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**New Zealand and Australian Marriage and
Family Therapy Practitioners: Paradigm
Adherence, Practitioner Profiles and
Clinical Practice**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in Psychology at Massey University

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ABSTRACT

A partial replication of a study conducted in the United States (Booth, 1996) on the theoretical perspectives of marriage and family practitioners using the Paradigm Adherence Scale (PAS), and a survey on demographic characteristics and clinical practice were conducted with New Zealand and Australian marriage and family therapy practitioners. The PAS measures adherence to the three main paradigms associated with marriage and family therapy (psychological, systems and social constructionist). The Australasian marriage and family therapy practitioners in the sample (N=88) were slightly more females than males, mainly middle-aged (48.6 years), and engaged equally in both private and public practices. Participants came from a diversity of mental health disciplines including social work, psychology, counselling and psychotherapy. They had been practising marriage and family therapy for 11.69 years on average, conducting short-term therapy (an average of 9.45 sessions) and treating a wide range of serious problems. Results from the PAS indicated that the largest proportions of participants adhered primarily to a combination of the three paradigms (43.2%) or to a social constructionist paradigm (39.8%). It was found that both the post-graduate and current or most recent supervisors' preferred paradigm predict participants' strength of adherence to a particular paradigm. Some methodological limitations were discussed. The study provided interesting insights into the training and practice of New Zealand and Australian practitioners and provides a baseline for future research, making it possible to describe the developments of marriage and family therapy in Australasia.

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