making, communication of a vision and working collegially. The variance explained by this factor was 6.77%.

The data were assessed as suitable for factor analysis with the KMO measure of sampling adequacy of 0.86 indicating data was sufficient for PCA. The Bartlett's test of sphericity  $\chi^2 = (136) = 732.448$ ,  $p < 0.001$  showed that there were patterned relationships between all items. Combined with the communalities of all 17 items being above 0.3, factor analysis was deemed suitable.

Subsequently, three key patterns of response were identified amongst the participants regarding what they perceive as key elements when initiating change: one pattern of setting the stage, one pattern of organisational review and strategy and one pattern of communication and relationships. These three patterns were independent of one another (i.e. they were not correlated).

**Table 20.** Rotated component matrix with eigenvalues and percentage of variance for 17 items in Question 15

	Loadings			<u>Communality</u>
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	
	Setting the stage	Organisational review & strategy	Communication & relationships	
Articulate a rationale for change	<b>.81</b>			.76
Assembling a team with power and influence	<b>.74</b>	<b>.41</b>		.48
Collaborative decision making	<b>.74</b>			.58
Creating a vision of the change	<b>.73</b>	<b>.41</b>		.76
Communication of a vision	<b>.67</b>		<b>.46</b>	.80
Ensuring staff have the capacity for change	<b>.65</b>		<b>.56</b>	.72
Reward and recognition for those involved in the change process	<b>.55</b>	<b>.52</b>		.66
Recruitment of staff who can implement the vision	<b>.51</b>	<b>.45</b>		.69
Development of change strategy		<b>.81</b>		.76
Review of organisational structure		<b>.80</b>		.79
Review of organisational processes		<b>.79</b>		.78
Conducting a stakeholder analysis, impact assessment	<b>.48</b>	<b>.77</b>		.72
Review of staff skills	<b>.45</b>	<b>.68</b>		.85
Review of organisational culture	<b>.52</b>	<b>.64</b>		.79
Review of shared values			<b>.86</b>	.70
Working collegially			<b>.67</b>	.57
Monitoring the impact of the change	<b>.43</b>		<b>.51</b>	.73
<b>Eigenvalues</b>	9.59	1.40	1.15	
<b>Percentage of variance</b>	56.40	8.22	6.77	
<b>Percentage of total variance</b>	71.39			

#### 4.5.4. Change models

Participants were asked to detail the type of change model that they used in a recent change event. Of the 66 responses received 65% (n = 43) of the participants indicated no change model was used to guide their change process (Table 21). Twenty two percent (n = 15) of participants indicated a specific change model was used to guide their change process.

**Table 21.** Type of change model used in a recent change event

Change management model	Frequency (percentage)
No Model used	43 (65)
Prosci's ADKAR model	4 (6)
Kotter's 8-step change model	3 (5)
McKinsey 7-S model	3 (5)
Kübler-Ross 5-stage model	3 (5)
Lewin's change management model	2 (3)
Other	8 (12)

#### 4.5.5. Strategy

##### 4.5.5.1. Models of strategic analysis

Participants were asked what type of strategic analysis guided a recent change event. SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats) was the most commonly used method of strategic analysis applied in the implementation of change with 50% (n = 33) indicating the use of the model (Table 22). Thirty three percent of participants indicated that no strategic analysis model was used in a recently applied change event.

**Table 22.** Type of strategic analysis used in recent change event

Strategic analysis	Frequency (percentage)
SWOT	33 (50)
No Model used	22 (33)
PEST	6 (9)
TOWS	1 (2)
Other	4 (6)

SWOT, Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats; TOWS, Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses, Strength; PEST, Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological

#### 4.5.5.2. *Strategy that drives change*

In a recent change event participants indicated that strategy to drive change was developed by two main methods. Thirty one percent (n = 32) indicated change strategy was developed through processes of analysis and evaluation. Thirty percent of participants (n = 31) indicated strategy was developed through people in and around the department (Table 23).

**Table 23.** Mechanisms of strategy development

Mechanism	Frequency (percentage)
Strategy developed through a logical process of analysis and evaluation	32 (31)
Strategy developed through ideas from a variety of people in and around the department	31 (30)
Strategy developed through senior management exerting influence and power	19 (18)
Strategy developed through peoples experiences, assumptions and ways of doing things	16 (16)
Other	5 (5)

#### 4.5.6. Decision making

Group advisory was the most common method of decision making in the change process with 40% (n = 33) of responses indicating use of this method. Individual advisory was the second most common decision-making method. The decision-making process, frequency and percentage of response are shown in Table 24.

**Table 24.** Processes by which decisions were made for recent change event

Decision making process	Frequency (percentage)
Group advisory	33 (40)
Individual advisory	21 (26)
Group consensus	15 (18)
Group majority	9 (11)
Unilateral decision	3 (4)
Other	1 (1)

#### 4.5.7. Team effectiveness tools

Seventy percent (n = 42) of participant responses indicated no tool was used to assess the effectiveness of the team that was involved in the change event. Twenty percent (n = 12) of participant responses indicated SWOT analysis was used to investigate team effectiveness. The team assessment model, frequency and percentage of responses are displayed in Table 25.

**Table 25.** Team model used in recent change event

Team model	Frequency (percentage)
No model used	42 (70)
SWOT analysis	12 (20)
MBTI for teams	2 (3)
Belbin's team assessment tool	2 (3)
Other	2 (3)

MBTI, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

## **4.6. Summary of survey results**

The survey included that: the majority of HoDs viewed the role as short-term, informal mentorship prior to appointment was common, most were either persuaded to take on the role, or took on the role as they viewed there was no other suitable person to assume the position. Regarding workload, HoDs perceived they spent significantly more time on management and administration activities than they had agreed to in their workload agreements and that they spent less time on research activities than they had agreed to in their workload agreements. When asked what factors impacted their ability to stimulate change HoDs identified leadership characteristics, resourcing, departmental position and staff skills as key factors. When asked what were the core skills they viewed as key to managing change, HoDs identified three factors; individual ability, personal qualities and political awareness. Regarding what HoDs identified as key elements when they initiated change process, they identified three factors as key; setting the stage, organisational review and strategy and communication and relationships. The majority reported that for a recent change event they led, no change model was used to guide the process. SWOT analysis was used by half of the HoDs to guide a recent change event with approximately a third reporting strategy was developed through a process of analysis and evaluation in conjunction with a variety of staff in and around their academic department.

# Results - Interviews

## 5.1. Introduction

This chapter reports findings from the qualitative stage of the study focusing on the influence that five HoDs in New Zealand universities perceived they had over change.

## 5.2. Participant characteristics

Five semi-structured interviews were conducted between October 2017 and January 2018. Three male and two female HoDs were interviewed. Participants were aged between 36 to 65 years old and had been working in the university sector for between 1 and 30 years. Two participants were appointed at the level of Associate Professor, two at Senior Lecturer and one at Lecturer. All HoDs had been in the role between 1 and 3 years.

## 5.3. Defining the HoD role

All participants were asked how they would define the HoD role. The word management featured prominently in the responses. The responses of the five HoDs are detailed below.

HoD 1 viewed the role from the perspective of the person, emphasising that the role involved looking after and supporting staff: *“It’s a people management role so it’s looking*



*after people and, specifically, the academic staff in the department to ensure that they are supported and that they are doing what they need to do”.*

HoD 2 drew attention to the positive and negative aspects of the role highlighting that they were motivated by the ability to develop individuals and the department: *“It’s thankless! You’re damned if you do and you’re damned if you don’t. There are bits of it that I absolutely love. I love the strategic-ness of it. I think that’s really, really exciting. I love developing a culture and supporting the development of a positive culture, bringing staff along with me. I love the challenges of having to work with different personalities because I have a particular personality and I can be quite black and white so I like being challenged so I’m challenged by staff that are quite grey; they consider the middle bit which I never consider”.*

HoD 3 had a simple view of the role: *“It’s my role to lead and manage the department. I probably wouldn’t put it any more different than that”.*

HoD 4 viewed the role as management noting a level of influence within their department, but with no ability to exert influence outside the department: *“Operations manager. That’s how I’d define it. You’re busy with operations of the staff, the curriculum. Yes, you can influence some change at departmental level but I don’t personally feel that it allows you to influence change at a wider level”.*

HoD 5 viewed themselves as an enabler but highlighted that much of their role was consumed by administration: *“I’m a glorified administrator. I’ve always said that all I am is an enabler”.*

## 5.4. Themes

The HoDs accounts of change were organised into four themes:

Theme 1: Perceived influence over change.

Theme 2: The influence of the position.

Theme 3: Approach to change.

Theme 4: Barriers to change.

### 5.4.1. Theme 1: Perceived influence over change

The HoDs viewed they exerted influence over five main areas:

(1) Curriculum, (2) staff tasks, (3) departmental direction, (4) resource allocation and (5) relationships.

#### 5.4.1.1. Curriculum

Four of the five HoDs perceived that in the role they were most able to influence the curriculum. Specifically, they perceived their influence extended to the design, structure and processes surrounding the curriculum. HoD 4, *“I think I can influence curriculum would be the first one on my list and the processes by which we deliver the curriculum so the curriculum structure, as well as curriculum processes”*. Influence was not just seen as being short term. HoD 5 highlighted that their present influence is based on future needs, *“Where I have influenced change a lot is around curriculum for the direction of the programme and where I see the students going or where the sector is going in the next five or 10 years”.... “The students that come through now that enter today, in three years’ time, five years’ time, we need to be predicting what they are going to be doing in that time. We can’t be kept resting on our laurels”*.

#### 5.4.1.2. Staff Tasks

All HoDs perceived they had significant influence over numerous facets related to staffing. This included workload allocation, mentoring of staff, encouraging staff to participate, keeping staff informed of the larger picture, organising staff into projects, the makeup of staff, enabling the staff to work more effectively, influencing how staff interact, engaging in strategic processes and strategic discussions surrounding career planning, developing and/or initiating networks for staff and managing relationships between staff, both internally and externally. HoD1 *"I spend a lot of time trying to make teams...trying to introduce people...providing advice and mentoring"*.

#### 5.4.1.3. Departmental Direction

All HoDs perceived they had significant influence over the direction that the department was moving in, departmental structure, and on the development of priorities for the department. HoD 3 *"I can influence the direction of the department to make some decisions around what kinds of things will be prioritised and that includes around staffing"*.

#### 5.4.1.4. Resource Allocation

Pertaining to budgetary allocations the consensus was that higher level approval was required, HoD 1 stating: *"Anything with budget implications, you generally have to clear if it's outside my budget, so that would include looking at large scale projects and things like that and if people are going to be taken off teaching to do research work, that would certainly have to go through that"*. With regard to resource allocation related to staffing, HoD 4 perceived that whilst they can control the makeup of the staff, that is, the mixture of lecturers versus clinicians within their department they had no influence surrounding funding allocation to hire new staff, as the budget related to staff allocation was controlled

by senior management. HoD 3 *“Staffing’s not something I feel like I have a large amount of influence over but influencing what the current staff are doing is something I can do”*. HoD 3 did not perceive that having more staff solved resourcing problems, but having better knowledge of what did was important *“I don’t always feel like we have enough staff but I don’t think more staff is the answer. I think actually that having better knowledge about what they’re doing and how I can better support them, those sorts of things would be much better”*.

#### *5.4.1.5. Relationships*

All HoDs viewed themselves as influential in both building relationships internally and fostering relationships externally with key stakeholders and industry. The links with industry were viewed as a formal channel through by which they could exert significant influence. HoD 4 highlighting the importance of these relationships through committee membership, *“I think committees are really valuable because it does give you that connection with, as it’s supposed to, industry, even if it’s somewhat middle management level but it does therefore give you an inroad to talking to other links to talking to people”*.

Four of the HoDs viewed holding influential positions such as membership on external committees as paramount to their success as an influencer. This was emphasised by HoD 2 *“It’s just the fact that I’ve been around a long time and I’ve also served professionally in some senior positions, so I’m well known in this sector. I think that’s one of the things that I bring to this role is being known in the sector so anyone in a key position in New Zealand would know who I was and where I worked”*.

Whilst the HoDs viewed they were very influential in the five key areas within the department they all reported their influence only existed within the sphere of their department. All HoDs reported they had support from their direct line manager (Head of School), however, above this level within the Faculty and wider university they felt they

had no voice and received little feedback around how their department was performing. HoD 2 stating: *“Certainly have the support of my line manager. Probably above that, I don’t feel like I’m that important to the Dean or the VC. I think that they have a different focus. I think that they’re more risk adverse so they’re more interested in if something’s not going right that it’s dealt with straight away or that it goes right all the time rather than saying that things are going well. I don’t get a lot of feedback around how we’re doing at that level”*.

This link between the department, the School, and the Faculty was further explored with questioning surrounding the effectiveness of feed up structures. Four of the five HoDs felt that whilst they were supported and had a voice within their department and School there was little feedback on the department’s performance and status from the wider university. A factor identified that may influence the knowledge of the department within the wider university relates to the degree of engagement the HoD has outside their department within the wider university. HoD 4 stating, *“I don’t have a position in the university outside my department. I don’t represent the department at any Faculty committee. I feel like I actually work in a bit of a bubble”*. An opposing view to this was made by HoD 5 who stated, *“I do feel I have a voice outside my department and the Faculty, but that has only occurred because I am proactive in developing networks”*. HoD 3 also felt networking influence was associated with gender. They viewed that influence was not associated with the size of the department or the esteem of the profession they lead, but felt male HoDs were at an advantage with regard to networking, stating, *“I think male HoDs seem to be able to connect better in terms of being invited to the right things and being connected to the right people”*.

While the consensus of the HoDs was that feed up structures were only effective within their School, results of questioning surrounding the autonomy of the role also paralleled these findings. All HoDs viewed the role as providing them flexibility in their working

environment from a perspective of being able to work on their own, set their own work direction and development of the curriculum. However, with regard to staff appointments and resourcing related to budgets the feeling of autonomy was removed. Items with budget implications required clearance from senior management outside of the department. HoD 5 stating, *“Autonomy is decision dependent”*. This point was further emphasised by HoD 4 *“Autonomy depends on the decision. I feel more isolated than autonomous. So a decision such as who I appoint, if a position becomes available and I’ve been given the approval, I totally understand that to appoint someone then I’m autonomous in who I appoint. Totally get that. If it comes to the number of students, no autonomy at all. It gets completely overridden”*.

#### **5.4.2. Theme 2: Influence of the position**

The influence of holding the HoD role was examined from two perspectives. First, the HoDs perceived influence on research and second, the perceived influence the role brings when working with industry. With regard to research, the perceived influence of holding the title varied widely amongst the HoDs. Variation was related to the research credibility the individual HoD perceived they held. Two of the five HoDs perceived they did not influence research, and because they only held the title of HoD that did not amount to being influential surrounding research within their department. HoD 4 stating, *“I don’t think I can influence research, I don’t have the credibility”*. HoD 5 also declared they had no research credibility, did not see that being a credible researcher or Professor would make them any better at their role, they stated, *“Being a credible researcher may open up some mind-sets by some people who view the HoD as a pure academic role. However, I do not feel this mind-set is in my profession where people are judged by what they actually do not their title”*.

HoD 1 and 3 declared they were well-established researchers, they felt that at a national level the title of HoD combined with being a credible researcher was of equal influence.

However, at an international level being perceived as a credible researcher with a large body of work was far more influential than the title of HoD. HoD 3 stating, *“Nationally my influence comes from more than just my research profile, I have been around a while and served professionally and in senior positions, I am well-known in the sector, I think it’s being known in the sector that helps with influence. Internationally it’s more your research profile and presence on social media that drives influence”*.

Whilst there was variation with regard to how the HoDs perceived their influence related to their research credibility at a national and international level, their perceived research credibility did not affect how they influenced research within their department. All HoDs felt they held an influential role relating to research in the following areas:

1. Helping staff plan their individual research.
2. Helping staff develop research networks.
3. Helping staff strategise around their research.
4. Providing opportunities for staff to undertake research through manipulation of workload.
5. Linking experienced researchers with early career researchers.

With regard to holding the title of HoD and the influence this has on industry all HoDs agreed the role was influential. Four HoDs reported that whilst the title alone is influential other factors such as holding professional positions, being known in the sector and being an active voice in the sector also carried weight. All HoDs perceived the position created networking opportunities with other HoDs, particularly in Australasian Universities more so than European and American Universities. HoD 3 *“In Australia it does because we are all invited to a Council meeting of all educators, typically all HoDs in New Zealand and Australia attend this meeting, it is a real opportunity to connect with other HoDs”*. All HoDs had well-established networks with New Zealand and Australian HoDs, and also

with key industry stakeholders. All HoDs agreed that the title opened doors for networking and collaborative opportunities. HOD 5 *"I had an email this morning from a UK university wanting to know what we are doing in the postgraduate space.....internationally our name is out there"*.

The consensus amongst the HoDs was that holding the title of HoD brought power and provided the opportunity to be influential. Whilst all the HoDs were cognisant of the power the title gave them they all viewed the power they held as perceived power. They were conscious of the importance of communication in order to prevent a situation where they were perceived to have power over their staff. However, HoD 1 commented that if staff wanted to do something opposed to the direction they had chosen it was not unusual for them to look for support higher up in the organisation. This HoD paralleled the power in the role as akin to a family relationship stating, *"I think it's the sort of role that people will listen to what I have to say and realise that I have to listen to what they say. If you're going to do something different from what they want then you are at least going to have to clear it with them"*.

HoDs 3, 4 and 5 viewed power as something they did not value but all valued trust. HoD 5 *"I don't like power, that's just me. I think it's difficult to get away from the title, the title itself will bring power. Whether that is perceived power or whether it's an actual one"*.

Trust was considered as fundamental to the success of the role. All HoDs admitted to a level of distress if they were viewed as not trustworthy or not authentic. Honesty with people, providing feedback, letting people know the directions or plans of the department and being transparent were viewed by all HoDs as keys to building trust. HoDs 2, 3, 4 and 5 reported starting from a position of total trust in their staff and then working back from that position. HoD 2 stating: *"I trust all the staff 100% and that's the way I came into the role as trusting everybody until somebody gives me any kind of idea that they shouldn't be trusted"*.



### 5.4.3. Theme 3: Approach to change

The HoDs were asked how they approached and implemented change and what the barriers to change were in a recent change project they lead. The change projects detailed by the HoDs were varied, however, there were numerous commonalities in their approach to change.

Communicating the high-level philosophy, or high-level vision surrounding what the change initiative was trying to achieve was viewed as a priority. Open communication and discussion of the core beliefs surrounding change was seen as a key component in discussing the underlying vision of the intended change. All HoDs viewed that it was imperative to gain a common understanding of the need for change by asking simple questions such as: What are we trying to do? What is the point of what we're doing? What are the current issues? What processes are causing these issues and the consequences of the current issues?

These questions were viewed as important to ask to establish not only the common understanding of the need for change, but also to develop the hunger for change, which ultimately fosters trust. Developing the hunger for change helped staff to think about how they could do things different. HoD 4 surmising this: *"To me, you need a catalyst; you do need to get your team on board. They need to feel that they've identified what they want to work on. So they're identifying the hunger to change things"*. Further to this point, reframing the change initiative in terms of making it seem as a way forward was also seen as a mechanism by which to develop the hunger for change. All HoDs were cognisant that even with the greatest level of planning and transparency there would always be an element of staff who were resistant to change. When managing resistant staff, compromise was seen as inevitable. But it was important that the head actively took a role in managing staff compromises, through discussion and planning with people to show the different ways they could work together, and where common ground could

be reached. HoD 3 *“They own that relationship between themselves, they don’t have to talk to me all the time but I’m constantly stressing different ways of working together and seeing which one they can compromise on”*.

Further to the point of compromise, developing a mindfulness or awareness surrounding the perception of change was also viewed as a key component of successful change. This point was emphasised by HoD 1 who noted that often when suggestions are made surrounding a new way of approaching a problem or how something can be done better, the people who designed the object of the intended change initiative often viewed the change as a personal attack on their skills or competency, *“I am very careful to make sure by meeting them beforehand that they were aware that this was not going to be a personal attack, this was going to be a way to drive it forward”*. This highlighted an important strategy – the behind the scene conversation - that maybe used by HoDs to ensure people who they know will be most affected by change are not adversely affected both professionally, academically and personally by the change initiative.

Staff involvement, regular communication, feedback sessions, detailed planning and transparency surrounding the intended change initiative were seen as key catalysts to getting staff or teams on board or to buy into the change initiative. Three HoDs were clear that in order to get staff on board with the proposed change initiative they had to be integrated and involved into the early stages of the planning processes HoD 2 *“As part of the early process, I started to talk to the staff. This is about the whole trust and transparency thing. We had some discussions at a staff meeting where I laid out what currently happened and asked people for feedback on it as well so that I knew that before embarking on it that I would get the support of the staff and I did have that support and that certainly made the process a lot more straightforward than it probably could’ve been”*. HoD 3 *“Prior to the change initiative I gathered a lot of rationale”*. HoD 5 further emphasised the importance of staff buy-in to successful change: *“If you’re going to do*

*any change mechanism, it has to have buy-in from the staff. If you don't have buy-in from your staff or at least have the ability to influence a way in which it can be implemented, in a considered fashion, then you're stuffed".* HoD 4 highlighted the notion of the HoD being a facilitator of change and creating a situation whereby staff discuss the issues, look at solutions and prioritise what they viewed as the key issues that needed to be addressed by the change initiative. *"They need to feel that they've identified what they want to work on. I will facilitate that".* Another key factor seen as crucial to getting staff on board with change was the timing of change initiative. The readiness for change needs to be determined, the receptiveness to change and the setting of realistic timeframes around the change initiative.

Decision making surrounding change was also seen as a crucial factor in both the approach to and implementation of a change initiative. It was acknowledged that within an academic department there would never be consensus on every single item that was open for discussion. The HoDs were also mindful that involving staff in the decision making process was a key factor in getting them to come along with a change initiative. However, it was viewed as impractical to run every decision past the academic team. A phrase coined by HOD 3 "decision fatigue" emphasised the point that staff also did not want to be involved in every decision. HoD 5 viewed the success of change initiatives within their department to be more related to those in senior management outside of the department who actually make the decisions, as opposed to internal factors within the academic department. HoD 5 regarded networking skills and the development of networks with key decision-makers as paramount to the success of proposed change initiatives, particularly if the initiative ultimately required higher management approval. HoD 5 *"You can write what you want but if you haven't got the ear of the people that are going to make the decision and if you don't have the networking skills or don't have the networks built before you start the process then you'll probably fail".*

#### 5.4.4. Theme 4: Barriers to change

All HoDs pointed to a general cynicism toward change as one of the biggest barriers they encounter *“Working in a university there is always something changing, always a new way of doing something....staff often view there is no point putting effort into change when nothing is going to change”*. A lack of confidence that things can change was a second barrier reported. This point was emphasised by HoD 1 *“People don’t believe that it’s worth making an effort and they have learnt or they have always thought that things don’t change so what’s the point of trying”*.

Change initiatives imposed from above (senior university management) with little or no consultation at the departmental level were viewed as doomed for failure by all HoDs. These types of change initiatives were seen as the *“flavour of the month”* (HoD 5) type of change and sold as something different, however, in doing so they often ultimately destroy any actual appetite for change at the departmental level. Again this type of change initiative was linked to cynicism, with staff often viewing the initiative imposed from above as either not going to be very good, not going to be done properly or ultimately one that will not produce any actual change. The view by staff that nothing can actually change was seen as representative of how staff only often think from a short-term perspective and often view themselves as isolated individuals. Staff who perceive themselves as isolated were viewed as those who often felt the solution to a problem was to work harder, rather than stepping back and taking a critical look at their work. HoD 1 also highlighted the dilemma of change of new staff *“Change is difficult for new staff as they often worry about their role and their place in the department”*. Change to this group of staff is often viewed as creating instability.

A strong link between inadequate resourcing and the ability to initiate change was made by all HoDs. Resources were discussed from two perspectives, first, budgetary resourcing and second, staff resourcing. All HoDs were aware that any change initiative

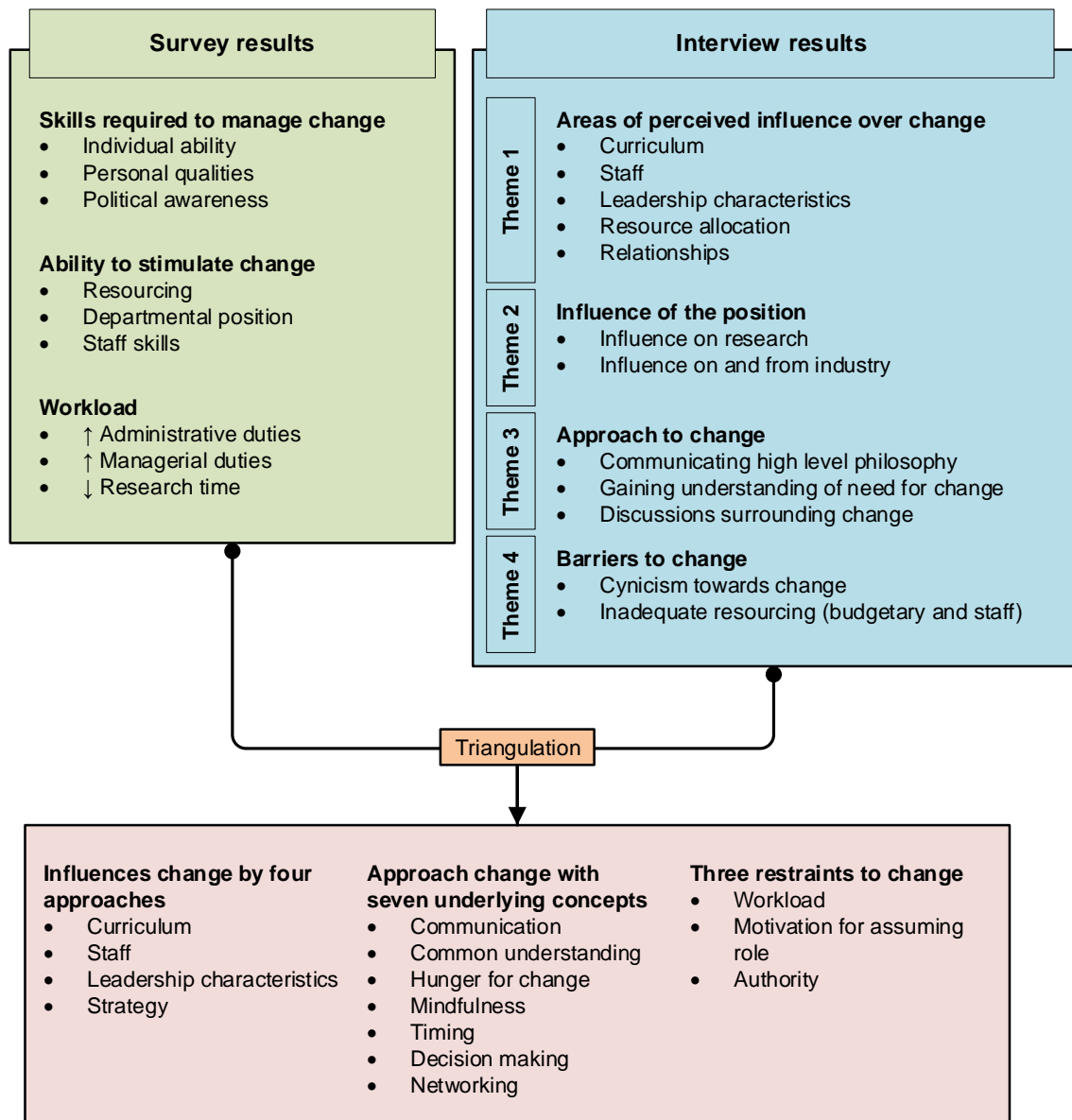
they instigated that was reliant on a large financial contribution or would have large financial implications was difficult to achieve without understanding and agreement from senior management. Two HoDs reported that whilst staffing numbers were always tight, and having more staff often made change easier, a clear knowledge of what staff are doing and how they can be better supported through resourcing was an important factor in alleviating barriers to change. HoD 3 *“I don’t always feel like we have enough staff but I don’t think more staff is the answer. I think actually that having better knowledge about what they’re doing and how I can better support them, those sorts of things would be much better”*.

## **5.5. Summary of interview results**

Four themes emerged from the interviews; (1) areas of perceived influence over change, (2) the influence of the position, (3) approach to change and (4) barriers to change. With regard to their perceived influence over change, HoDs viewed they could exert influence in five areas: curriculum, staff, leadership characteristics, resource allocation and strategy. HoDs who did not feel they had research credibility perceived they could not influence research, whereas HoDs who were established researchers viewed that the influence borne from research credibility as opposed to the title of HoD was more important at an international level but at the national level holding the title HoD carried influence. There was commonality amongst the HoDs on how they approached change. Communicating the high level philosophy or vision surrounding change, communication and discussion surrounding change and gaining an understanding of the need for change were priorities. HoDs conveyed that a general cynicism toward change was one of the biggest barriers they encountered. This was due to the fact that change is constant in a university, consequently, staff were cynical if indeed change would really occur.

## 5.6. Methodological triangulation

Figure 18 presents a summary of triangulated data derived from the online survey and interviews. Chapter six presents the discussion of the triangulated data with regard to the two research questions posed by the current study.



**Figure 18.** Outcomes from methodological triangulation of study data

# Discussion

## 6.1. Introduction

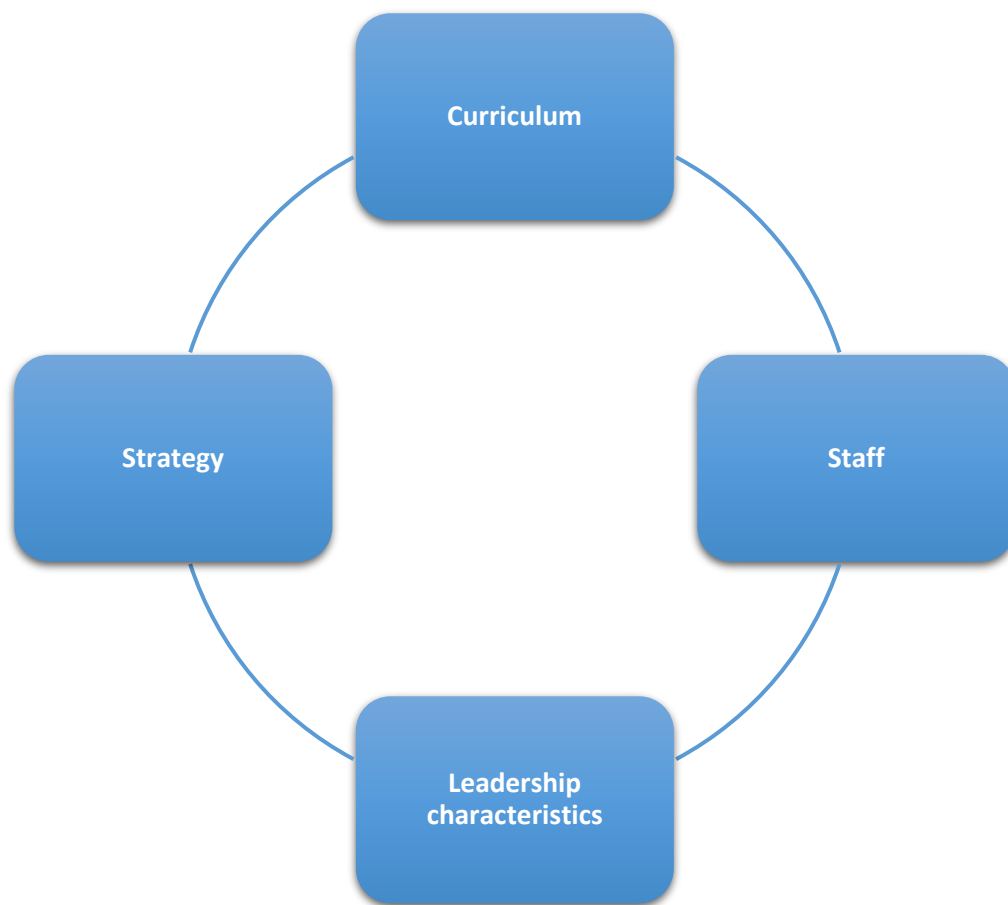
The chapter will present an overview of the results and discuss the implications of the findings with regard to the two research questions. The chapter will also discuss restraints to change that HoDs face in the process of change implementation.

## 6.2. Overview of findings

The aims of the study were to investigate two research questions. First, how HoDs in New Zealand universities perceived they could influence change and second, how HoDs in New Zealand universities approached change. Methodological triangulation of survey and interview data revealed two major findings in relation to the research questions and one additional finding related to restraints to change encountered by the HoDs. First, HoDs perceived they could influence change through four approaches, (1) curriculum, (2) staff, (3) leadership characteristics and (4) strategy. The four approaches are discussed in section 6.3. Second, HoDs approached the change process with seven underlying concepts in mind (1) communication, (2) common understanding, (3) developing a hunger for change, (4) mindfulness surrounding the change, (5) timing of the change, (6) decision making and (7) networking. The seven approaches are discussed in section 6.4. Finally, three restraints to change were revealed that may impact the HoDs ability to instigate change, (1) workload, (2) motivation for assuming the role, and (3) authority. The three restraints to change are discussed in section 6.5.

### 6.3. How do Heads of Department perceive they can influence change?

The data revealed that HoDs perceived they can influence change via four approaches; (1) curriculum, (2) staff, (3) leadership characteristics, and (4) strategy (Figure 19).



**Figure 19.** Four approaches of change

The approaches through which HoDs perceived they influence change are closely linked to the behaviours that Bryman (2007) described to be associated with departmental effectiveness. Specifically, providing a strategic direction, communicating departmental direction, staff factors such as adjusting workloads to stimulate scholarship and research and making academic appointments that enhance the department. In this sense, the ability to influence change maybe associated with the HoDs individual need to be



effective in their role. The similarity may also be attributable to the notion that there is little difference between managing and managing change (Bush, as cited in Law & Glover, 2000).

### **6.3.1. Approach 1: Change through curriculum influence**

The importance of curriculum influence is highlighted by (Bennett & Figuli, 1990) who describe the departmental head as the custodian of academic standards, the person in control of monitoring, resource allocation and professional development surrounding curriculum based activities. Berdrow (2010) identified the ability to drive curriculum change and knowledge is a key attribute that a HoD must possess. Moses (1985) established that curriculum expertise was a key staff expectation of any person who would assume the role of departmental head. The finding of this study that HoDs perceived curriculum as an area where they have substantial influence aligns with the findings of early research into the HoD role (McLaughlin, Montgomery, & Malpass, 1975) who identified that departmental heads felt most comfortable with the academic role that encompassed curriculum development. The concept of comfort with curriculum leadership may be the significant reason that HoDs in this study felt they were able to influence change over the curriculum. Secondly, the perceived influence over curriculum change may also be related to the high degree of internal autonomy the departmental heads held over the curriculum and related processes. Autonomy driven by the ability of the HoD to work with staff to plan and develop the programme curriculum being a predominately internally controlled activity due to the content expertise that rests within the academic department. Curriculum change may also be a comfortable area for HoDs to exert their influence due to the curriculum knowledge that HoDs possess prior to entering the role. While chapter 2 identified that a lack of management training in preparation for the role was a source of tension, a finding confirmed by this research, little training is often required surrounding the programme curriculum and curriculum

processes by those entering the role. This level of knowledge surrounding the programme curriculum prior to taking on the role may afford the HoD a level of reassurance that they can positively and confidently influence the curriculum. This concept is also supported in that curriculum redevelopment may also be viewed as a relatively low risk activity where the results are tangible, effects of change can be quickly seen and the processes are generally not reliant on significant financial resourcing. Consequently, curriculum leadership may be the area where HoDs first demonstrate their ability to lead, innovate and stimulate creativity.

### **6.3.2. Approach 2: Change through staff influence**

Two areas were identified in which the HoDs perceived they could impact staff to influence change. First through manipulation of workload allocation. Second, through network development.

#### *6.3.2.1. Change through manipulation of staff workload*

The manipulation of workload allocation was identified as a central mechanism to initiate departmental change. The findings of this study parallel those of Seagren (1993) who reported that the HoD can achieve manipulation of workload through reallocation of work assignments and professional development planning. Participants in the current study highlighted that dependent on the career stage of the staff member, manipulation of workload allocation was an important mechanism that achieved different goals. The allocation of workload to allow more research time seen as integral, if a change in research culture is desired. Manipulating the mix between research and other academic workload in order to create space for staff to undertake research being a well-documented phenomena in higher education literature that is associated with an effective HoD (Deem, 2004). HoDs also reported that regarding new staff, protection from

excessive workload was important to ensure the new staff member transitioned into the department smoothly, allowing more time for planning for teaching. This is reinforced by Staniforth and Harland (2006) who found that one of the main induction responsibilities of HoDs was the protection of new staff from excessive workloads. The manipulation of workload for mid-career staff seen as a mechanism to maximise their impact and more of a strategic process whereby the HoD linked career planning to strategy. Manipulation of workload was also viewed as a means of influencing change for staff who are viewed as disengaged or do not seem to be progressing professionally. These staff being described by Kanter (1980) as “stuck” or “plateaued”. Workload manipulation in this sense is seen as a mechanism to refocus or redirect the staff member.

#### *6.3.2.2. Change through network development*

A novel finding of this research relates to the importance of networking to the HoD role. Literature describing the importance of networking in relation to the HoD role has mainly focused on the benefits and importance that networking brings for those new to the HoD role or those who require support in the role (Preston & Price, 2012; Qualter & Willis, 2012) and the micropolitical aspect of networking, whereby the HoD is required to understand the formal and informal networks within which they function and how these networks shape their professional identity (Clegg & McAuley, 2005; Marshall, 2012; Seagren, 1993).

This study found two new perspectives from which networking should be viewed with relevance to the HoD, an internal and external perspective. The internal perspective considers how the HoD influences staff through enabling or facilitating networks and linking people in order to influence change. The external perspective, whereby the HoD uses their external networks as one of the key components in how they approach and implement change. The use of external networking and the HoDs approach to change is discussed in Section 6.4.

In the current study HoDs described themselves as influencers, facilitators, enablers and mentors regarding the relationship to staff they managed. They perceived that their networking skills were an important leadership characteristic, an important individual ability and important in positioning their department for success. From the viewpoint of the internal perspective, HoDs facilitated the development of internal networks by identifying opportunities where it was beneficial for individual staff to work together and areas where they felt it would be productive for the department for staff to work together. This involved facilitating relationships within departmental staff, between departmental staff and the wider university staff, and between departmental staff and industry. There was a strong sense that the development of these networks was particularly important to develop research opportunities for staff, particularly if they were early career researchers. HoDs described themselves as enablers in the sense of getting staff to work better and more efficiently and mentors from the perspective of either directly mentoring staff or facilitating a mentoring relationship between other staff members. The main areas of staff development identified were professional development activities, career planning and research development. Facilitating mentoring relationships was viewed as important in situations where the HoD did not feel they had the credibility as a researcher.

### **6.3.3. Approach 3: Influencing change through leadership characteristics**

Data from the current study provides a unique insight into the leadership characteristics that HoDs perceive influence change. The findings are novel as the current study is the only study that has gained insight into what person-based characteristics university HoDs perceive are important to influence change. Person based characteristics perceived by HoDs that were required to initiate successful change are displayed in Table 26.

**Table 26.** Person based characteristics required to initiate change

Characteristic
1. Transparency in actions
2. Be able to compromise / understand different viewpoints
3. Be an influencer / motivator
4. Networking skills particularly with sources external to the university
5. Work with resistors
6. Be clear in communication
7. Be able to manage multiple tasks
8. Work collegially
9. Ability to build trust
10. The ability to use power effectively

The characteristics of an effective leader have been explored in higher education, but these have only been from staff's perspective of characteristics they feel are important in a leader. As discussed in Chapter 2 past research has focused on skill and behavioural requirements for the HoD role (Bryman, 2007; Moses, 1985). Fullan (2002) identified five essential components that characterise successful change leaders in a knowledge society, however, these were not based in the context of higher education. Fullan's five components that characterise change leaders are displayed in Table 27.

**Table 27.** Fullan's components that characterise change leaders

Component	Characteristics
1. Moral purpose	Leader acts with the intention of making a positive difference in student lives
2. Understand change process	The leader: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ innovates selectively</li><li>▪ help others find a collective meaning and commitment to new ways</li><li>▪ redefine resistance, look for ways to address resisters concerns</li><li>▪ focus on reculturing, change what people value and how they work together</li></ul>
3. Improving relationships	Relationships must improve to foster successful change
4. Knowledge creation/sharing	Must promote knowledge sharing as well as knowledge seeking
5. Coherence making	The leader must make sense of the complexities with which they work in

The leader characteristics identified in Fullan's model only relate to the results of the current study in the area of relationships and understanding the change process. Data from the current study emphasises that HoDs value characteristics related to relationships, namely, transparency, being a motivator, clear communication, working collegially and building trust. As discussed, networking was an important mechanism in influencing staff to bring about change. Networking is also identified as a key individual ability the HoD should possess, further emphasising the importance of being networked and developing networks for the HoD.

The ability to use power effectively was perceived by the HoDs as a key personal quality. This unique insight emphasises how they view their use of power as integral to the success of change. The HoD possesses many sources of power including, positional power afforded by authority, power through control of information and expertise, power through control of rewards, coercive power, power through formation of alliances and networks, power derived from access and control of information, power from being able to reframe messages from senior management and personal power. Chapter 5 identified that HoDs interviewed in this study were cognisant of the power they had but viewed the

power as perceived power and were conscious of the importance of communication in order to prevent a situation where they were perceived to have power over their staff. Taking a micropolitical perspective of this finding it is clear that HoDs in the current study valued the strategy of “power with” to drive change. Power with characterised by high trust relationships, empowering of staff, shared leadership, open communication and collaboration (Smeed, Kimber, Millwater, & Ehrich, 2009). Although there was an awareness of the importance of power the current research also identified that power, or lack of power, was a significant restraint to HoDs. The restraints caused by a lack of power identified by the current study are discussed in section 6.4.

Tschannen-Moran (2014) define trust as “one’s willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent” (pp. 20-21). Building trust is paramount to the success of the change as trust influences the uncertainty and vulnerability engaged in change (Le Fevre, 2014). The ability to build trust was identified by this study as a personal quality required of the HoD in order to implement change. As identified in Chapter 4 the ability to build trust to stimulate change was a core skill that rated highly in participants who responded to the survey. Similarly, those participants who were interviewed revealed developing trust was considered as fundamental to the success of the role. Although this study is the first to establish the ability to build trust as a personal quality requirement of an HoD, the notion of trustworthiness is an established characteristic of effective departmental leader in higher education (Bryman, 2007).

#### **6.3.4. Approach 4: Influencing change through strategy**

HoDs developed the strategy to drive change by a combination of two methods. First, strategy was developed through a logical process of analysis and evaluation. Second, strategy was developed with the aid of staff in and around the academic department. With reference to tools or methods for strategic analysis, half of the HoDs surveyed

indicated they used or had used the SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis model. Approximately 20% of respondents indicated strategy was imposed or developed from senior management external to the department. Aligning with the findings of how strategy was developed approximately a third of survey respondents indicated no formal model of strategic analysis was used in the development of change strategy. Strategy in this sense was developed through a process of collegiality and consultation.

All HoDs in the current study viewed their role as strategic in nature. Data revealed that HoDs approached the strategy of change from three perspectives. First, a process of setting the stage for change where they established a rationale behind the intended change created and communicated a vision for the change and assembled a team to begin the change process. Second, HoDs viewed organisational review as an important change strategy. This involved the development of the change strategy, review of current structures and processes and assessment of the likely impact of change. Third, the HoDs were cognisant of the need for continual communication and relationship building as a strategy in the change process. This involved the development of shared values, the need to work collegially during the change process and to ensure staff had the capacity for change.

These findings provide an interesting but contradictory view of strategy in relation to the HoD role. Although the role was viewed as strategic in nature, few HoDs received strategic training prior to assuming the role and many used no formal method of analysis or tool to develop strategy. This points to the very collegial approach to strategy development and implementation that HoDs in the current study followed. Rather than adhering to the rigidity of a framework of strategic analysis, their approach placed staff at the centre of the change process.

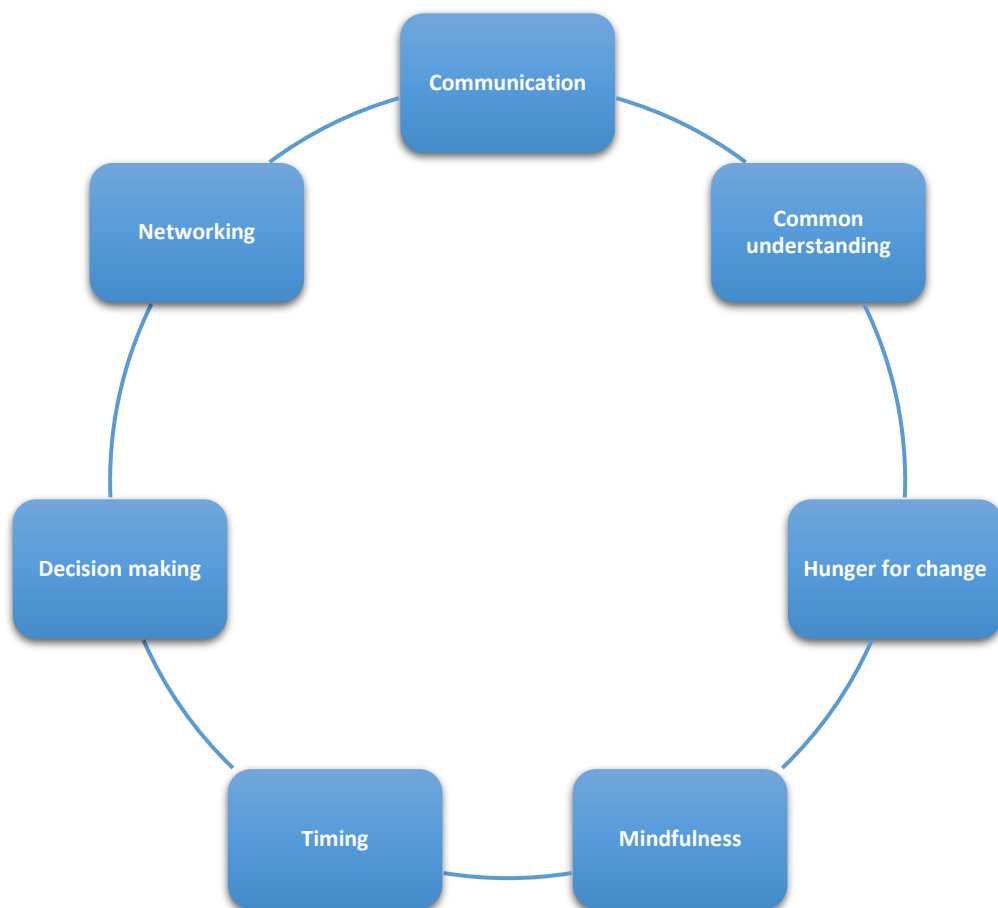


The strategic analysis tools that HoDs were questioned around in the survey (SWOT, TOWS and PEST) have their genesis in the corporate environment where organisational cultures that are distinctly hierarchical in nature. This may explain why these analytical tools were not widely used by HoDs in the current study, as they work in an organisational structure that is distributed in structure. Further to this point, the past exposure to these analytical tools of HoDs will also dictate their use. Conceivably, many HoDs surveyed may not have knowledge of the specific tools or frameworks presented in the current study as they have not been exposed to the tools in their working environment.

## **6.4. How do Heads of Department approach change?**

### **6.4.1. Seven concepts used by HoDs to approach change**

HoDs approached the change process with seven underlying concepts in mind. The seven concepts that emerged were: (1) communication, (2) common understanding, (3) fostering a hunger for change, (4) mindfulness, (5) timing, (6) decision making and (7) networking (Figure 20).



**Figure 20.** Seven concepts that guide change

HoDs were questioned around their use of five models of change (Prosci's ADKAR model Kotter's 8-step change model, Lewin's 3 stage change process Kübler-Ross model and McKinsey's 7-S model). Commonalities between the seven concepts underlying change identified by the current study and the components of five change management models is displayed in Table 28. The comparison table highlights the 'lack of fit' between corporate change management models and the approach to change that HoDs followed in the current study. Whilst there were commonalities surrounding the concepts of communication, developing a common understanding for change, developing a hunger for change and to a degree mindfulness, the importance of timing, decision-making and networking were not considered by the change management models.

**Table 28.** Comparison between 7 concepts of change and change management models

	Models of change				
Seven change concepts	ADKAR model	Kotter's 8-step change model	Lewin's 3 stage change model	Kübler-Ross model	McKinsey 7-S model
Communication	Communicate awareness	Communicate the vision	Change - communicate often	Denial stage Anger stage	X
Common understanding	Develop awareness of reasons for change	Create a vision	Unfreeze - determine what needs to change	Denial stage	X
Hunger for change	Desire - communicate the benefits, identify risks, address fears	Establish a sense of urgency	Unfreeze – create need for change	Denial stage	X
Mindfulness	X	X	Change - involve people in the process	Denial stage Anger stage Acceptance stage	X
Timing	X	X	X	X	X
Decision making	X	X	X	X	X
Networking	X	X	X	X	X

Data from the current study revealed the majority (65%) of HoDs indicated that for a recent change event no change management model was used as the framework to guide change. These findings reinforce that traditional models of change management developed for corporate environments lack applicability to drive innovation and change in higher education. Buller (2015) explains this concept further conveying that corporate derived change management models do not fit the purposes of higher education as university staff do not perceive themselves as being “managed”, they view themselves as independent contractors, who preserve autonomy over their teaching and research. University staff essentially view themselves as independent, making it difficult to impose the processes described by corporate based change models. This independence is borne from differences in organisational structures within which staff operate between

universities and the corporate world, that is, a distributed versus hierarchical organisations.

Buller (2015) details three central reasons why corporate models do not apply in the context of higher education.

1. "They relied on a dichotomy between decision makers and decision implementers that doesn't really apply to the role faculty members have." (Buller, 2015, p.20). Corporate derived change management models often rely upon a single change agent or someone who controls the change process. With distributed leadership and shared governance a feature of higher education many staff are empowered to make their own decisions. Staff who are managers are also managed, the reality being there is a lack of distinction between those who make and implement decisions.
2. "By suggesting that change is being imposed from the outside rather than growing organically from within, they produced a type of learning anxiety that's antithetical to smooth transitions." (Buller, 2015, pp. 20-21). Many change models assume there are numerous hidden factors that employees are unlikely to see. In the university environment where staff view themselves as competent, educated and quick to learn new tasks change processes that challenge self-imagery due to factors such as fear of loss of power or position, fear of loss of personal identity or fear of loss of group membership will be met with resistance (Schein, 2010).
3. "They described the change process in a manner that most faculty members would have regarded as manipulative." (Buller, 2015, p. 22). This point is emphasised by issues the Kotter 8-step model. Change in the initial stages of this model are driven by a change manager, long before stakeholder involvement. This may work well in

hierarchical organizations but runs counter to the culture of a distributed organisation. As shown in the current study HoDs were careful to ensure change involved staff from the beginning of the process.

A final point that the change models derived from corporate structures are not applicable to the university department are that these models presume the change process reaches a definitive completion. This is exemplified by the Lewin's three stage change model (unfreeze, change, refreeze). Applied to the university context the model implies the university department could readily assume that change could be revolutionary, sporadic and then completed. The reality that may never be achievable in the university departmental environment.

The three concepts; timing, decision-making and networking not considered in the change management models also indicate how the change process evolves from conceptualisation to implementation in the university context is potentially different to the corporate change environment. Change initiatives in the university setting are heavily reliant on collegiality and the use of networks to succeed. The focus of the approach to change of the HoDs in the current study were very person centred. This implies that human resources were the greatest asset in the eyes of the HoDs. The multi-layered levels of formal and informal leadership that exist within university departments also increase the complexity of change processes and in doing so, influences the scope for change. This heightens the HoDs need to be aware of individual concerns about change to ensure staff can work effectively together to make the change happen. Consequently, emphasising the importance of timing, decision-making, and networking to the success of change in universities. The seven concepts are also be indicative of the more collegial approach to management that the HoDs in the current study operate within. Collegiality exerts a powerful force among academics and thus potentially provides a powerful force for change (Walvoord et al., 2000). As opposed to the more bureaucratic environment

structures that the models of change were derived from, whereby, the notion of collegiality appears to be absent.

#### **6.4.2. Decision making**

Data revealed that HoDs utilised collaborative decision process in making in their approach to change. Collaborative decision making is synonymous with several other terms such as collegial decision-making, participative decision-making, and shared decision-making, all of which encompass the inclusion of others in the decision making process (Cardno, 2012). Generally, the collaborative approach assumes that there will always be discussion and consensus and that power is shared (Bush, 2003). Group advisory, whereby the HoDs obtained opinions of the entire group and discussed the implications of the group's suggestions, prior to making a decision was the most common method of decision making used by 40% of HoDs. Individual advisory, a process where HoDs consulted their colleagues individually who had expertise to make the decision, and then made a decision that may or may not have reflected their opinions was the second most common decision making method used by 26% of the HoDs. Approximately a fifth of the HoDs sought the consensus of the group prior to making their decision. Very few of the HoDs (5%) surveyed made an individual decision without consultation.

The strategy of making decision making a shared process as followed by the HoDs in the current study may help to promote a stronger sense of ownership and enhance the nature of departmental development. However, this decision making approach is not without problems. Law and Glover (2000) convey two issues that arise with the collective rather than the individual manager led decision making. First, the decision-making process can be delayed, consequently wasting valuable time. Second, issues which in

some cases should be settled on a one-to-one basis become a collective responsibility, often to the detriment of more important activities.

The current study only gained insight into how HoDs approached the decision-making process, no insight was gained into whether this method of decision-making lead to decision acceptance. As noted by Vroom and Yetton (1973) there is a difference between quality decision and quality acceptance of decisions, suggesting there needs to be assessment of how often quality decisions are implemented and how often decisions fail because of the need to compromise to gain acceptance.

#### **6.4.3. Networking**

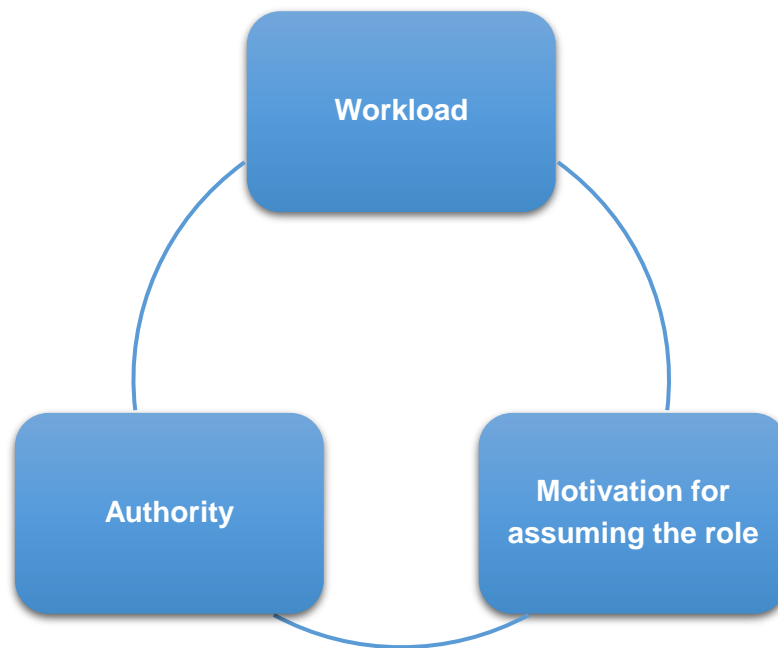
The emergence of networking as a key component of how HoDs approach change recognises that the formation of networks is an integral component required for successful change. Little research has investigated the role of networking in relation to the university HoD. Seagren (1993) viewed networking as very much a political activity whereby the departmental head deliberately sets out to gain support from others by playing on their ideas, emotions, and aspirations to gain their interest, confidence, and support. Fundamental to gaining support are the actions of bargaining, alliances, manipulating expectancies, and conferring prestige. In universities and colleges, the internal network targets for the departmental head include departmental opinion leaders and groups, committee members, senates, centres or institutes, councils, regents, trustees, senior executives, and advisers. Outside targets include legislators, coordinating commissions, professional associations, foundations, and accrediting agencies. In this sense Seagren (1993) views networking as an action initiated by the departmental head for the benefit of themselves rather than the benefit of the department. This aligns closely with the leader follower model of management, as opposed to the collaborative approaches highlighted in the current study.

An alternative view outside the academic sphere is that of Callan and Dickson (1993) who view networking as a managerial competency and an integral coping strategy for adapting to change. Networking skills being held as paramount and vital to build support both vertically (within a department) and horizontally (the wider university) within an organisation. Callan and Dickson (1993) found that managers who could secure adequate information from their environment, and who could reduce the level of uncertainty, were more successful adaptors to change. Accessing better information also supports the decision making processes discussed in 6.4.2. Vroom and Yetton (1973) stressing that robust information is required to support an effective decision making process.

## **6.5. Restraints to change**

Sections 6.3 and 6.4 have identified how university HoDs in New Zealand perceive they influence change and the key components of how they approach change. In answering these questions with integration of the findings from the literature review (Chapter 2) three restraints were revealed that may impact the HoDs ability to instigate change (Figure 21). The following section will discuss the three identified restraints; workload, motivation for assuming the role and authority of the role.





**Figure 21.** Restraints to change

#### **6.5.1. Workload**

Workload issues are a commonly cited phenomena experienced by university HoDs, which may ultimately lead to reduced effectiveness (Thornton et al., 2018). In a recent study of HoDs in one New Zealand university Thornton et al. (2018) found workload was seen as the second biggest challenge for HoDs. Floyd and Dimmock (2011) noted that UK academics who assume department leadership roles experience higher workloads and work longer hours.

The current study is the first to quantitatively measure the perceived experienced versus agreed workload allocation for the four workload domains of teaching, management, administration and research in university HoDs. With regard to management and administrative activities, data indicated HoDs spent significantly more time on these activities than their agreed workload allocation. Conversely, HoDs spent significantly less time on research activities than their agreed workload allocation. Data indicated no

significant differences between experienced and agreed teaching workload. This indicates there is a clear gap between what HoDs perceive their role workload would encompass and what they actually experience. Of note is the amount of time occupied undertaking administrative and managerial duties. Extrapolating directly from the workload survey results (Table 16) HoDs on average attributed approximately 63% of their workload to the combined duties of administration and management tasks. Smith (2002) reported that many HoDs struggle to adequately manage key aspects of their role, such as, research, teaching and leadership, plus staffing issues that consumed large amounts of their time. As discussed in Chapter 2 tension related to workload has its genesis from numerous factors including: the amount of responsibilities in addition to the combined roles of teaching, supervision and research (Floyd & Dimmock, 2011; Smith, 2002, 2005), time spent on completing paperwork, attending meetings and dealing with rules and regulations (Seagren, 1993). Workload tasks cited as problematic included performance evaluations, promotions, budgeting and dealing with university processes (Seagren, 1993). Thornton et al. (2018) identified the reactive nature of the HoD role as problematic, this encompassed the unexpected and unpredictable tasks/crises that the HoD deals with on a regular basis, often cumulating in the HoD not meeting their planned daily tasks. This view is also supported by Brook and Davies (1994) who note the problem is not more work, but the more diverse work that falls on the HoD. (Benoit as cited in Aziz et al., 2005) indicated that HoDs perceived themselves as having as many as 18 different roles in the department, ranging from mundane administrative roles (e.g. fiscal overseer) to leadership (e.g. role model), interpersonal (e.g. coach) and resource development (e.g. faculty mentor) roles.

While it is clear that there are many facets to managerial activities that create role overload, clarity is still required surrounding the specific aspects of managerial activities that are problematic. One solution to unpacking management duties in relation to the HoD role may lay in the discourses of management postulated by Ball (1994). Ball (1994)

suggested three managerial discourses, (1) professional management, activities in this category relate to development planning in relation to the academic department. This is considered context-free management as it focuses on the business of education rather than education as a business. In relation to the results of the current study this may relate to managerial activities related to the curriculum and general programme development. (2) Financial management, relates to activities concerned with “balancing the books”, budget and resource allocation. Considering the results of the current study this would appear to be the aspect of the HoD managerial role that is problematic due to the lack of authority afforded. (3) Entrepreneurial management, activities that relate to income generation, the market the department exists within and the image of the department. In the context of the study was a strong theme that emerged. The three managerial discourses warrant further investigation in relation to the HoD role.

It is clear that managing the diversity and the complexity of responsibilities expected from the role creates significant pressures, ambiguities and conflict. Two common issues that may arise that are entangled with workload are role conflict and role overload (Law & Glover, 2000). Role conflict arising due to the conflicting demands of the role. Role overload whereby the quantity of work causes overload. Perhaps the most significant factor identified by the workload data from the current study with most relevance to role conflict and overload is the finding that HoDs perceived they spent less time undertaking research based activities than they had agreed to and the relationship to the length of the appointment and motivation for taking on the role.

#### **6.5.2. Motivation for assuming the role**

Data presented in Table 14 relating to motivations for taking on the HoD role demonstrated that the majority who assume the role were either persuaded to, or felt no others were suitable for the position. Only 16% of HoDs indicating that they saw the position as an opportunity to bring about change, with only 5% aspiring to the role. These

findings present a confronting reality for both staff who are lead by reluctant HoDs, and for the department in the wider university. Will the interests of the department be represented to their fullest extent by a reluctant HoD?

Why is this the case and why is there such a lack of interest in leading an academic department? The answer may be deeply entrenched in the concept of career capital as highlighted in Chapter 2. The current study data demonstrated that HoDs percieve they spent the majority of their time undertaking management and administrative tasks at the expense of their research activities, which as Floyd (2012) found is the very reason many enter academia in the first place. Subsequently, the view may be taken that becoming a HoD may lead to 'de-skilling' by reducing their credibility as an academic. Simply, the HoD role may not carry a significant enough career capital to warrant a departure from the traditional teaching and research pathway. With this point in mind it would seem that those appointed to the role of HoD would be more ideal candidates if they had an established research profile that afforded them a level of credibility. However, this raises another issue unique to leadership roles in higher education. As described by Bolton (1996) and Mathias (1991) departmental leaders may be appointed as they are viewed as having excelled as academics, rather than because of previous leadership or managerial experience. This inadvertantly creates a problem and must influence the effectiveness and the potential ability of the HoD to initiate change. If the appointed HoD is still focused on maintaining their research credablity during their tenure, will they be able to, or be truly focused on their development as a leader? Particularly if they have had no previous leadership or management experience.

The current study identified a new perspective on academic credibility, that is coined 'industry credibility'. This is a form of credibility that the HoD holds that has not been previously reported in higher education literature related to university middle management. This perspective of credibility is founded on the relationship between the

department and key external stakeholders (industry). The current study identified that HoDs with no, or a small research profile, felt because of their strong external networks and industry relationships, their research credibility was not viewed as important to industry. Industry viewed a strong curriculum and producing good graduates as more important than the research credibility of the HoD. This reinforces and may explain the findings surrounding the importance that HoDs placed on their perceived ability to influence curriculum change. In this sense the relationship with key stakeholders may be used as a point of leverage by the HoD if their change initiatives surrounding curriculum are not supported or meet barriers within the university. Industry credibility maybe particularly relevant in academic disciplines where there is not a historical culture of research, but a strong industry influence such as practice based professions. Industry credibility may also be used by the HoD as a means of reinforcing their importance of protecting their role in a research focused academic environment. The concept of industry credibility also highlights the evolving nature of the HoD role and staff within academic departments. With the casualisation of university appointments many university academic departments have fractional or short-term contracted staff from the private sector who teach into programmes (Clegg, 2008). It is inevitable with the growth of the casualisation industry, involvement and the importance of engaging with and maintaining credibility with industry will take greater precedent. Consequently, the HoD role is moving beyond the boundaries of the university.

Adding to the issues created by credibility is the short-term transitory nature of the HoD role. Mathias (1991) reporting that three-year periods for HoD appointments were common. As shown in Table 10, 57% of the survey respondents had been in the role three years or less, with 84% indicating they intended to stay in the role for three years or less (Table12). The short-term nature of the role is problematic in that a large proportion of time early in the role is spent learning and developing tacit knowledge, particularly if the HoD has little pre-existing leadership or managerial experience.

Mathias (1991) identified that the short-term nature of the role is also problematic in terms of institutional knowledge, in that the knowledge base tends to be partial or short-term. Knowing that role knowledge takes time to develop coupled with the potentially short-term nature of the role, the ability of the HoD to produce lasting and sustained change must be questioned. The vision and strategic relevance of the role is also brought into question. Can long term vision and strategy really be a reality if HoD appointments are only of a short-term nature?

### **6.5.3. Authority**

Can the HoD influence meaningful lasting change without authority to make change happen? The current study revealed that HoDs perceived they can only have authority to change internal operational processes and maintain balances, for example the balance of staff and work-load activities of staff. HoD's perceived they had no authority or control with regard to funding allocation and employment of new staff, due to budget related authority being controlled by senior management external to the department. Ultimately, HoDs can only change what they have the authority to change. Their authority only extended to change internal processes, the allocation of workload, the curriculum and the relationships internal and external to the department.

Power in context to the academic leadership has been described as the ability to influence and inspire (Branson et al., 2016). Power based frustrations of those who assume the HoD role with regard to a lack of authority are well documented in higher education literature (Mathias, 1991; Preston & Price, 2012). Marshall (2012) emphasising frustrations come to the fore with academic middle leaders because authority often does not rest where the responsibility rests. The current study findings surrounding a lack of authority afforded by the HoD role reinforce the findings of Branson et al. (2016). Branson et al. (2016) reported that the authority and power held by middle managers in higher education was more comparable to influence and persuasion.

Branson et al. (2016) concluded that the middle leaders authority was formed within the nature of their relationships. Further the point of persuasion, Hoppe (2003) reported that authority resides in the power of policy and the power of persuasion. Collaboration, consistency and the ability to communicate a shared vision form the only legitimate basis of power (Powell cited in Hoppe, 2003 p. 7). Mathias (1991) noted that influence is exerted by persuasion through credibility and trust that is earned by the leader. This emphasises the conundrum of authority faced by the HoD, they influence change through others but can be markedly compromised by their need to sustain professionalism and collegiality with the very people they are trying to influence (Branson et al., 2016).

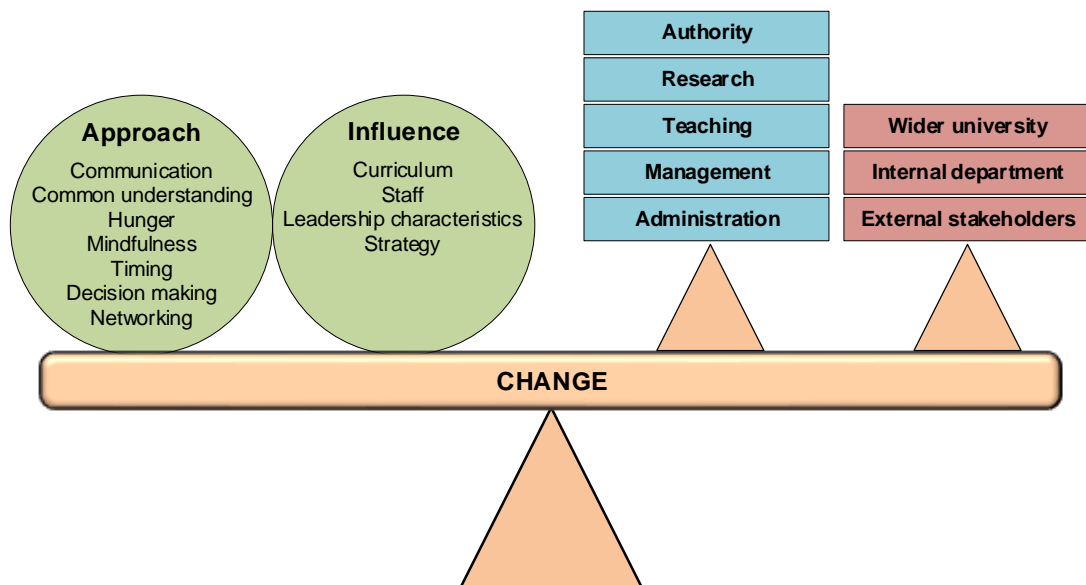
These findings further emphasise the importance of the HoD to be a competent networker and have well established networks. The HoD who has well established networks will be in a position to obtain better information from multiple sources. This is particularly important in the modern university climate where the financial resourcing is limited, the solution becomes to have better knowledge of what staff are doing to better support them. In this sense networking provides a mechanism to obtain influence. The importance of networks between the HoD and wider university was underscored by (Branson et al., 2016). Branson et al. (2016) reported that the HoD experiences authority differentially based on the nature of the hierarchy they operate within. They point to the existence of historical hierarchies that exist beyond departments. These hierarchies being associated with well established networks of influence. The networks of influence are potentially two-sided, either being used as a mechanism that could either undermine the direction or planned initiative, or conversely be a strong advocate when support is required.

# Conclusions

## 7.1. Conclusions

The study is the first to examine the perspectives specifically related to change in HoDs in New Zealand universities. The study was also the first to compare characteristics of academic workload through comparison of experienced versus perceived workload across all New Zealand universities.

The ability of HoDs to enact change can be conceptualised as a balancing act (Figure 22). On one side the HoD must balance the numerous layers to their role, at the same time balancing how they approach and influence change.



**Figure 22.** The balancing act of change for the university HoD

To facilitate change HoDs perceived they exerted influence over four key areas, curriculum, staff, leadership characteristics and strategy. Staff were influenced through



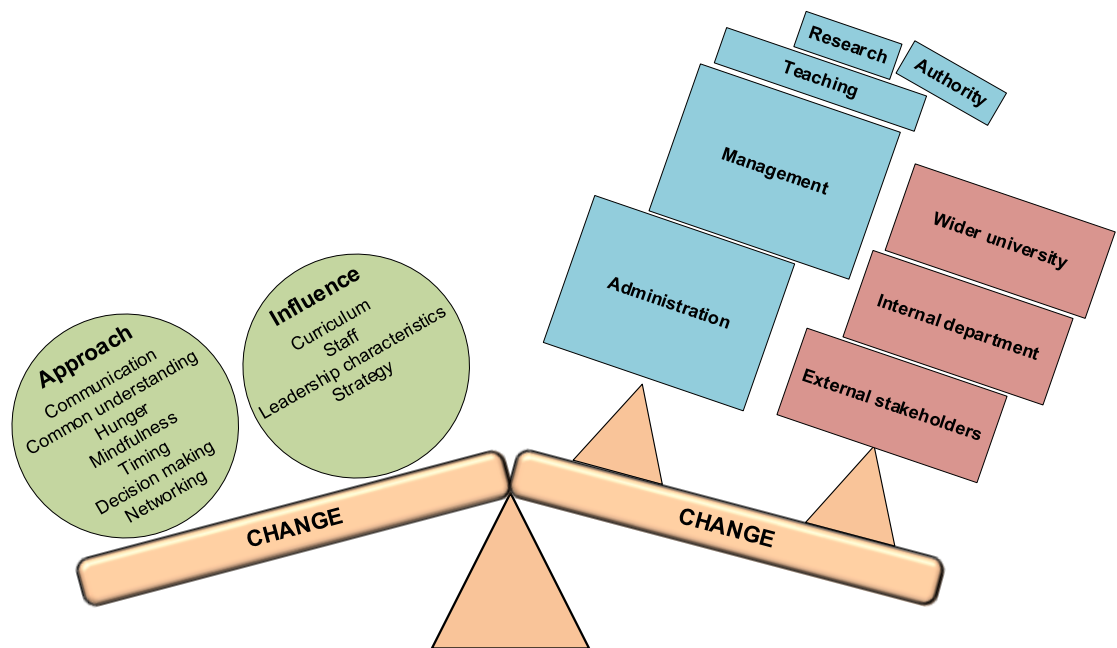
the HoDs ability to manipulate their workload and the ability to develop networks. HoDs described that their individual ability and personal qualities were paramount in the change process. These findings highlight that HoDs assume a collegial approach to change.

Seven approaches were uncovered that HoDs viewed as keystones when implementing change. Clear communication, developing a common understanding of the change, developing a hunger for change, being mindful of the effects of change, the importance of timing of the change, the use of collaborative decision-making and the importance of networking.

The success of this collegial approach to change was balanced by restraints, owing to the multiple layers within which HoDs function. Identified restraints include inequities in the workload balance between research, teaching, management and administrative duties and influential forces within and external to their department and external, both within the wider university and stakeholders external to the university. While being required to operate successfully across these multiple layers, HoDs highlighted they lead in an environment with limited authority. Authority predominately rested in their capacity to influence and persuade.

HoDs identified the role led to reduced ability to maintain a research profile, consequently their research credibility was diminished by the role. HoDs also identified they experienced higher administrative and managerial components to their workload than agreed. Coupled with increasing demands from within the department, the wider university and external stakeholders due to the neoliberal forces the balancing act of change is easily disturbed. I propose that it is not possible for the HoD to perform effectively across all layers, therefore, inevitably one or more layers may fall away as the HoD progresses in the role, ultimately affecting their ability to implement effective

change. Figure 23 depicts how the ability to implement change can be affected by the increased workload demands of management and administration, reduced research capacity, diminished authority and increased demands from within and external the university.



**Figure 23.** *The balancing act of change broken by increasing demands*

Whilst reduced research credibility was identified as a negative aspect of the role a new perspective on credibility, coined ‘industry credibility’ was revealed. This form of credibility emphasised the importance of strong industry networks to influence change and was of importance to HoDs with no research profile. Networking provides a mechanism to obtain influence, adapt to and build support for change, within and external to the wider university and externally with stakeholders. The HoD who is well networked is in the ideal position to enable their department to more readily implement and adapt to change.

## **7.2. Strengths and limitations**

### **7.2.1. Strengths**

This is the first research to investigate the HoD role across all universities in New Zealand. The mixed method approach with methodological triangulation allowed a greater understanding of how HoDs in New Zealand universities approached change. The study also adds to the limited number of mixed method studies that have focused on the HoD role in the New Zealand context.

The use of methodological triangulation exposed unique differences between the survey and interview data that may have remained undiscovered with the use of only a quantitative or qualitative approach to data collection was taken. The use of methodological triangulation served the purpose of completeness, through providing in-depth information surrounding the HoDs perceptions of change.

### **7.2.2. Limitations**

Although the study is the first to seek an oversight of HoDs at all New Zealand universities the response rate was only 28%. The validity of the conclusions drawn by the study must be considered, the final analysed sample only represents approximately a quarter of academics in New Zealand who held the role of HoD at the time of the survey. The context of the responses was based solely in a New Zealand university environment, consequently the views and opinions expressed, and conclusions drawn from data may not be applicable in all international university environments.

Despite following a reflexive approach to thematic analysis allowing for the lived experiences of HoDs perspectives surrounding change, all codes generated, and theme

developed were completed by the author. A second researcher was not used to enable reliability assessment of the coded data, or to collaboratively develop and assess the final themes. Consequently, it may be argued there is potential for researcher bias or influence surrounding the final themes developed.

## **7.3. Recommendations**

### **7.3.1. Awareness of change management models**

As demonstrated by literature and the findings of the current study, corporate derived change management models are not applicable as a framework for the change management in higher education. The awareness of change management models that are applicable in higher education must be raised. Although not presented in this thesis there are numerous models/frameworks that are applicable to the organisational structures found in higher education.

### **7.3.2. Distributed leadership approach**

Figure 23 depicts how change can be affected by the complex multi-layered nature of the HoD role. There must be recognition that the current system and expectations for one person to effectively lead an academic department is unsustainable. Leadership roles in academic departments must move to a distributed leadership model to grow leadership capacity. This has a three-fold benefit, first, it is a central mechanism whereby the identified workload issues for the HoD could be reduced. Second, increasing the leadership capacity grows tacit knowledge. Third, with the growth in tacit knowledge and the increased awareness of what departmental leadership roles entail, succession planning may be less problematic. This process should not only encompass academic

staff but be inclusive of professional staff. This approach to leadership will allow for greater responsiveness to adapt to change.

### **7.3.3. Development of a networking environment**

The current study has emphasised the importance of networking to the HoD. In addition, and potentially as part of context-based training, network development needs to be facilitated. This would promote an environment to share ideas, discuss issues, develop potential mentor relationships and further promote context-based learning.

### **7.3.4. Context based training**

Academic leadership training cannot be one size fits all. As indicated in the current study, academic departments varied greatly in size. Training also need not occur prior to the appointment. A more situational and contextual based approach to training would be beneficial. Chapter 2 identified that training for HoDs is inadequate and when implemented, was often not targeted to the areas that are perceived important by HoDs. Context based training would involve identifying the likely points of tension the HoD will face and planning for these. This process is based on the current skills of the HoD, the organisational context of the department within the wider faculty and the expectations surrounding the key roles of teaching, administration, management and leadership. It is also clear that HoDs do not follow traditional corporate models of change management or strategy development. Therefore, the use of these models in HoD training programmes should be questioned.

### **7.3.5. Incentivise the role**

The role must be seen as a career prospect for the academic, not a role that damages academic reputation or halts career progression. Taking an evidence-based approach

to this issue, 40 years of literature has indicated reduced research credibility is central to the problem. At the forefront of incentivising the role must be opportunities for the appointee to undertake research. Traditionally the mix of teaching, research and administration is negotiated, it is now time to remove layers from the role and agree that the role may only need to encompass departmental leadership and protected research time. The role must also be seen to contribute to promotion or career progression, those who have undertaken the role must have extra recognition for this. Until this is overtly stated and actioned by the university, the issues related to motivations for assuming the role identified in the current study will not change. Consequently, the most suitable leader may not be appointed.

#### **7.3.6. Job sizing**

Data from the current study points to the HoD role in its traditional sense not being sustainable. Role clarification is required to review accountabilities, responsibilities and delegations. HoDs in the current study emphasised the strategic nature of the role. Therefore, space and time must be provided for HoDs to develop and implement strategy. Delegation is a key aspect of job sizing, particularly with the ever-increasing pressures to develop the business aspects of departments and the ever-increasing pressures to grow student numbers. The HoD needs to be versed in entrepreneurial activities and be relied on for expertise in resource management as opposed to academic expertise. To address this requirement HoDs will need to be integrated with professional staff who possess skills from commercial enterprise.

#### **7.3.7. Rationalisation of role on typology**

With tasks, behaviours, roles and the organisational context identified as the key tenets that will define the HoD role, individual analysis of these factors should be considered specific to departmental requirements prior to appointment. This would enable early

identification of the specific problems the incoming HoD is likely to encounter. Subsequently the development of position descriptors can be tailored to the context of the specific department, as opposed to commonly used generic position descriptors.

## **7.4. Implications for future research**

The current findings have produced various important findings that require additional investigation. Highlighted below are the areas of necessary research that will aid development and further understanding surrounding the HoD role.

The current study determined how the HoDs approached change and the factors they perceived as important. Research is required to determine if the change processes they implemented were successful and more importantly became embedded.

The multiple perspectives of academic credibility require further investigation. Although literature posits reduced academic credibility by academics who undertake the HoD role, understanding needs to be gained if this is an actual phenomenon that has occurred. To what extent have careers been affected by the position? With the increased commercialisation of universities and the need for academic departments and HoDs to work closer with industry, the concept of academic credibility requires understanding. How important is this relationship? How does industry now influence academic departments? How does the HoD use industry to steer change?

The HoD role requires reframing with investigation of the positive aspects of the role. Past literature has taken a one-sided view of the role, framing the role as detrimental to an academic career from the aspects of credibility and progression. Research has not investigated the role from the perspectives of opportunity and growth. With data from the study indicating that many HoDs have been in the role for a substantive amount of

time and served multiple terms there will be a series of factors that have led to the HoD staying in the role.

The current study was the first to gain a quantitative understanding of the HoDs workload, however, this still only provides a limited insight as it was only a perceived relationship, from the HoDs perspective. Research is required to quantify the HoDs workload in the four categories discussed (leadership, management, teaching and research). Until this is specifically quantified it will be very difficult to accurately job size activities such as discussed in the recommendations section. This research would also enable the phenomena of role overload to be further explored. Explicitly, with regard to management activities, a greater understanding of the three managerial discourses (professional, financial and entrepreneurial) in relation to the role may also help to understand where specifically pressure point arise in the role.

The current study only gained insight into how HoDs approached the decision-making process, no insight was gained into whether their method of decision making led to decision acceptance. Assessment of how often quality decisions are implemented and how often decisions fail because of the need to compromise to gain acceptance is required.

Networking emerged as a central pillar of success for the HoD. Analysis is required of whom HoDs form networks and how they use these networks to exert influence. It would also be beneficial to investigate how university networks develop over time and compare progression of academics who are considered well networked both internally and externally to academics who function in a more isolated environment. The effect of research networks would also be of interest. Are more established researchers better networked and is this beneficial to potential departmental leadership?



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## Appendix 1 - Characteristics of included quantitative and qualitative studies

Author Year	Study title	Study type	Country	Participants	Study objectives
Branson et al. (2016)	Middle leadership in higher education: A relational analysis	Phenomenographic	New Zealand	3 Chair of Departments	To explore middle leadership as experienced by Chairpersons of Departments within one faculty in a university
Franken et al. (2015)	Middle leaders' learning in a university context	Phenomenographic	New Zealand	3 Chair of Departments	To critically examines how middle leaders learn aspects of their role
Hotho (2013)	Higher Education Change and Its Managers: Alternative Constructions	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	10 Academic middle managers (Head of School or Department level)	Examines how the process of marginalization manifests itself in the mainstream change discourse
Floyd (2012)	'Turning Points': The Personal and Professional Circumstances That Lead Academics to Become Middle Managers	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	17 HoDs	To investigate academic's career decisions through exploration of the nexus and interrelationships between their personal and professional identities, manifested through different socialization experiences
Preston and Price (2012)	'I see it as a phase: I don't see it as the future': academics as managers in a United Kingdom university	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	18 HoD or Programme Director	To investigate the experiences of academics who take on temporary, middle management roles within a university faculty.
Marshall (2012)	Educational middle change leadership in New Zealand: the meat in the sandwich	Qualitative - Interviews	New Zealand	10 middle leaders	To investigate the role of middle leaders of change in New Zealand higher education.
Qualter and Willis (2012)	Protecting academic freedom in changing times: the role of Heads of Departments	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	2 HoDs	To provide some insight into university middle management with the intention of seeking pointers as to how HoDs support academics through times of significant change.
Smothers et al. (2012)	In the eye of the beholder: A configurational analysis of followers' conceptualizations of the ideal academic department leader at private universities	Quantitative - Survey	USA	31 department leaders	First, this study investigates the characteristics and abilities that define effective leadership from both leader and follower perspectives to identify how they conceptualize the ideal leader of an academic business department (i.e. recognition-based processing). Second, this study identifies the measures by which leaders and followers evaluate a leader's effectiveness (i.e. inference-based processing).

Floyd and Dimmock (2011)	'Jugglers', 'copers' and 'strugglers': academics' perceptions of being a head of department in a post-1992 UK university and how it influences their future careers	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	17 HODs	To investigate: 1. the experiences of academics who became department heads in a post-1992 UK university 2. explore the influence that being in the position has on their planned future academic career
Inman (2011)	The Journey to Leadership for Academics in Higher Education	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	18 HoDs, Faculty or School	To investigate how leaders have learnt to lead.
Potgieter et al. (2011)	Management competencies for the development of heads of department in the higher education context: a literature overview	Quantitative - Survey	South Africa	39 HoDs	To identify the management competencies deemed necessary for HODs to function effectively within the higher education context
Berdrow (2010)	King among Kings: Understanding the Role and Responsibilities of the Department Chair in Higher Education	Qualitative - Interviews	USA	21 Departmental Chairs	Investigation of the competencies inherent in effectively carrying out the HOD role
Inman (2009)	Learning to lead: development for middle-level leaders in higher education in England and Wales	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	18 HoDs or Head of School	Considers ways in which leadership development opportunities could and should be developed in order to best equip leader-academics for middle-level leadership in higher education
Staniforth and Harland (2006)	Contrasting views of induction - The experiences of new academic staff and their heads of department	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	6 HODs	Explores the induction experiences of new academic staff and the role of their head of department in this process.
Smith (2005)	Departmental Leadership and Management in Chartered and Statutory Universities - A Case of Diversity	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	2 HoDs	To test the proposition that larger university departments are difficult to lead, to identify the 'organisational structure' of the departments and the ways in which the management functions are delegated, and to explore the ways in which, in the two departments, leadership is distributed, where it lies, the mechanisms for its dispersal and how effectively it is perceived to work.

Aziz et al. (2005)	Understanding the training needs of department chairs	Qualitative - Interviews	USA	18 Department Chairs	To develop a framework to assess the training needs for department chairs
Sotirakou (2004)	Coping with conflict within the entrepreneurial university: threat or challenge for heads of departments in the UK higher education context	Quantitative - Survey	United Kingdom	142 HoDs	To examine the role conflict associated with the headship position in the contemporary university context.
Hancock and Hellowell (2003)	Academic Middle Management in Higher Education: A game of hide and seek?	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	14 academic middle managers (3 Deans of Faculty, 11 middle managers (Associate Dean or Head of Faculty))	This article considers some of the forms which the hiding process may take, and explores some of the issues of trust which may influence the degree of concealment which takes place
Smith (2002)	The Role of the University Head of Department - A Survey of Two British Universities	Quantitative - Survey	United Kingdom	30 HoDs	To examine and compare perceptions of the head of department's role in the different types of university
Hellowell and Hancock (2001)	A case study of the changing role of the academic middle manager in higher education: between hierarchical control and collegiality?	Qualitative - Interviews	United Kingdom	14 academic middle managers (3 Deans of Faculty, 11 middle managers (Associate Dean or Head of Faculty))	To investigate the perceptions of academic middle management specifically whether collegiality was seen as a significant factor in the university's internal decision-making processes
Bone and Bournier (1998)	Developing University Managers	Quantitative - Survey	United Kingdom	65 replies from a mixture of 'managers' and HoDs	To identify the extent and nature of management development for the managers of UK universities
Plough (1995)	Fostering Leadership Development and Professionalism for University Department Heads	Mixed method – Interviews and survey	USA	200 HODs	Reviews a successful eight-year program for the academic leadership development of department chairpersons.
Eley (1994)	Management Training for the University Head of Department	Quantitative - Survey	United Kingdom	48 HODs	To investigate: 1. whether HODs possessed any management qualifications 2. whether HODs had undertaken any management training 3. the usefulness of training in certain management skills
Mathias (1991)	The Role of the University Head of Department	Quantitative - Survey	United Kingdom	Not specified	To examine aspects of the role of the head of department
Weinberg (1984)	The Perceived Responsibilities of the Departmental Chairperson: A Note of a Preliminary Study	Quantitative - Survey	USA	Not specified	To gain a perspective of the role of the Chairperson
Startup (1976)	The role of the Departmental Head	Quantitative - Survey	United Kingdom	52 academic staff	To explore the activities of Departmental Heads and the expectations which surround their activities

## Appendix 2 - Characteristics of the included review articles

Author Year	Study title	Study type	Study objectives
Bryman (2007)	Effective leadership in higher education: a literature review	Literature review	To examine the main leadership behaviours associated with leadership effectiveness at Departmental level
Blackmore and Blackwell (2006)	Strategic leadership in academic development	Review article	To explore how academic developers' identity and approach can best be developed to support those engaged in academic work
Parker (2004)	Becoming manager or, The werewolf looks anxiously in the mirror, checking for unusual facial hair	An autobiographical reflection	Reflections on becoming the head of a management department
Brook and Davies (1994)	Proliferating demands on academic Heads of Department: a management issue?	Review article	To explore the responsibilities of the HoD role
Seagren (1993)	The Department Chair: new roles, responsibilities and challenges	Monograph	Explores the changing role of the academic department chair in the areas of leadership, influence, and faculty development.
Gray (1989)	Resisting change: some organisational considerations about University Departments	Review article	Explored the organisational structure of Departments
Moses (1985)	The role of the Head of Department in pursuit of excellence	Review article	Discusses the role and functions of heads of departments as analysed in the literature



## Appendix 3 - Ethical Approval



### AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology  
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus  
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316  
E: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)  
[www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics](http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics)

3 August 2017

Howard Youngs  
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Howard

Re Ethics Application: **17/234 The complexity of change for a Head of Department in New Zealand Universities**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by a subcommittee of Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 3 August 2020.

#### Standard Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries, please contact [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)

Yours sincerely,

Kate O'Connor  
Executive Manager  
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: [matthew.carroll@aut.ac.nz](mailto:matthew.carroll@aut.ac.nz)

## Appendix 4 - Online Survey

8/11/2018

Qualtrics Survey Software



### Project Information

---

**AUTEC approval number: 17/234**

#### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

Academics who are appointed in the Head of Department (HOD) or to an equivalent role at New Zealand Universities are being invited to participate in the research.

Your email address was obtained through a search of New Zealand University websites.

#### **What will happen in this research?**

You will be asked to complete an online survey. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

**If you complete the survey this will be deemed to be your consent to participate.**

#### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

We do not anticipate any risks for participants in completing the survey. The survey is completely anonymous and there is no ability to identify participants. We have minimised any risks by the use of an anonymous link to distribute the survey.

#### **How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

No personal identifiers will be collected in this survey. In an effort to maintain anonymity, during the design of this survey, the option to collect your computer IP address has been disabled.

The anonymised data will be securely stored on AUT property and will be kept for a period of six years after which it will be destroyed (deleted). All outcomes will only refer to aggregated or de-identified responses.

#### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There are no financial costs to participating in this research, apart from your time. We expect that the survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

#### **What are the benefits?**

Benefits to participants: There may potentially be no immediate benefit for the

individual research participants beyond assisting in research. However completing the questionnaire may raise the participant's awareness of the principles of change management.

Benefit to researchers: The findings of this study will give the researchers an indication of the perceived value change by University HODs. The results of the projects also contribute to partial requirements for the fulfilment of the Master of Educational Leadership degree for the researcher Dr Matthew Carroll.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

For the purposes of carrying out this survey, the University uses the survey tools provided by Qualtrics with whom they hold an agreement. These security obligations are set out in the agreement between Qualtrics and the University. The security and privacy statements for the Qualtrics survey tool can be found at the following links; Security Statement <https://www.qualtrics.com/security-statement/> Privacy Statement <https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/>.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

The links to the survey will be made available for a period of four weeks from the time it is first advertised to University HODs.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

The final results will be available to all participants who would like to review them. The results of the research may be published in appropriate journals and presented at relevant conferences.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor: Dr Howard Youngs, [hyoungs@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hyoungs@aut.ac.nz) and phone 09 9219999 ext. 9633.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz) , 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Researcher Contact Details**

Primary researcher: Dr Matthew Carroll ([matthew.carroll@aut.ac.nz](mailto:matthew.carroll@aut.ac.nz))

Project supervisor: Dr Howard Youngs ([hyoungs@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hyoungs@aut.ac.nz))

---

**What is your gender?**

Male

Female

---

**What is your age?**

Under 36

36 - 45

46 - 55

56 - 65

Over 65

---

**What is your current academic position?**

Professor

Associate Professor

Senior Lecturer

Lecturer

Other

---

**How long have you been employed with Universities**

1 - 5 years

6 - 10 years

11 - 20 years

21 - 30 years

31 - 40 years

41 - 50 years

more than 50 years

---

**Prior to being appointed HOD did you?**

	Yes	No
Possess a tertiary qualification relevant to leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate in higher education leadership seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Undertake self-guided research on leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Yes	No
Complete a formal leadership program provided by the university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Complete a formal leadership program provided by an external provider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receive any formal mentoring or coaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receive any informal mentoring or coaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate in leadership development programs that were customised to your needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

---

**How many years have you held the role of HOD?**

- under 1 year  
1 – 3 years  
4 - 6 years  
7 – 10 years  
more than 10 years
- 

**What was your motivation for taking on the role? (tick all that apply)**

- You always aspired to take on the role  
Felt it was a necessary progression of your career  
Persuaded by others to take on role  
Saw it as an ideal role to bring about change  
There was no other suitable person to assume the role  
Other

**Currently how many staff do you directly line manage?**

- 1 - 5  
6 - 10  
11 - 20

21 - 50

more than 50

---

**What was the academic position immediately before your appointment as HOD?**

Head of School

Head of another Department

Acting Head of Department

Professor

Associate Professor

Senior Lecturer

Lecturer

Other

---

**How much longer do you see yourself in your current role as HOD?**

under 1 year

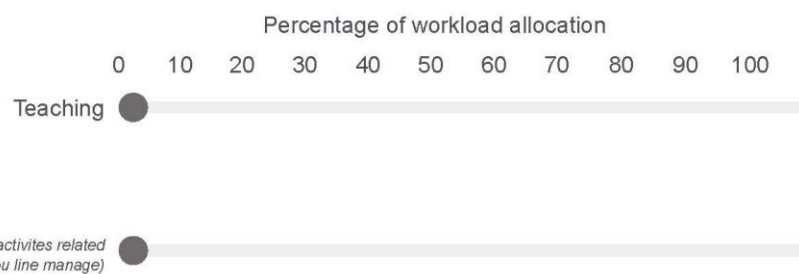
1 – 3 years

4 - 6 years

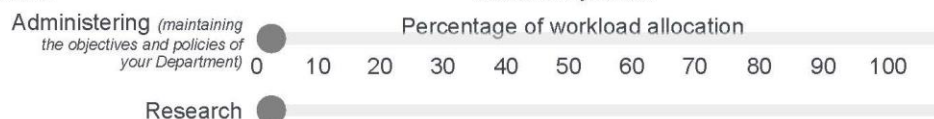
7 – 10 years

more than 10 years

---

**According to your workload document what is your allocation between teaching, management, administration and research?** *(please move the slider to indicate your workload allocation, ensuring the the total of the 4 categories equals 100%)*



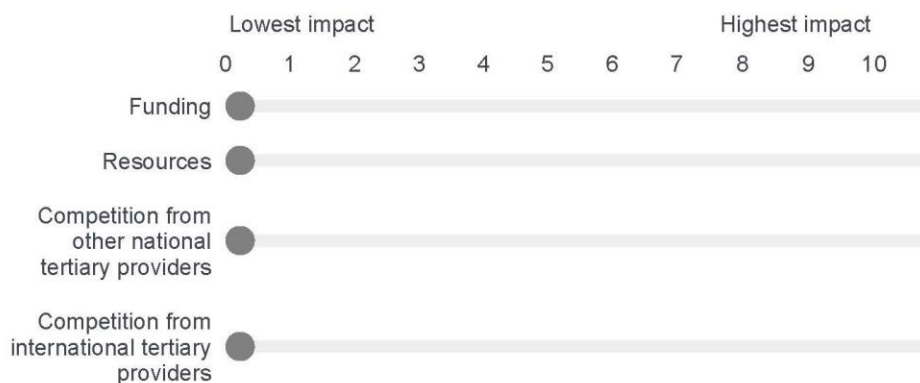


What is your actual experienced allocation between teaching, management, administration and research? (please move the slider to indicate your workload allocation, ensuring the the total of the 4 categories equals 100%)



Do Heads of Department perceive they can stimulate change

How do you perceive the items below impact your ability to stimulate change? (please move the slider to indicate your perceived level of impact)



The number of

8/11/2018

Qualtrics Survey Software

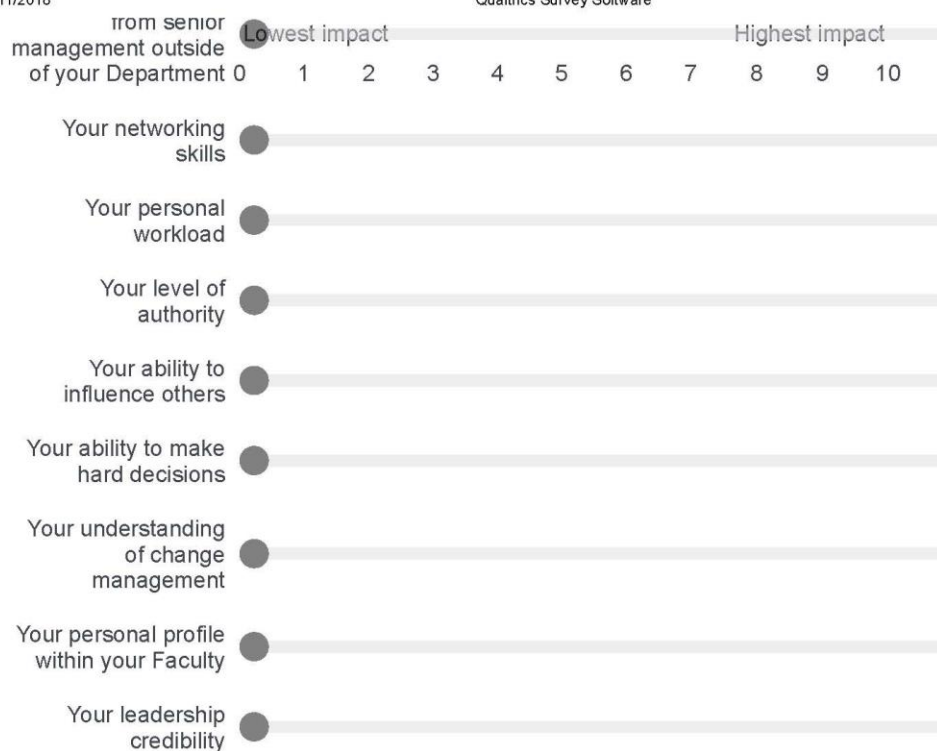


Strategies imposed

<https://aut.au1.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurveyPrintPreview>

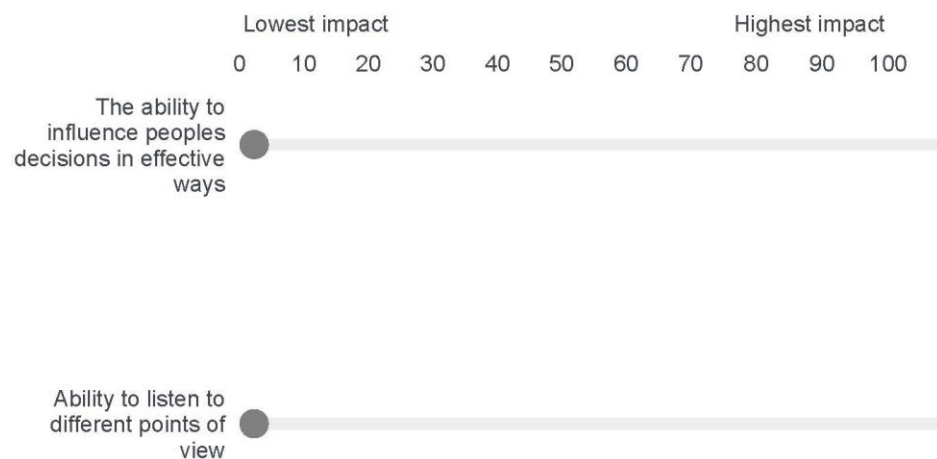
7/13



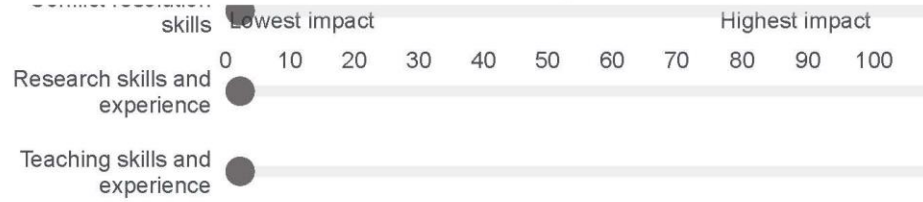


### Approach to change

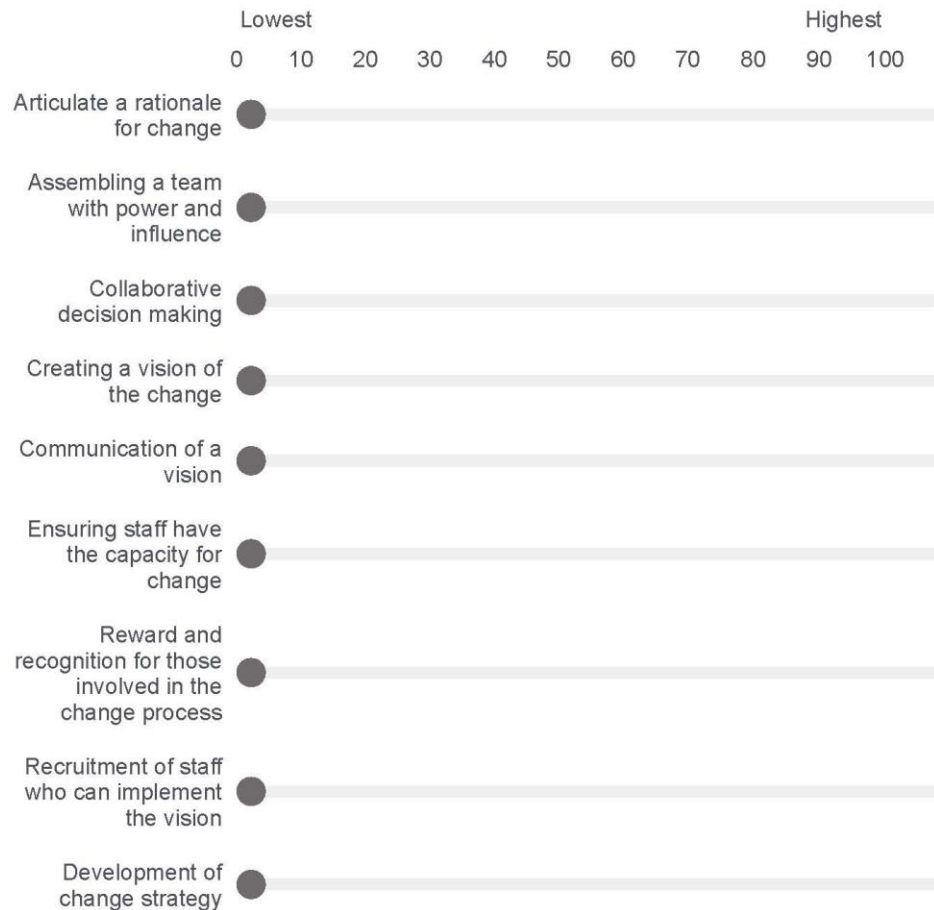
**In your view how important are the core skills listed below in order to manage change successfully?** (please move the slider to indicate your perceived level of impact)

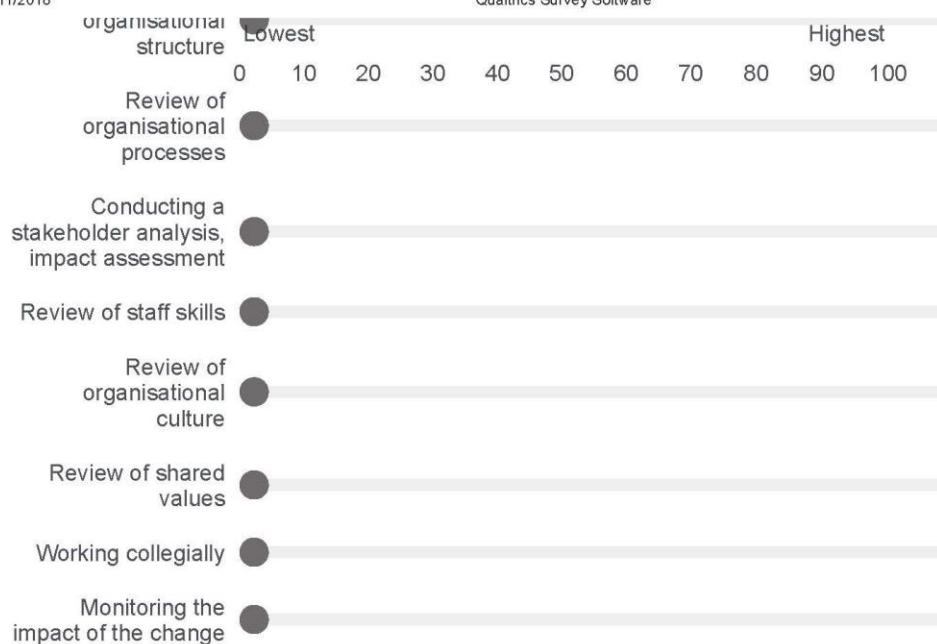






When you initiate change, generally how evident are the following? (please move the slider to indicate your perceived level of impact)





**For a recent change event you led did you apply any of the following models of change? (tick all that apply)**

- ☐ Lewin's change management model
- ☐ Kotter's 8-step change model
- ☐ McKinsey 7-S model
- ☐ Kubler-Ross 5-stage model
- ☐ Prosci's ADKAR model
- ☐ No model of change was used to guide the process
- ☐ Other

**For a recent change event did you apply any of the following strategic analysis models? (tick all that apply)**

- ☐ SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis
- ☐ TOWS analysis

PEST (Political, Economic, Socio-cultural Technological) analysis

No strategic analysis model was applied

Other

---

**For a recent change event how did you develop the strategy that drove the change? (tick all that apply)**

Strategy developed through a logical process of analysis and evaluation

Strategy developed through peoples experiences, assumptions and ways of doing things

Strategy developed through ideas from a variety of people in and around your Department

Strategy developed through senior management exerting influence and power

Other

---

**For a recent change event you led how did you make decisions? (tick all that apply)**

**Individual advisory** - (You consulted with your colleagues individually who had expertise to make the decision, and then made a decision that may or may not have reflected their opinions).

**Group advisory** - (You solicited the opinions of the entire group, discussed the implications of the groups suggestions, and then made the decision).

**Group majority** - (You involved participants in the decision-making, and then the group decided by majority rule).

**Group consensus** - (You involved participants in the decision-making, and then the group decided. All group members shared equally as they generated and evaluated the decision, but total consensus was required before the decision was made).

**Unilateral decision** - (You made the decision without consultation).

Other

---

**For a recent change event you led did you use any of the following tools to assess the effectiveness of the team you led? (tick all that apply)**

Belbin's team assessment tool

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) for teams

SWOT analysis

No team analysis tool was applied

Other

---

### End of survey

---

Would you be interested in participating in a face to face interview. Please note this is only available for participants in the Auckland region.

Yes

No

Powered by Qualtrics

## Appendix 5 - Participant information sheet



### Participant Information Sheet

#### Date Information Sheet Produced:

06/05/2017

#### Project Title

The complexity of change for a Head of Department in New Zealand Universities.

#### An Invitation

Hello, my name is Matthew Carroll and I am undertaking this research project as part of my Master of Educational Leadership thesis. The research study will be exploring how University Heads of Department perceive they influence change. I would like to invite you to take part in this research. Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary.

#### What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of the research is to explore how University Heads of Department (HOD) perceive they can influence change and how they approach the change process. The study is being carried out as part of my Master of Educational Leadership Degree at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). In addition to the publication of a Master's thesis, the findings of the study will be shared with a wider group of educational professionals and other interested individuals. Findings may be published in professional (educational leadership) journals and presented at professional (education based) conferences.

#### How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You were identified by an online search of New Zealand University websites. An invitation was sent to you to participate in an online survey as you were appointed to the role of a HOD. On completion of the online survey you indicated that you would be willing to participate in a face to face interview. You have been invited as you are an academic in a New Zealand University appointed to the role of HOD.

#### How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

#### What will happen in this research?

I would like to interview you and ask you questions related to your experiences of managing change. The interview will last between 30-60 minutes and will be more like an informal discussion. The interview will take place at a time convenient to you and at your place of business, and with your consent, will be recorded. I may need to contact you again after the interview to clarify some points raised in the interview. Prior to completion of the study the data I have gathered from you will be returned to you to enable you to make changes as you see fit and / or to request the withdrawal of anything you do not wish to be included.

#### What are the discomforts and risks?

I do not anticipate any risks for you in completing the interview. However, it is possible that some of the experiences you share about change management may evoke strong emotions. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

#### How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

You may choose not to talk about particular experiences, or choose not to answer any questions that you find distressing or uncomfortable. You may also choose to withdraw from the interview and / or the study at any time.

#### What are the benefits?

Benefits to participants: Although there may not be any immediate benefits of your participation in this research, the stories you share will be contributing to the body of knowledge surrounding your perceptions of change management. This may contribute to a better understanding by academics who hold HOD roles in Universities. We



would also like to provide you with a \$20.00 MTA voucher in appreciation for taking the time to participate in the interview.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

To ensure your privacy and confidentiality is maintained, I will take the following steps:

1. I will not divulge your true identity to anyone.
2. Your name will be substituted with a pseudonym (false name) in all reporting of the study findings.
3. All identifying information that I gather will be kept in a secure place that is only accessible to myself and my supervisor, Dr. Howard Youngs.
4. Upon completion of the study all the data collected will be stored securely on AUT premises for six years. The recording of your interview will be offered back to you once the work is completed, or you may request that it be destroyed.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The main cost of participating in this study is your personal time for the interview (30-60 minutes). If you choose to take part, the interview will be held at a place that is convenient to you.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You have two weeks to consider this invitation. It would be appreciated if you could advise of your intended participation in this study within two weeks of receiving this information sheet.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

You will have the opportunity to view and approve the data I gather from you prior to the completion of the study. You will have access to my completed thesis and any research journal article(s) that are sent for publication. If you indicate on the consent form that you wish to receive a copy of the summary research report then this will be sent to you on completion of my thesis. On completion of the study, I will be more than happy to discuss the findings with you and answer any questions you may have. You will also be welcome to attend any public presentations where the findings of the study are discussed.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Howard Youngs, [hyoungs@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hyoungs@aut.ac.nz), (09) 921 9999 ext 9633.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (09) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Dr Matthew Carroll, [matthew.carroll@aut.ac.nz](mailto:matthew.carroll@aut.ac.nz), (09) 9219999 ext 7305.

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Dr Howard Youngs, [hyoungs@aut.ac.nz](mailto:hyoungs@aut.ac.nz), (09) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 3 August 2017 AUTC Reference number 17/234**



## Appendix 6 - Consent Form

**AUT**

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI  
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

### Consent Form

*Project title:* **The complexity of change for a Head of Department in New Zealand Universities.**

*Project Supervisor:* **Dr Howard Youngs**

*Researcher:* **Dr Matthew Carroll**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 06/05/2017.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 3 August 2017 AUTEC Reference number 17/234**

## Appendix 7 - Interview questions



Auckland University of Technology  
Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ  
T: +64 9 921 9999  
www.aut.ac.nz

**AUT**

**Project title:** *The complexity of change for a Head of Department in New Zealand Universities.*

**Project Supervisor:** *Dr Howard Youngs*

**Researcher:** *Dr Matthew Carroll*

---

### **Interview questions:**

1. What areas of your role do you perceive you can influence change?

*When considering questions 2, 3 and 4 please draw on current and recent examples of a change event you initiated.*

2. How did you approach the change process?
3. What did you see as the key components in the implementing of change?
4. What did you perceive as your biggest barriers to change?

## Appendix 8 - Coding Example



programme leaders for one degree. What they've done, although they have watched the brief and everything, they really have been looking particularly at pass rates and reports and things like that rather than any strategic changes.

Interviewer: You mentioned you feed up at the Head of Department level and that feeds on to your Head of School and probably on to your faculty. Is that effective, do you think? Does your message get heard?

FEED UP

Respondent: It's not hugely effective. I think that what we get from that is the chance to make our position known but it doesn't mean that we're gonna get what we want. There have been changes and one of the things that's happened over the last few years is that there's been a little bit more willingness to devolve decisions to the schools rather than the faculties and then those decisions generally get made in the Head of Department meetings so the Heads of Department and Head of School, Head Teacher in Learning, Head Research come to those meetings; things like funds allocation and things like that.

DECISION MAKING

RESEARCH INFLUENCE

Interviewer: In your department, how do you think you can influence research? Do you feel you have more of an influence on research? You mentioned personal development as well.

Respondent: There's a small amount of funding that I get from the research funding to support people within the department so there's the ability to allocate that. The other side of it is also then the map process, IDP process, looking at what people's plans are for research. Virtually all of the stuff is research active so they're all keen to do something and one of the things that I spend quite a lot of time doing is either seeing opportunities and trying to make teams and trying to introduce people to other people so that they can actually work together and then also identify areas which I think will be productive for the staff member to follow. Some people are very early stage who are really looking for advice and with that we tend to try and mentor them up with some of the professors or associate profs. Other people are mid-career and are looking to maximise impact so with them, that really is a strategising process to say, "This would be a good journal or a good collaboration or good conference, let's see what we can do to make that happen." There's doing more and there's also doing less and saying, "I wouldn't spend so much time doing that, I would actually move across to this instead," and having a strategic discussion with them.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

FUNDING ALLOCATION  
PLANNING RESEARCH  
PLANNING STAFF

NETWORK DEVELOP

EARLY  
LATE  
CAREER

DIFFERENT  
NEED OF  
HOD

DIFFERENT  
PRIORITIES

STAFF DON'T  
THINK STRATEGICALLY

One of the things that I find with the majority of the staff is that very few of them think in terms of career and strategy so they're very much what have I got to do this year? Talking to them, they're often really unaware of the process for promotion and things like that so, "You really needed to be doing this stuff now

because at the moment there's a big hole." That's taken a lot of work with people to try and get them aware of that sort of thing.

workload

Interviewer: Where do you perceive your workload sits? If you looked at that split of administration management, mentoring, teaching, how do you [indistinct 6.32]?

Respondent: Effectively, this is a 50% position. I would probably say that teaching and supervision is probably about 50% of my time and then maybe personal research is about 10% and then the rest of it is to do with the Head of Department role and it's around about a third each. So there's pure administration, signing things, lining up documents that work with each other and things like that, writing reports, then decision making and getting support for decision making, socialising decisions and then the mentoring again is another third. I think that one of the things that you realise but those strategic decisions that you're trying to make end up being the easiest ones to squeeze out because there's always a short-term thing which is immediately distressing or whatever.

40%  
100%

100%  
PERSONAL  
RESEARCH

GOOD DESCRIPTION

SHORT  
TERM  
DECISIONS

Interviewer: With the links outside the university with industry in terms of your influence, do you think your influence comes from being the head of your department or comes from your research profile?

INDUSTRY  
LINKS

Respondent: Bit of both. There would definitely be two strands so there would be the people that I talk to because of my research profile so it's health, IT and this radio frequency identification stuff and those people I've probably known for quite a long time and then we do have contacts with people who are coming in and looking for projects or research collaboration, consultancy and they come through as, "He's the Head of Department so I'll ask him about it and then he can put me through to the right people." So you get a lot more of that.

LINKING PEOPLE

One of the things I've realised is that keeping that sort of thing front of mind for staff is actually quite difficult. They're driven by what's happening this week and that's fine but you do have to manage those relationships a bit so that people who come in and you've introduced, you have to check out that something's still happening with that, a little bit of eagle eye just to make sure it's still happening because often the external clients or external collaborators are either not really aware of how the university timing works or vice versa and quite often the academics have got no idea about the urgency of something so they'll say, "Oh, that's great, we'll start our student next year," but these guys want something in the next three weeks so you've gotta choose whether you're gonna do it or not.

MANAGE  
RELATION  
BETW  
STAFF  
& INDUSTRY



Interviewer: How about at an international level? Do you feel the Head of Department role affords you anything or again does it really come back to more of a research profile that lifts that? INTERNATIONAL

Respondent: No, it does. Within Australia/New Zealand there's a Head of Departments group in computer science so we actually had the New Zealand meeting last week and we try to meet up every year within the Australasian group as well so there is some contact with that and there's certainly some contact with other institutions who are looking to do exchanges or visiting people and they generally quite often come to me first and then I try and find somebody that they would actually deal with and work with. HOD IN RELATION TO ROSSIE

Interviewer: Do you feel you're quite autonomous in your role with regard to authority or have you got a ceiling where you need to chat with your line manager? How does that [indistinct 10.14]? AUTONOMY

Respondent: Anything with budget implications, you generally have to clear with people if it's outside my budget so that would include looking at large scale projects and things like that and if people are going to be taken off teaching to do research work, that would certainly have to go through that. But aside from that, a lot of the time I'm really left with quite a lot of autonomy with the expectation that I'll be reporting back what's happened. In some ways, you might prepare something, get it to the stage where it's ready to go and then it goes to the Head of School for final sign off. BUDGET

*OUTSIDE OF BUDGET (quite autonomous)*  
*NEED TO REPORT BACK*

Interviewer: How would you say you are in terms of and we use the word "power" but it has different connotations to lots of different people? If I said that word in terms of your role, what take would you have on your power? POWER

Respondent: I think it's the sort of role that people will listen to what I have to say and realise that I have to listen to what they say. If they are wanting to do something opposed to what I've made it clear that I'd like to happen then, if they wanted to, they would try and look for support higher up in the organisation. The power comes from the role obviously but it also comes from the fact [indistinct 12.07] funding from different places but I suppose it's almost like a family relationship. If you're gonna do something different from what they want then you're at least gonna clear it with them and I can say, "I can't stop you doing that but I don't think that's a good idea," or, "Yeah, I'd really like to support you doing this. Now, we're gonna have to together work out some way of doing this." GOOD QUOTE

*MICROPOWERFUL ASPECT*  
*POWER FROM ROLE*

*POTENTIAL QUOTE*

One of the things I think is quite interesting, there's people from all sorts of cultures here, it's a very international department so there are people who come

*CULTURE*

## Appendix 9 - Codebook Example

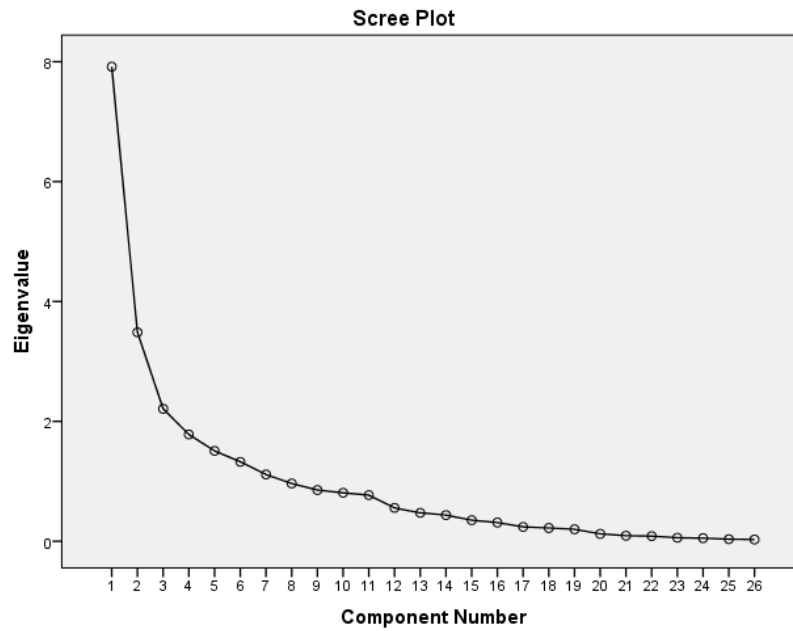
### Codebook

#### Code 1: Perceived influence over change

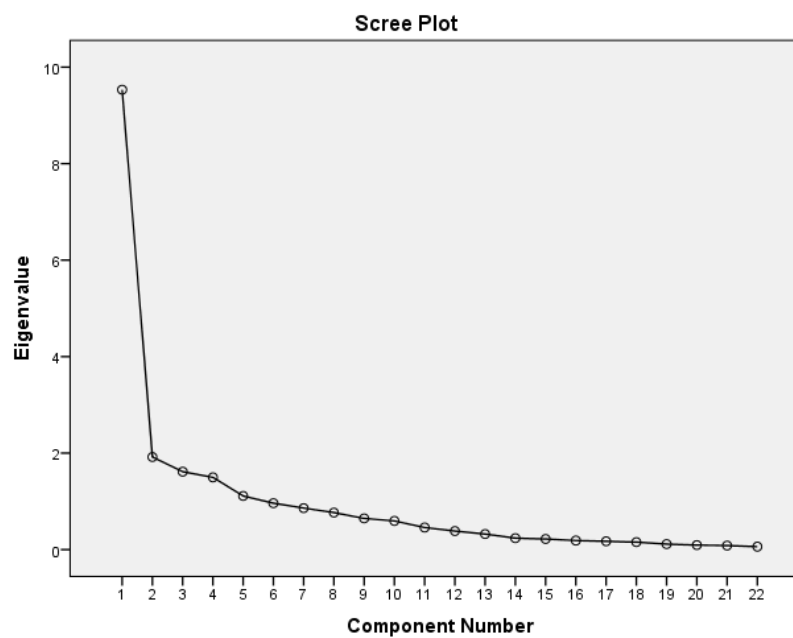
Description	Examples	HoD
Text that discuss the HoDs influence over change or how they perceive they influence change	One would be simply the day-to-day mentoring of staff and encouraging people and supporting and sometimes discouraging them from doing some things	1
	The second one would be reporting up. We have a Head of Department's meeting, we can feed in there which then goes up to faculty.	1
	Then the third thing are projects.	1
	research funding to support people within the department so there's the ability to allocate that	1
	I spend quite a lot of time doing is either seeing opportunities and trying to make teams and trying to introduce people to other people so that they can actually work together and then also identify areas which I think will be productive for the staff member to follow.	1
	<b>Research Influence</b> There would definitely be two strands so there would be the people that I talk to because of my research profile so it's health, IT and this radio frequency identification stuff and those people I've probably known for quite a long time and then we do have contacts with people who are coming in and looking for projects or research collaboration, consultancy and they come through as, "He's the Head of Department so I'll ask him about it and then he can put me through to the right people." So you get a lot more of that.	1
	Because of my personality, I think I can influence change wherever I wanna influence change and I suppose that's one of the things that I bring to being Head of the Department – I've got quite a strong sense of who I am professionally and I don't think anything for me is insurmountable	2
	I was appointed to make significant changes in all aspects of the programme	2
	It was about improving our profile nationally and internationally so it was quite a broad brief	2
	It's more than just my research profile, it's just the fact that I've been around a long time and I've also served professionally in some senior positions	2
	It's more my research profile internationally and probably my presence on social media cos I use Twitter quite a lot.	2
	I think as the Head of Department, I can influence the direction of the department	3
	make some decisions around what kinds of things will be prioritised and that includes around staffing, to some degree; staffing's not something I feel like I have a large amount of influence over but influencing what the current staff are doing is something I can do.	3
	The curriculum. Interface with the profession is one of things I think I can influence around direction and probably the relationships within the	3

## Appendix 10 - Scree plots for survey questions 13, 14 and 15

Scree plot for survey question 13



Scree plot for survey question 14



Scree plot for survey question 15

