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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE SERVICE CLIMATE
AND CLIENT SATISFACTION
An Investigation of New Zealand
English Language Centres
Offering TESOL Courses**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Management
at Massey University, Palmerston North and Wellington,
New Zealand**

John Walker

2003



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to state that the research carried out for my Doctoral thesis entitled “English Language Centre Service Climate and Client Satisfaction” in the Department of Management & Enterprise Development, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand is all my own work.

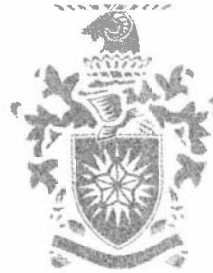
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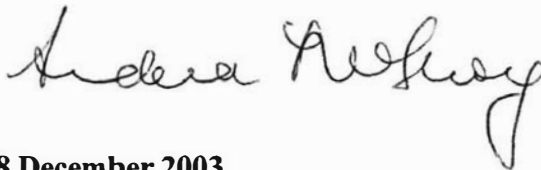
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This is to state the research carried out for the Doctoral thesis entitled “English Language Centre Service Climate and Client Satisfaction” was done by John Walker in the Department of Management & Enterprise Development, Massey University, Wellington New Zealand. The thesis material has not been used for any other degree, and the candidate has pursued the course of study in accordance with the requirements of the Massey University regulations.

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Date

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ABSTRACT

The teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) conducted in English language centres (ELCs) is a major service industry in New Zealand, earning several hundred million dollars annually. Despite its increasing importance to the New Zealand economy, however, little is known about management aspects of TESOL programmes in ELCs, and particularly the nature of TESOL as a service. The research described here addressed these issues by exploring links between the service climate of ELCs in New Zealand and levels of client satisfaction with ELC service.

Focus groups of ELC staff and clients were set up to provide insights into staff perceptions of service climate and client perceptions of service provision. The data obtained was content-analysed and the findings used to construct two survey instruments. A service climate questionnaire was used to survey staff in 30 New Zealand ELCs on their perceptions of the service climate in their institutions. A satisfaction survey was used to survey clients in the same 30 ELCs on their satisfaction levels with the service provided. The surveys returned 275 usable staff responses and 1684 usable client responses. The survey data was subjected to statistical analysis.

The general conclusions of the study are that ELC staff perceive a positive service climate in New Zealand ELCs; that ELC clients are, overall, satisfied but not delighted with the service they receive; and that the more positive ELC staff perceive the service climate to be, the greater the levels of client satisfaction with ELC service.

A number of implications for management theory, for policy and for practice are stated. These include implications in the following areas: research practices and techniques used to investigate climate and client satisfaction; research into the management of TESOL in ELCs; policy on mandatory national qualifications for New Zealand ESOL teachers in ELCs; levels of ELC manager performance in traditional functional areas such as strategy, organisation and quality control; desirable staff professional and technical skills for the creation of client satisfaction; standards of teacher resources, facilities and equipment in ELCS ; and the effectiveness of ELC-client communication.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my supervisors, Associate Professor Andrea McIlroy and Associate Professor Don McAlpine for their wisdom, knowledge, guidance and encouragement; and for the unstinting time and effort they expended on my behalf over the duration of this project.

To my wife, partner and best friend, Ute Walker, for her support, good humour and endless patience; and for her willingness to act as both intellectual sounding board and my own personal, unpaid, in-house PhD trainer.

To my parents-in-law, Gerda Wepner and Kurt Wepner, for years of unselfish practical support and assistance, which afforded me a level of focus on and commitment to this project that I would not otherwise have been able to enjoy.

To the late Elaine Brewster of Rotorua English Language Academy and stalwart of the TESOL industry in New Zealand, for her insight into the need to conduct research into TESOL management; and for her inspiration and encouragement to proceed with this project at a crucial stage in its conception.

To Jeff Johnson of Questar Data Systems, Inc., Minnesota, USA, for kindly providing information on the research techniques and instruments used in his own service climate research.

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