AN EXPLORATION OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT IN HIGH PERFORMING PRIVATE TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS IN NEW ZEALAND

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Abstract

It has been recognised that governance and management have a far-reaching impact in different spheres of society. Failures in governance and their damaging consequences as well as current challenges on the global scene have led to an increasing focus on governance and management, including in higher education. This is true in New Zealand where the government's Tertiary Education Strategy demonstrates a commitment to improving strategic capacity and leadership at both governance and management levels in tertiary education organisations (Edwards, 2003).

The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes good governance and management practice in New Zealand private tertiary education. Underpinned by a pragmatist epistemology which emphasises the utility of research to solve practical real-world problems, the study offers insights and implications for practice that will contribute to lifting the quality and credibility of the sector. Practice theory which suggests that practices are the basic units of analysis to understand organisational phenomena (Nicolini, 2012) serves as the theoretical framework supporting the study. An empirical enquiry approach which focuses on the everyday activity of organising (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011) is utilised to investigate practice.

The findings of this research are informed by a case study of a high performing private training establishment (PTE), qualitative interviews with New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) Evaluators as expert informants experienced in assessing the performance of tertiary education providers, and analysis of relevant documents. The analysis of findings follows the conceptualisation of practice-as-entity, i.e. practice is comprised of three elements – competence, materiality and meaning (Shove et al., 2012).

Four key themes emerged from the findings, representing the key features of high performing PTEs: being driven by a purpose beyond profit, strong leadership, being reflective, and valuing staff. Sub-themes embody the governance and management practices associated with these key features: having a student-centric mission, vision, values; strong community engagement; active and knowledgeable governance;

competent academic leadership; self-assessment; robust data management leading to continuous improvements; and motivating staff.

Based on these findings, the study proffers a number of insights, practical implications, and recommendations relevant to practitioners in the sector. The recommendations are presented as an integrated leverage system that creates an advantage for a PTE and useful for attaining superior performance. The system depicts how a PTE's leadership operates around organisational purpose (the fulcrum) by applying its energies through three leadership handles to provide the organisational output. This creates leverage similar to how a mechanical lever on a fulcrum works. The leadership handles are 'stakeholder plus' governance structure, distributed academic leadership and quality management, and participative people management.

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Glossary of Acronyms

PTE   Private Training Establishment

NZQA   New Zealand Qualifications Authority

TEI   Tertiary Evaluation Indicators

EER   External Evaluation and Review

ITENZ   Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand

TES   Tertiary Education Strategy

TEO   Tertiary Education Organisation

TEC   Tertiary Education Commission

TQM   Total Quality Management

COVID-19 Coronavirus disease 2019

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

This study is an explorative investigation of governance and management practices in New Zealand private training establishments (PTEs) that have been highly rated in external evaluation and reviews conducted by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

This introductory chapter provides the background of my study, the context within which the research was undertaken, the focal point, and the significance of the study. I begin by setting the scene, highlighting the impact and universal importance of governance and management as well as the interrelationship between the two concepts. I then go on to identify the aim of the study and the research question that this study addresses. The supporting frameworks used and the contributions that this research will make are also highlighted. This chapter concludes with a summary of the structure of the entire thesis.

Background

Corporate governance has been the single most significant issue on the global business agenda for the past 30 years or more, with its successes and failings affecting every working individual in every economy across the world (Bloomfield, 2013). De Silva Lokuwaduge (2010) and Edwards (2003) purport that corporate governance issues in both private and public sectors have become a popular discussion topic in the last two decades.

Impact of Governance

There are multiple examples of corporate governance failures in recent years, with the financial costs and worldwide governmental response deemed to affect at least two generations of workers yet to enter the workforce worldwide, leading to incalculable political and social consequences (Bloomfield, 2013). This has reinforced the renewed global emphasis on effective corporate governance (Adebayo et al., 2014), supported by a growing consensus that good corporate governance is linked to national economic growth and development (Nwachukwu, 2007, as cited in Adebayo et al., 2014).

The results of a study demonstrate that companies with good corporate governance records can generate more resources to create employment opportunities, support business, pay dividends to shareholders, and generate more tax revenues for the government (Adebayo et al., 2014). The same study found that the adoption of good corporate governance practices has a positive impact on all organisational performance indicators, including transparency of operations, accountability, and profitability (Adebayo et al., 2014). This is consistent with the corporate literature validating the important role played by governance in improving performance (De Silva Lokuwaduge & Armstrong, 2015).

Interestingly, Heracleous (2001) cited several research studies which failed to find convincing connections between generally accepted "best practices" in corporate governance, such as a balanced board in terms of skills, and organisational performance. This is echoed by Edwards (2003) who purports that a growing body of research in several jurisdictions is showing weak connections between accepted elements of good practice, including board composition, and company performance. A lack of empirical linkage between governance and organisational performance does raise questions about the importance of corporate governance. However, a more recent meta-analysis of relevant studies provides evidence for the correlation between governance variables, such as board diversity and independence, and company performance (Khan et al., 2018). The studies do show that the correlation is not always positive. For example, a diverse board can disrupt group cohesiveness and communication which negatively affect company performance (Khan et al., 2018).

Gillies and Morra (1997) argue that common sense tells us there is a relationship between corporate governance and firm performance, and the fact that various macro studies on corporate governance have been unable to identify it does not mean that the relationship does not exist. This is why the institutional investor community is virtually ignoring research findings that question the relevance of "best practices" and continue to demand corporate governance reform (Heracleous, 2001).

Given the impact that corporate governance has on a national and global scale as well as at the firm level, many have recognised the importance of getting the study of corporate governance right (Bloomfield, 2013). Tricker (2019) observes that the 1990s saw a

dramatic surge in academic interest in corporate governance. Hughes (2010) supports this observation, recognising that there is a large and important literature on corporate governance, with questions around this dominating management in the private sector.

Governance and Management: Interrelationship

In the context of a firm, governance is often discussed in the literature within the broad field of management. The relationship between governance and management is often highlighted. Tricker (2019) differentiates the two by saying that executive management is responsible for running the enterprise, but the governing body ensures that it is running in the right direction and being run well. This is reinforced by studies that relate governance to macro-level processes and functions undertaken by Boards, and management to the day-to-day operational activities of internal staff members and managers. Examples are the study of New Zealand tertiary education institutions by Locke (2001) and the case studies of Canadian tertiary institutions conducted by Lang (2016). Both studies posit that matters of governance rest outside the internal structure of the organisation, either on Boards or in Councils. Likewise, Carver (2002) situates governance within a Board of Directors, maintaining that when governance is properly designed, governance and management are not simply different but have different concepts, language, and reporting needs (Carver, 2007).

As the governing body, the Board of Directors is responsible for setting direction, formulating strategy, and policy making as well as supervising management and being accountable for the organisation's decisions and performance (Tricker, 2019). On the other hand, the functions of management are to order and control to make an organisation efficient and effective within agreed objectives (Middlehurst & Elton, 1992). Bloomfield (2013) also distinguishes between the roles of the board and the firm's management, whereby the board determines and establishes methods and policies while management follows and implements these. However, he is of the view that good corporate governance should be pervasive and embedded in management functions. His contention is that to be effective, good governance must exist at all levels of the organisation as an essential part of managerial activity and is not simply the province of a firm's Board of Directors (Bloomfield, 2013).

Context, Focus and Justification for the Study

My study emerges from the recognition of a) the significance of corporate governance and the ensuing interest in studying and researching the subject and b) the interrelationship between governance and management, both discussed in the preceding section. It is with this two-fold perspective that my study investigates the subject. The context chosen for this study is the higher education sector in New Zealand. The literature search has found scant significant empirical research addressing governance and management in this sector. A similar observation was made from a study of governance in New Zealand tertiary institutions by Locke (2001). There still appears to be a dearth of systematic studies made on the subject. Yet the subject holds significance to academics and practitioners alike, given the increased focus in recent years on governance and management in higher education (Kok & McDonald, 2017; Middlehurst, 2013).

Monumental challenges posed by the current global financial climate have implications for leadership, governance, and management in higher education, including the need to manage change (Melville-Ross, 2010). Key changes include funding reductions and emphasis on greater market responsiveness impinging on governance and academic practice (Middlehurst & Elton, 1992). Consultancy reports, such as Ernst & Young and Deloitte's, also indicate far-reaching consequences of significant changes in the higher education environment for internal governance (Middlehurst, 2013).

Major challenges to governance systems include an emphasis on managerial efficiency, the creation of economic benefits and the achievement of international competitiveness (Shin & Harman, 2009). Such challenges point to a strong need for institutions to re-think and re-engineer their internal governance, including whether the current models and structures of management are fit-for-purpose (Middlehurst, 2013). This need has motivated the sector's more prominent focus on leadership, management, and governance (Middlehurst, 2013) as manifested in the many studies that have added to the body of knowledge on higher education leadership and management (Kok & McDonald, 2017).

Governance and Management Focus in New Zealand Higher Education

In New Zealand, tertiary governance has been the subject of extended debate for many years (Edwards, 2003). Furthermore, the publication of the government's Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-2007 signalled a fresh commitment to improving strategic capacity and leadership at both governance and management levels in tertiary education organisations (Edwards, 2003).

The enhanced focus on governance and management in the country is reflected in the evaluative framework for reviewing the performance of non-university higher education institutions. The framework called the Tertiary Evaluation Indicators (TEI) presented in Figure 1 provides common points of reference for what 'good' can look like in education and training through the outcome and process indicators (New Zealand Qualifications Authority [NZQA], 2017a). 'Governance and management' is a process indicator. The premise is that process indicators underpin the outcome indicators, e.g. governance and management underpin student achievement and outcomes. This is consistent with the notion presented in the literature that corporate governance impacts organisational performance.

Figure 1

Tertiary Evaluation Indicators (NZQA, 2017a, p. 6)

Tertiary Evaluation Indicators

Outcome indicators — Achievement & Outcomes	Programmes match needs	Student engagement	Governance & Management	Compliance
These indicators are relevant to: 1. How well do students achieve? 2. What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?	These indicators are relevant to: 3. How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?	These indicators are relevant to: 4. How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?	These indicators are relevant to: 5. How effective are governance and management at supporting educational achievement?	These indicators are relevant to: 6. How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?
Students acquire useful skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities.	Programmes maintain relevance to stakeholders and communities.	Student learning goals are well understood.	Organisational purpose and direction is clear.	Policies and practices are legal and ethical.
Students complete courses and/or gain qualifications.	Programmes are regularly reviewed and updated to meet existing and emerging needs of students and stakeholders.	Comprehensive and timely study information and advice is provided to assist students pursue their chosen pathways.	Organisational academic leadership is effective.	The TEO has effective compliance management processes.
Students gain relevant employment and/or engage successfully with further study.	Learning environments are planned and structured for the benefit and needs of students.	Responses to the well-being needs of students are appropriate.	Sufficient resources are allocated to support learning, teaching and research.	Relevant legislation, rules and regulations are complied with.
Students apply new skills and knowledge and contribute positively to their local and wider communities.	Academic standards and integrity are maintained.	The learning environment is inclusive.	Data analysis is used effectively throughout the organisation	
Students improve their well-being and enhance their abilities and attributes.	Learning activities and resources are effective in engaging students.	Policies and procedures minimise barriers to learning.	Recruitment and development of staff is effective.	
Communities' and iwi bodies of knowledge are created, developed, and advanced.	Key stakeholders, including students, are clearly identified and engagement is appropriate and ongoing.	Students have opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts.	Staff are valued.	
	Assessment is fair, valid, consistent and appropriate.	Students are supported to establish effective social and academic support networks.	The education organisation anticipates and responds effectively to change.	
	Assessment provides students and teachers with useful feedback on progress.	Students are provided with useful and timely feedback on their progress	Innovation, responsiveness and continuity are balanced.	
	Learning activities and assessment tasks are purposefully aligned with learning outcomes		The TEO operates a sustainable business model, which is aligned to its educational purpose.	

The TEI is part of an integrated national quality assurance system in New Zealand which covers non-university education providers including PTEs (NZQA, n.d.). The system is operated by NZQA, the government's regulatory agency that ensures New Zealand qualifications are credible and robust (NZQA, 2017b). A key component of the quality assurance system is the external evaluation and review (EER), an independent evaluation of an institution that leads to a statement of confidence in two scope areas: a) educational performance and b) self-assessment capability (NZQA, n.d.-a). Using the TEI framework as the evaluative tool, tertiary education organisations are placed in one of four categories of capability (Category 1 to 4, with 1 being the highest) to reflect NZQA's confidence ratings in the two scope areas (NZQA, n.d.). A Category 1 rating is indicative of an institution's superior performance.

Private Training Establishments (PTEs)

Of particular interest for my study is the PTE sector. The gap in the literature on governance and management in New Zealand higher education extends to private tertiary education. This study serves to fill this gap by exploring governance and management practices in high performing PTEs. The subject deserves investigation as the competitive advantage resulting from good educational outcomes underpinned by good governance and management is vital in a profit-oriented sector.

New Zealand private training establishments are private organisations (i.e. not state-owned) providing education or training (NZQA, n.d.-d). PTEs are operated by a wide range of companies, trusts, and other entities (New Zealand Ministry of Education [MOE], 2021). They are diverse in terms of their scale of operation, location, culture, and areas of educational expertise, which lets them respond to the broad range of needs of students, industry, employers, communities, and other stakeholders (New Zealand MOE, 2021). As such, PTEs play a significant role in the New Zealand tertiary education landscape.

There were 396 registered PTEs in New Zealand as of October 2021 (Education Counts, 2021a). In 2020, PTEs had a combined total of 56,115 enrolled students, making up 15% of nationwide participation in tertiary education (Education Counts, 2021b). Between 2009 (when EERs were first conducted by NZQA) and 2020, an annual

average of 138 PTEs underwent an EER (see Appendix A. PTE EER Results: 2009-2020). Of these, an average of 17% received a Category 3 rating, and 3% a Category 4 rating. Categories 3 and 4 are the lowest categories of capability, indicating that the organisation has not demonstrated enough educational quality or NZQA has concerns about its capability to monitor its own performance (NZQA, n.d.-b). Having 20% of the PTE sector not meeting the standards of educational quality and performance year-on-year is a cause for concern.

In addition, between 2009 and 2021, a total of 524 PTEs had their registrations cancelled, an average of 40 each year (see Appendix B. Cancelled PTE Registrations: 2009-2021). Reasons for de-registration include PTE business decisions related to inability to support operations and NZQA action arising from non-compliance issues. These statistics add to a compelling rationale for the focus of the current research.

A study of EER results in the PTE sector one year after NZQA began conducting such reviews (NZQA, n.d.-c) and the subsequent analysis of EER results among tertiary education organisations operating under the NZQA quality assurance regime in 2011 (Bourke, n.d.) reveal that most of the characteristics of Category 1 PTEs relate to governance and management as defined in the TEI framework. These results are indicative of the significance of governance and management as an underlying factor in the success of PTEs. This is consistent with what the literature demonstrates. Unfortunately, no similar study has been made since (N. Woodhead, personal communication, June 4, 2019). This highlights the fact that the PTE sector has remained largely unexplored in the literature.

Given the size and scope of the PTE sector, investigation of governance and management practices in high performing PTEs can contribute to practice. Having more high-performing PTEs increases the quality and credibility of the PTE sector, an objective explicitly defined in the charter of Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand (ITENZ), the nationwide representative of private tertiary institutions in the country (Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand [ITENZ], 2019). This research contributes to the ITENZ objective by presenting implications for practice, thus further justifying the significance of this study, and providing the impetus for presenting its findings. Although the outcomes of this study may not be directly translate-able to all

PTEs given the diverse contexts within which different organisations operate, the results can provide a foundation to inform the improvement efforts of governance and management practitioners in New Zealand PTEs.

Research Aim, Research Question, Frameworks, and Contributions

This study aims to explore governance and management practices of high performing PTEs or those that have attained a Category 1 rating in their most recent EER to gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes good governance and management practice in this sector. Given this purpose, the research question driving this study is "What are the governance and management practices in high performing PTEs that can inform the improvement efforts of governance and management practitioners in other New Zealand tertiary education organisations"?

Frameworks for the Study

In seeking to answer this question, I utilised a practice lens, a theoretical perspective that affords the capacity to analyse organisational phenomena and offer important practical implications for practitioners (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). Practice theory suggests that the basic units of analysis for understanding organisational phenomena are practices, not practitioners (Nicolini, 2012; Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017). The object of inquiry should be managerial and entrepreneurial activities, not managers and entrepreneurs (Nicolini, 2012) who are conceived as carriers and performers of practices (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017). With practices as the unit of analysis, the "practice approach" can be demarcated as all analyses that develop an account of practices or treat the field of practices (the total nexus of interconnected human practices) as the place to study the nature and transformation of the subject matter (Schatzki, 2000). With this conceptualisation, practice theory is relevant to my research question and my intent to offer implications for practice. My research has an empirical focus that recognises the importance of practices in the ongoing operations of the organisation and the centrality of people's actions to organisational outcomes (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). The practice lens as a theoretical framework is discussed further in Chapter 2 Literature Review.

Moreover, as the TEI framework sets out the standards of performance that New Zealand PTEs are measured by, it is a relevant and useful framework for answering the research question. Governance and management indicators in the TEI provide a starting point for determining what governance and management practices lead to high performance. Furthermore, as governance and management are two very broad disciplines, the TEI serves to focus the directions for this research. It defines the scope of the literature review and the research framework for data collection and analysis.

Contributions

My research contributes to the current discourses on governance and management, particularly in New Zealand higher education. It fills a gap in empirical studies in this arena. It also fills a gap on the subject within the context of New Zealand PTEs which have been largely unexplored in the literature. Moreover, my research offers unique insights and implications for practice that will serve as a starting point and basis for continuous improvement in New Zealand PTEs, contributing to the objective of lifting the quality and credibility of the PTE sector. Furthermore, using the practice lens, my research contributes to the body of existing studies informed by practice theory, particularly studies that apply the empirical approach to investigating practice. Feldman and Worline (2016) cite various applications of practice theory in management studies. My research serves to address a gap in the empirical literature on practice by extending these applications to the domain of corporate governance and management.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised as follows. Chapter Two provides a review of existing literature on governance and management, with emphasis on the higher education setting. The chapter begins with a presentation of the practice lens, the theoretical framework that underpins the study, followed by an introduction to the concept and theory of governance. This then funnels down to its key dimensions. The chapter also explores management and its key dimensions. As a related concept, leadership is explored in conjunction with management.

Chapter Three details the research methodology that addresses the research question. This chapter discusses the methodological approach, research design, sampling method, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents the findings resulting from thematic analysis. The four themes that emerged from the study describe the key features of governance and management practice in high performing PTEs. These are Purpose-Driven, Strong Leadership, Reflective, and Valuing Staff. The corresponding sub-themes are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five is a discussion of the findings in light of current literature and past research. The empirical approach in the field of practices is employed in describing the findings as reconstructions of the practitioners' perspectives. The final chapter, Chapter Six, concludes this report by identifying the overall contributions that the study has made, the insights, implications, and recommendations for practice, acknowledging the limitations of the research and recognising future research directions. My concluding comments serve to close the thesis.

Chapter 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews relevant literature on governance and management and provides an overview of the body of knowledge in the field. The emphasis is on the higher education context. Understanding existing knowledge across the dimensions of governance and management lays the foundation for understanding the practices that lead to superior organisational performance. The TEI framework is the basis for the inclusion of governance and management dimensions in this review.

I start with key concepts of practice theory as they relate to the rationale of my research. This is followed by an exploration of the concept of governance, then funnels down to its key dimensions: governing mechanism, organisational purpose and direction. An exploration of management and leadership in higher education follows. Leadership is explored in conjunction with management as it is a closely related concept. The review concludes with key management dimensions: academic leadership, academic leader competence, and management of people and quality.

The Practice Lens

The lens of practice provides a theoretical perspective for investigating and understanding governance and management practices in high performing PTEs in New Zealand. Practice theory, practice-based studies, practice approach, or practice lens denote a family of orientations that take orderly materially mediated doing and sayings ('practices') and their aggregations as central for the understanding of organisational and social phenomena (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017).

Practice theory has been applied in studying many organisational phenomena (Feldman & Worline, 2016). This includes organisational studies in the fields of strategy and knowledge (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011), resourcing, technology use, and communities of practice (Feldman & Worline, 2016). My study expands the application of practice theory into the domain of governance and management where it appears largely underutilised.

Feldman and Worline (2016) argue the relevance of practice theory for management, citing its practicality in helping managers see and understand the ordering of activities in everyday life with greater clarity, thus preparing them for working with their organisations in context. Given this, the practice lens is deemed appropriate and relevant to the intent and rationale of my research to extend knowledge of governance and management practices and provide implications for practice that will inform practitioners in New Zealand PTEs.

Practices

Most thinkers who theorise practices conceive of them as socially recognised arrays/ meaningful forms/ patterns of human activity centrally organised around shared practical understanding, dependent on shared skills and capable of being done well or badly, correctly or incorrectly (Barnes, 2000; Pouliot & Cornut, 2015; Schatzki, 2000). Practice theorists acknowledge that non-human entities help constitute human sociality, although most practice theorists continue to focus on the human (Schatzki, 2000). Likewise, my study focuses on activities carried out by human agents mediated by non-human entities (such as resources and materials) in governing and managing PTEs in New Zealand.

Bukhave and Creek (2021) see practice as both entity and performance. Practice-as-entity consists of elements that make up the practice - materials, competences and meanings (Shove et al., 2012; Twine, 2015). 'Materials' encompass objects, infrastructures, technologies, tools, hardware, and bodies (Shove et al., 2007). 'Competences' are multiple forms of understanding and practical knowledgeability, skills and know-how, whereas 'meanings' represent the social and symbolic significance of the practice, ideas, affect, aspirations, and norms (Shove et al., 2012). Twine's (2015) work on understanding the practice of snacking using the insights of practice theory provides an example. In British culture, the 'Sunday roast' is a traditional meat-eating practice constituting interdependent skills (preparation, carving), materialities (oven, tray, dead bird, butcher or supermarket) and shared meaning (common aesthetic, affective, moral and cultural understandings) (Twine, 2015).

Practice-as-performance is the doing of practices by individuals, which continue to exist only to the extent that they are enacted and re-enacted at particular times and in particular places (Bukhave & Creek, 2021; Nicolini, 2012; Twine, 2015). Thus, the nature of practice is that it is performed, situated and contextual. Actions and contexts are part of practices, and practice performance as well as the person performing the practice cannot be situated outside or between historical and social contexts that give structure and meaning to what people do (Bukhave & Creek, 2021; Wenger, 1999).

Underpinning my research is the Schatzkian view that an organisation is an orchestration of practices occurring at all kinds of levels (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015). Organisations such as PTEs are first and foremost social phenomena that unfold through the 'happening' of practices and activities (Schatzki, 2006), including governance and management. My study explores these practices happening at board and management levels.

Practice Theory

It has been acknowledged that no theory of practice can be a sufficient basis for an understanding of human behaviour (Barnes, 2000), especially that a unified theory of practice does not exist (Nicolini, 2012). Nevertheless, practice has been used as a lens for the reinterpretation of many organisational phenomena (Corradi et al., 2010), an analytical framework or specific approach to explaining and understanding the world (Bukhave & Creek, 2021; Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Pouliot & Cornut, 2015). Central to a practice lens is the notion that social life is an ongoing production and thus emerges through people's recurrent actions (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). To comprehend practice, one must gain an understanding of how things get done (Lodhia, 2015).

There are three ways of studying practice: an empirical focus on how people act in organisational contexts, a theoretical focus on understanding relations between the actions people take and the structures of organisational life, and a philosophical focus on the constitutive role of practices in producing organisational reality (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). My study employs the empirical enquiry approach. This approach answers the "what" of a practice lens – a focus on the everyday activity of organising in

both its routine and improvised forms (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). This aligns well with my research question and the aim of this study. My application of this approach to studying and understanding governance and management practices is discussed in Chapter 3 Research Methodology.

Governance

In this section, I explore the theories and key dimensions of governance indicated in the TEI framework. There are various arenas in which governance is practiced, studied, and debated. The term governance is an umbrella concept for a wide variety of phenomena including policy networks, public management, public-private partnerships, and corporate governance (Katsamunska, 2016). Corporate governance at the firm level is the focus of my study, the subject of the investigation being the PTE sector in New Zealand. This is apropos as PTEs are privately-run enterprises operating within a profit-oriented context. Moreover, the principles for corporate governance for companies have provided useful insight for governance in tertiary education, with institutions moving closer to a corporate model of management (Edwards, 2003).

Definition

Hitt et al. (2013) define corporate governance as the set of mechanisms used to manage the relationship among stakeholders and determine and control the strategic direction and performance of organisations. This is echoed by international bodies, such as the OECD Ad Hoc Task Force on Governance, which define governance as the system, process, and structures for organisational direction, control, and monitoring to achieve objectives and ensure success (Bloomfield, 2013; Hughes, 2010; Zuva & Zuva, 2018).

The literature identified various perspectives on the purpose of governance. How an organisation views this purpose has implications for how governance is practised. One perspective is that governance as an extension of ownership is about running organisations so investors receive a fair return (Adebayo et al., 2014; Carver, 2007; Hughes, 2010). This argument is limited in that it does not consider the interests of other stakeholders. Indeed, Bloomfield (2013) describes the emphasis on the primacy of the shareholder and their ownership rights as a traditional view of governance which may no longer reflect the realities of the present time. In practice, the rights of others

who are touched by the actions of the organisation, not just shareholders, are now recognised and these stakeholders now occupy a more significant role (Bloomfield, 2013).

Theories of Governance

These differing views of the purpose of governance are reflective of the two main theoretical underpinnings of governance: agency theory and stakeholder theory. Agency theory identifies the main participants in corporations: shareholders or principals, and managers or agents (Donaldson & Davis, 1991; Yusoff & Alhaji, 2012). Agency theory maintains that managers will not act to maximise the returns of shareholders unless appropriate governance structures, checks and balances are implemented to safeguard the interests of shareholders given managers' ability to pursue their own agenda at the expense of the shareholders (Hart, 1995; Jensen & Meckling, 1976). This theory puts the shareholder at the centre of organisational pursuits without considering other agency motivations. In contrast, stakeholder theory highlights the different constituents of the firm and addresses the needs and contributions of investors, employees, suppliers, customers as well as external groups (Bloomfield, 2013; Khan et al., 2018; Yusoff & Alhaji, 2012; Zuva & Zuva, 2018). This aligns with the recognition by many researchers that the activities of a corporate entity require accountability of the organisation to a wider audience than just its shareholders (Yusoff & Alhaji, 2012; Zuva & Zuva, 2018).

A theory often juxtaposed with agency theory due to its contrasting approach to motivation is stewardship theory (Glinkowska & Kaczmarek, 2015). In stewardship theory, managers are considered good stewards motivated by progress, achievement and self-actualisation stemming from pro-organisational behaviours, thus they will act in the best interests of the owners, maximising their profits as they seek to attain organisational objectives, and maximising their own value in the process (Bloomfield, 2013; Donaldson & Davis, 1991; Glinkowska & Kaczmarek, 2015; Zuva & Zuva, 2018). Stewards, unlike agents in agency theory, consider their interests to be in line with the interests of the company and its shareholders (Khan et al., 2018).

A fourth theory - resource dependency - proposes the need for environmental linkages between the firm and outside resources (Yusoff & Alhaji, 2012). Directors serve to link these external resources with the firm to address uncertainty and decrease associated transaction costs (Hillman et al., 2000). Directors are seen as a resource bringing with them information, skills, constituents such as suppliers, buyers, social groups, policy, and decision makers as well as legitimacy (Gales & Kesner, 1994). Resource dependency is particularly relevant to PTEs. As private organisations with limited access to government funding, links to external resources are critical to maintaining business viability.

The four theories are limited in that they each focus on a specific aspect of governance practice. Researchers in the field acknowledge that the present governance theories cannot fully explain the intricacies and wide-ranging aspects of corporate business to provide an understanding of corporate governance (Chhotray & Stoker, 2009; Yusoff & Alhaji, 2012; Zuva & Zuva, 2018). Others acknowledge there is no common and widely accepted theoretical base (Carver, 2007; Tricker, 2019). Carver (2007) argues that governance operating without governance theory has resulted in massive debacles, and corporate decisions not grounded on a robust and integrating theoretical framework. This could explain the failures observed in the New Zealand PTE sector.

Governance – Key Dimensions

This section explores two key dimensions in corporate governance practice, with emphasis on the context of higher education: a) governing mechanism, focusing on the Board of Directors as a governing body, and b) determining and setting organisational purpose and direction as an essential function of governance. Board composition and structure as well as board competence are explored here. The amalgamation of governance and management functions is also explored as this is often observed in small firms such as New Zealand PTEs. Key elements of purpose and direction are highlighted in this section, including mission, vision, the link to strategic management, organisational performance, and organisational buy-in.

Governing Mechanism

One of the central mechanisms of governance in organisations and a source of internal control is the Board of Directors, the collective group of individuals elected by shareholders to oversee the management of the corporation (Hellriegel et al., 2008). Based on the governance theories, a board has a three-fold role. First, this body monitors managerial actions on behalf of shareholders to achieve adequate returns for them (Donaldson & Davis, 1991; Zuva & Zuva, 2018). This role is advocated by agency theory (Heracleous, 2001). Second, the board offers expertise and counsel/ advice consistent with stewardship theory, and thirdly, the board addresses linkages with external resources which the resource dependence theory advocates (Heracleous, 2001). Specifically, the primary function of boards sitting at the apex of an organisation is formulation and successful implementation of sound competitive strategies leading to policy making, formation of mission/ vision/ values, resource management, strategic change, supervising and delegating to executive management, maintaining relations with shareholders, and providing accountability (Heracleous, 2001; Tricker, 2019).

Board Composition and Structure. There are three classifications of members of the Board of Directors: executive directors who are top-level managers and a source of information about day-to-day operations, non-executive directors who have some relationship with the firm but not involved in day-to-day operations, and independent non-executive directors who provide independent counsel to the firm and may have top-level managerial positions in other organisations (Hitt et al., 2013; Tricker, 2019). Based on board composition, there are four types of structures: the all-executive-director board, the majority-executive-director board, the majority non-executive-director board, and the all-non-executive-director board (Tricker, 2019). Many corporate governance codes now demand the majority-non-executive-director board structure in listed companies, sometimes called "professional boards" (Tricker, 2019).

The Board's composition and structure have often raised doubts about its effectiveness. International evidence suggests that sound board processes and structures are not sufficient conditions for effective institutional performance (Edwards, 2003). A board with more insider members provides relatively weak monitoring and control of managerial decisions (Hitt et al., 2013) as executive directors cannot be reasonably

expected to monitor themselves (Hart, 1995). On the other hand, a board with more outsiders is also problematic because outsiders do not have ready access to information and have no contact with day-to-day operations (Hitt et al., 2013). Independent directors are less likely to know about the company and its industry (Tricker, 2019), may lack significant financial interest in the firm and have feelings of loyalty towards the management team who may have recommended them to be directors in the first place (Hart, 1995). Indeed, studies show that the presence of independent directors on the board may negatively affect company performance (Khan et al., 2018).

Moreover, Hitt et al. (2013) purport that a board that actively monitors top-level managers' decisions and actions does not necessarily ensure high performance. It is the presence of board members with significant relevant experience and knowledge that will most likely help the firm formulate and implement effective strategies (Hitt et al., 2013). This is supported by an Australian study which found that the major determinant of firm success is the mix of knowledge and skills in the board, and the effective integration of these with the company's needs at any particular point in time (Kiel & Nicholson, 2003). This relates to the skills-based model of governing board membership which is founded on the notion that institutions are best governed by those who have the requisite skills (Connolly et al., 2019). In contrast to this, the stakeholder model is based on the notion that institutions should be governed by those who have an interest in them (Connolly et al., 2019). Interestingly, there are many situations where those who have a stake in the institution also have the requisite skill set (Connolly et al., 2019). This is referred to as the 'stakeholder plus' model (Farrell, 2013).

Board Competence. The right skill set for board governance in the education setting includes finance, legal and human resource management as well as 'education skills' (Connolly et al., 2019). Desirable attributes include integrity, intellect, critical faculty, strength of character, being results-oriented with a balanced approach to risk, communication, interpersonal skills, strategic reasoning, vision, planning, decision-making, networking, and political abilities (Tricker, 2019).

Other skills considered important are the ability to scrutinise, persist, assert oneself as well as play an active role in meetings/ governing processes - there is little value in having useful technical expertise if they don't play an active part (Connolly et al.,

2019). In addition, directors need appropriate knowledge of the business and its financials (Tricker, 2019). Members of the board should also be independent of management and free of all business and other relationships that can interfere with or be perceived to interfere with independent judgement (Adebayo et al., 2014).

Amalgamation. The important role played by a governing body in educational settings is highlighted in a study by Kooli (2019) which found that the main deficiencies in 14 audited higher education institutions were around the absence of governance bodies (Board of Directors or Trustees), or the need to review those which are not effective and play only a legal and fictional role. Kooli (2019) also concludes from the review of 25 quality audit reports that roles, responsibilities, governance systems and management structures that are not clearly delineated prohibit stakeholders from fulfilling their mandate and ultimately the institutions from reaching their objectives. The fusion of authority between governance and management structures leads to misunderstanding of the boundaries between governance and management activities, which does not guarantee the independence of advisory, strategic, and operational practices (Kooli, 2019).

This study implies that amalgamation of governance and management functions may not lead to positive results. This is consistent with Carver's (2007) argument that boards that encroach upon management tolerate weak management, or actively weaken it, which ultimately doesn't lead to positive results for the organisation.

Organisational Purpose and Direction

The nature of corporate governance entails defining the purpose and setting the direction of an organisation. Organisations often encapsulate this sense of purpose and direction in a statement of corporate mission and vision, sometimes combining both and incorporating a view of the company's values (Tricker, 2019). These provide a mechanism for steering and controlling strategic choices, guiding decisions, inspiring employees, and informing stakeholders (Tricker, 2019). Mission and vision are explored in this section and linked to strategic management as well as organisational performance and buy-in.

Mission. There are varied meanings of 'mission' in the literature. A common thread is that mission provides strong justification for an organisation's existence. It deals with the 'who we are, what we do and why we are here' (Hellriegel et al., 2008; Rampersad, 2001; Stone, 2008). It is dubbed as the organisation's spiritual DNA which defines its enduring character (Daft, 2018).

The literature revealed that good mission statements identify the domain in which the organisation intends to operate, the business it intends to compete in, and customers it intends to serve (Hitt et al., 2013; Schermerhorn et al., 2011). Schermerhorn et al. (2011) deem that an important test of corporate purpose and mission is how well it serves the organisation's stakeholders such as customers, shareholders, community groups, suppliers, and others. Stakeholder-centred mission statements will guide organisational members towards determining and meeting stakeholder needs.

Examples of stakeholder-centred mission statements are found in the literature, such as Mary Kay and Motorola (Daft, 2018), Merck, and Fisher & Paykel (Schermerhorn et al., 2011). These organisations are renowned for success in their sector, reflecting Daft's (2018) observation that most successful companies have missions that proclaim a noble purpose. As exemplified by these organisations, a noble purpose is one that meets the needs of organisational stakeholders and upholds their common good beyond the mere pursuit of profitable ends.

Vision. In addition to mission, the vision statement guides the organisation into the future, what it wants to become or where it wants to be (Lewis et al., 2007). Cardno (2012) differentiates vision from mission, with vision indicating a future state for the organisation, whereas mission captures the organisational purpose as it is now. This is supported by the literature showing that vision is the larger ambition that an organisation is working towards, so it is future focused.

The definitions of 'vision' in the literature describe something that is ideal, yet realistic and credible, a dream that is attractive to the organisation and represents an improvement of the present state, a transformation or a better condition than what exists now (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Daft, 2018; Schermerhorn et al., 2011; Senge, 1990). It can be said that vision starts with a clear perception of why the organisation exists and

for whom, so it can determine where it wants to go in the future. Thus, mission is the starting point of vision.

Link to Strategic Management. Strategic management is one of the primary duties of every board in ensuring the enterprise is heading in the right direction (Tricker, 2019). However, the board cannot develop an effective corporate strategy if it lacks a shared view of the company's purpose and future direction (Tricker, 2019). It is evident from the literature that vision and mission are essential elements of strategic management. Strategic management frameworks differ in the process of strategy formulation and implementation but link a firm's vision and mission with strategic actions, indicating that mission and vision provide the foundations for choosing, building, implementing strategies and establishing a baseline that usually leads to better performance (Bartol et al., 2008; Hellriegel et al., 2008; Hitt et al., 2013; Lewis et al., 2007; Rampersad, 2001; Sallis, 2002; Samson et al., 2012; Schermerhorn, 2012; Stone, 2008).

It has been acknowledged that there is no specific model of strategic management particularly designed for the educational setting (Cardno, 2012). Strategic planning in education mirrors what is normally followed in industry and commerce, with the tools employed for establishing mission and goals translating well (Sallis, 2002). In the education setting, the focus of strategic management is on teaching and learning, and ultimately the improvement of student learning outcomes (Cardno, 2012).

In contrast to business and commercial entities, educational organisations strategise in a far more limited way because of significant restrictions to the creation of vision and strategy formulation (Cardno, 2012). For example, funding for higher education providers is usually contingent upon their institutional goals and objectives being in alignment with the broader directions of central government (Cardno, 2012).

In New Zealand, the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) sets out the government's long-term strategic direction for tertiary education, and all tertiary education organisations (TEOs) are required to show how they have regard for the TES ("Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities and Tertiary Education Strategy", n.d.). The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), the funding body for tertiary education that assesses

TEO investment plans, must give effect to the TES through the investment process; similarly, NZQA, the regulatory agency, must have regard for the TES, and its quality assurance functions should be consistent with the TES ("Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities and Tertiary Education Strategy", n.d.). With an overlay of this vision created by central government, vision and strategy in tertiary education organisations are likely to be constrained (Bush et al., 2010).

This may be the reason for the misgivings about the impact of organisational vision and mission in education institutions. Bush (2019) and Lumby (2002) assert that evidence of their effectiveness to provide guidance remains mixed. Nevertheless, even with restricted boundaries, effective management of strategy is considered a fundamental aspect of effective educational leadership (Cardno, 2012).

Impact on Organisational Performance. The prevailing management and leadership thought in literature supports the notion that a clear organisational purpose and direction is essential to achieving high organisational performance. Clear, compelling, inspiring visions and strong missions that give people a deep, enduring sense of purpose and meaning have been associated with ventures that have greater employee motivation, involvement, energy, and satisfaction, leading to improved performance (Daft, 2018; Manning & Curtis, 2009; Pedler et al., 2010; Rampersad, 2001).

Kooli (2019) cites several studies that demonstrate a positive correlation between corporate mission/values and financial performance. This is substantiated by a study of vision-driven companies by management authors James Collins and Jerry Porras, which found that such companies proved more successful than their competitors (Manning & Curtis, 2009). The achievement of successful companies, such as Walmart and Medtronic, can be attributed to the commitment of their managers to providing a compelling mission for the organisation (Daft, 2018; Lewis et al., 2007). These companies typically attract better employees, have better relationships with external parties and perform better in the marketplace over the long term (Daft, 2018).

Organisational Buy-in. Several studies show that vision, mission, and values must be well defined, consistently articulated and disseminated so members of an

organisation fully understand the organisation and its mission and are united through this shared understanding (Kooli, 2019; Lo & Sculli, 1996; Morgan, 1992a). Organisational buy-in, where everyone is focused on the central mission (Spanbauer, 1995) leads to productivity and profitability (Lewis et al., 2007). Without buy-in, people will be unable to align themselves with the organisation and move towards the set direction in a unified way.

Buy-in comes from clear and consistent communication and propagation of the vision and mission so that people are inspired to act and commit their hard work to turn vision into reality (Schermerhorn et al., 2011). The literature identified other means for achieving buy-in, including co-creation, i.e. consulting as many people in the organisation as possible to find the common ground that binds their personal dreams into a shared vision for the organisation (Daft, 2018), encouraging new member understanding and commitment by early introduction (orientation programme), making the vision constantly visible, using vision as a decision-making guide, and reinforcing employee behaviour that supports the vision (Manning & Curtis, 2009).

Management and Leadership - Key Dimensions

The interrelationship between governance and management is demonstrated in the literature, with governance at the macro-level and management at the operational level of steering an organisation. Management, as a concept, overlaps with leadership (Bush, 2007). As Duignan (1992) argues, both management and leadership functions are inextricably intertwined, and treating them as separate sets of activities is enforcing an unnatural separation. In the education setting, there is global interest in leadership and management because of their perceived importance in developing and maintaining successful schools and educational systems (Bush, 2007). Moreover, it is leadership that provides the motivation and impetus to make corporate governance effective (Davies, 2006).

In view of this, this section explores management in conjunction with leadership, with emphasis on the higher education context. The dimensions highlighted here relate to the relevant indicators in the TEI framework: a) academic leadership, b) academic leader competence, c) people management, and d) quality management.

Academic Leadership

In tertiary sector research, the term 'academic leadership' is often identified to include academic work within the scope of leadership (Cardno, 2012). Academic leadership is identical to leadership in other organisations (Ramsden, 1998). It can be understood with a broad framework of generic management ideas while having special characteristics related to the nature of academic business, focusing on the work of leaders in educational settings (Cardno, 2012).

Literature identified empirical evidence demonstrating the influence of leadership to enhance school effectiveness, ultimately improving student learning outcomes (Bryman, 2007; Bush, 2019; Cardno, 2012; Hallinger & Heck, 1999). A conceptualisation of leadership that has become a popular idea in school leadership literature is distributed leadership (Crawford, 2019). It has had different degrees of uptake across contexts and countries but is considered the normatively preferred leadership model in the 21st century (Bush, 2019).

Studies of distributed leadership in educational theory link this concept to shared governance, collaboration, inclusive participative approach, engagement and enablement, shared influence, and shared leadership (Burke, 2010; Jones et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2014; Van Ameijde et al., 2009; Youngs, 2017). The distinction from other models lies in its focus on collective rather than singular leadership (Bush, 2019), and the distribution of leadership among formal and informal leaders (Goksoy, 2015).

The literature also indicated that distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists in the organisation, having a network of individuals pooling their expertise instead of this being sought through a formal position or role (Goksoy, 2015; Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2004). Expertise, rather than hierarchical position, is the driving factor (Woods et al., 2004).

The literature identified that lateral and vertical relationships in distributed leadership are manifested in team-based structures (Bush, 2019; Woods et al., 2004). Many schools have experimented with distributed leadership by organising teachers into self-managing teams that identify and solve problems, develop goals and instructional

strategies, leading to students achieving at higher levels (Scribner et al., 2007). Studies have shown considerable evidence about the impact of distributed leadership practice on student outcomes (Bush, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2008; Robinson, 2019) as well as on academic capacity and capacity building in schools (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Harris, 2004). While this indicates that multiple leadership is more effective than solo approaches, situational factors such as the task and people involved do need to be managed for distributed leadership to be effective.

Academic Leader Competence

One of the researched requirements of effective academic leadership is that leaders have the appropriate credentials and academic experience so that their judgements are valued in matters academic (Cardno, 2012) and so they can provide the means, assistance and resources which enable academic and support staff to perform well (Ramsden, 1998).

Drawing on her model of student-centred leadership, Robinson (2019) puts forward five sets of leadership practices that affect student outcomes: goal setting and communication, strategic resourcing, ensuring quality, leading teacher learning and development, and ensuring an orderly and safe environment. She contends that three highly integrated capabilities are involved in enacting these practices – educational knowledge, solving complex problems, and building trust (Robinson, 2019). Research shows that high performing schools demonstrated quality enactment of these five dimensions (Robinson, 2019), implying that the underlying capabilities for enactment need to be strong for the five dimensions to have a positive impact on performance.

A study of academic leadership capabilities in Australian higher education also contributes insights into key competencies for effective learning and teaching leadership: cognitive capabilities (flexibility and responsiveness, strategy, diagnosis), interpersonal capabilities (empathising, influencing), and personal capabilities (commitment, decisiveness, self-regulation) (Scott et al., 2008).

People Management

The priority of any tertiary education organisation is to provide high quality education, and managers need to effectively allocate sufficient resources to support this (Anderson,

2002; Mestry, 2019; NZQA, 2017a). In most organisations, the truly key and scarce resource is excellent people (Morgan, 1992b). Leading companies recognise this and manage this resource through the productive use of people in achieving the organisation's strategic objectives (Stone, 2008). This section highlights two key aspects of managing people which have been linked to achievement of organisational objectives – professional development and staff motivation (Stone, 2008).

Professional Development. Professional development is widely accepted as fundamental to the improvement of organisational performance and, therefore, a core task of leadership and management (Bolam, 2002). The literature dealing with effective educational leadership clearly signals the importance of developing staff professionally and its centrality to effective educational leadership (Bolam, 2002; Cardno, 2012; Scott et al., 2008). This ensures that teaching staff remain apprised of new theories and teaching methodologies (Spanbauer, 1995).

Bolam (2002) describes professional development as an ongoing process of education, training, learning, and support aimed at promoting the development of professional knowledge, skills and values of teachers and school leaders so that they can educate students more effectively. The literature evidenced the link between professional development (keeping the learning workforce trained and up to date) and student outcomes as well as achievement of organisational goals and competitive advantage (Cardno, 2012; Spanbauer, 1995). Indeed, better equipped staff will perform better and are more productive.

Staff Motivation. Common definitions of motivation found in the literature refer to an internal or external force that energises, stimulates, and directs behaviours, arouses enthusiasm and persistence in the pursuit of actions or goals (Bartol et al., 2008; Berman et al., 2020; Daft, 2018; Hellriegel et al., 2008; Lewis et al., 2007; McShane et al., 2016; Samson et al., 2012; Schermerhorn, 2012). This force leads to behaviours that reflect high performance and productivity within organisations, resulting in higher customer satisfaction, lower employee turnover, improved safety, and greater profitability (Berman et al., 2020; Daft, 2018; Hellriegel et al., 2008; McShane et al., 2016; Samson et al., 2012; Schermerhorn et al., 2011). Creating an organisation filled with satisfied and motivated employees is a means for achieving business success as

highly motivated employees outperform those who are less motivated (Hellriegel et al., 2008).

The literature identified two major theories of motivation: content theories focused on the needs and factors motivating behaviour, and process theories focused on the origin of behaviour or the 'how' of motivation (Nel et al., 2012; Wilson, 1997). These theories imply that organisations must offer a broad range of conditions to satisfy the range of needs and motivate their employees (Berman et al., 2020).

Another theory of motivation is reinforcement theory. Based on the notion that behaviour results from consequences, it focuses on positive and negative reinforcers as motivators (Lewis et al., 2007). The literature identified positive reinforcements that managers can use to modify employee behaviours such as pay rises, time off, praise, positive feedback, social recognition, gifts, awards, positive attention, and expressions of appreciation such as thank-you notes (Bartol et al., 2008; Daft, 2018; Hellriegel et al., 2008; McShane et al., 2016; Schermerhorn et al., 2011).

Another important concept underlying workforce motivation is participative management. This is closely related to the concept of empowerment, power-sharing, delegating power or authority to subordinates, such as giving employees the power to make substantive decisions or even participate in formulating organisational strategy (Samson et al., 2012). Employee involvement beyond the scope of their jobs heightens people's personal connection to the organisation and motivates workers by providing opportunities for growth, responsibility, and commitment (Furukawa, 1992; Lewis et al., 2007). Results of studies support this, showing that empowering and encouraging employees to take part in the identification of strategically relevant issues and actual decision-making increases morale, employee engagement, productivity, efficacy, and commitment, all of which contributes to achieving organisational goals (Busse & Regenberg, 2019; Chan, 2019; Ngotngamwong, 2012).

Nel et al. (2012) suggest a holistic approach whereby the motivational theories complement each other to provide a framework for understanding human behaviour and be used in their totality in the effective management of people in the workplace. This

will enable organisational leaders to leverage the strengths of each motivational theory and tailor-fit motivational strategy to organisational needs.

Managing Quality through Continuous Improvement

Quality management is an area of concern in the New Zealand PTE sector, as signalled by the EER results and de-registration statistics since 2009. In view of this, this section explores continuous improvement as a pathway to quality. Continuous improvement is a core tenet of the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM), so TQM and its essential aspects are explored here as they apply to managing quality in the educational setting.

Total Quality Management (TQM). Literature identified that change and innovation are characteristics associated with success. Successful organisations are not static but change and innovate to remain competitive (Bartol et al., 2008). Change can be incremental wherein many small adjustments occur routinely to continuously improve performance and stay ahead of competitors (Hellriegel et al., 2008). Continuous improvement helps organisations avoid the complacency that comes with success. This is what the TQM approach relies heavily on (Hellriegel et al., 2008). TQM is both a philosophy and a set of guiding principles that represent the foundation of a continuously improving organisation (Besterfield et al., 2003; Rampersad, 2001). Definitions of TQM found in the literature stress that continuous improvement aimed at continual increase of performance is a basic tenet or core value of quality management and key to the success of organisations (Rampersad, 2001; Sallis, 2002; Spanbauer, 1995).

The concepts, language and methodology of TQM are derived from industry, having originated in a manufacturing environment (Sallis, 2002; Saunders & Walker, 1991). However, the literature identified that TQM concepts and tools can be applied to education and the management of education institutions as education is not an industry isolated from others (Lo & Sculli, 1996; Owlia & Aspinwall, 1997; Psomas & Antony, 2017; Sallis, 2002).

The application of TQM methodologies and tools in higher education institutions around the world and the significant results in terms of organisational performance are well-documented in the literature (Cruickshank, 2003; Owlia & Aspinwall, 1997; Psomas & Antony, 2017; Spanbauer, 1995; Svensson & Klefsjö, 2006; Temponi, 2005). Not all the results, however, have been deemed a success (Owlia & Aspinwall, 1997; Psomas & Antony, 2017; Venkatraman, 2007). Nevertheless, the effective integration of TQM tools has the potential to generate successful outcomes in education.

Self-assessment in TQM. TQM builds on existing quality in educational institutions and develops it into continuous quality improvement through the creation of a culture of continuous enhancement and institutional self-assessment (Sallis, 2002). Institutional self-assessment is the process by which educational institutions make considered judgements on their own performance and use these as data for future enhancement of their services (Sallis, 2002). As a methodology within TQM for obtaining a picture of an organisation's strengths and improvement possibilities (Svensson & Klefsjö, 2006), self-assessment is a catalyst and the basis for future improvements that lead to quality (Sallis, 2002; Temponi, 2005; Zink & Schmidt, 1998).

Institutional self-assessment is becoming increasingly important in education (Sallis, 2002). It is considered a critical stage in the process of institutional accreditation (Temponi, 2005). In New Zealand, self-assessment is one of two scope areas in an external evaluation and review of tertiary education providers (NZQA, n.d.-a). Temponi (2005) suggests that self-assessment should become an integral part of a school's quality system to ensure maximum contribution of all stakeholders towards continuous improvement. Mechanisms do need to be developed to feed the results of self-assessment back into the strategic planning process and ensure that action plans will lead to demonstrable improvements (Sallis, 2002). Through a robust feedback loop, self-assessment outcomes will have consequential effects on strategy and decisions that lead to improvement.

Use of Data in TQM. One of the components of the TQM principle is the use of meaningful data for management and process improvement (Saunders & Walker, 1991). TQM frameworks found in the literature have management of information and evidence

or fact-based decision making as common elements (Psomas & Antony, 2017; Spanbauer, 1995). Indeed, data-based decision-making is at the heart of the problem-solving approach used in TQM (Saunders & Walker, 1991). This is supported by literature that shows decision-making, change assessment and planning, and customer focus are more effectual when they are based on data (Saunders & Walker, 1991; Spanbauer, 1995). Data provides the objectivity, precision, clarity, and transparency for these processes to be effective.

The literature also indicated the use of data in self-assessment. Self-assessment approaches such as workshops, questionnaires, and peer involvement involve the collection and use of data to identify strengths, issues, and areas for improvement (Zink & Schmidt, 1998). Data is the building block for self-assessment.

In conclusion, exploring the literature around governance and management placed the current research within the construct of existing knowledge on the subject. The literature around the key dimensions established a foundation of knowledge vital to the current investigation. As my study is an empirical enquiry into governance and management practices of high performing PTEs, this review focused largely on what successful organisations do or the practices associated with superior performance. This is likewise the focus of the information gathering phase, discussed in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research methodology used for this study. I begin by introducing the methodological approach underpinning the study. This is followed by the research design, sampling process and participants, then data collection and analysis. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical considerations in this study.

Methodological Approach

Pragmatism

My research is underpinned by a pragmatist epistemology which posits that research should aim to be useful (Rorty, 1999) for gaining knowledge in the pursuit of specific goals, not just the abstract pursuit of knowledge through inquiry (Morgan, 2007). With its emphasis on utility and the resultant shared meaning (Morgan, 2007), the pragmatic orientation is to solve practical problems in the real world, investigate phenomena with the most appropriate research method or different methods which enable data interpretations from a multidimensional perspective (Feilzer, 2010). Mixed methods from different paradigms are chosen based on usefulness for answering the research question (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The research problem is central, and all approaches are applied to understanding the problem (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

Utility of results for practitioners in the PTE sector is an end-goal of my inquiry. This is a hallmark of the pragmatic paradigm. The research problem is identifying and understanding governance and management practices in high performing PTEs in New Zealand that other tertiary education providers can use as a basis or starting point for making improvements in their own organisation. The choice of research methods was guided by this research problem to achieve utility of the results.

Practice Methodology

A practice lens is applied as the theoretical framework supporting my study. Practice theory offers an opportunity to reinterpret all imaginable organisational phenomena (Nicolini, 2012). The practice approach has the capacity to describe important features of the world we inhabit as something that is routinely made and re-made in practice using tools, discourse, and our bodies (Nicolini, 2012). This is relevant to my research

problem where the phenomena being investigated are governance and management practices associated with superior organisational performance.

One of the approaches in the practice methodology is an empirical enquiry that focuses on how people act in organisational contexts (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). This approach recognises that people's actions are central to organisational outcomes, and that practices are important in the ongoing operations of the organisation (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). This is consistent with the intent of my research. My study employed this approach using interviews that elicited descriptions of governance and management practices in high performing PTEs, particularly in terms of actions performed by staff which constitute operational activities that lead to achievement of organisational objectives. Such activities are recognised as building blocks that bring into being the reality of superior organisational performance leading to a Category 1 rating in an NZQA EER. Actions performed by staff are interpreted in the context of the environment in which PTEs operate. As Mattern (2011) puts it, investigating practices demands a method that interprets the doings of human beings not in reference to abstract criteria, but in reference to the local criteria of the social environment in which they are positioned.

The empirical approach I employed reconstructs the practitioners' point of view and everyday whereabouts (Pouliot & Cornut, 2015). Practitioners in this study are the staff performing the actions of governing and managing the enterprise. However, the practice methodology entails much more than just reconstructing - as the practitioners' subjective experiences form the starting point of the analysis, but not its final destination (Pouliot & Cornut, 2015). Hence, the descriptions of the actions performed by staff are analysed utilising practice theory's three-way conceptualisation that views practice as entity - materials, competences and meanings (Shove et al., 2012; Twine, 2015). Through deconstructing such practices in terms of these constituent elements, my study sheds more light on the meaning of the work that goes into what practitioners do and what makes it possible (Nicolini, 2012). Furthermore, through deconstructing such practices in terms of these constituent elements, my study constructs the implications for practice that can inform continuous improvement in governing and managing organisations in the New Zealand tertiary education sector.

Research Design

This section presents the overall design of this research. The selection of participants for each method used is detailed in the Sampling Strategy and Research Participants section. The application of the methods or the actual procedures undertaken are detailed in the Data Collection and Analysis section.

Qualitative Research

As with most exploratory research that relies heavily on qualitative techniques (Cooper & Schindler, 2011), my study utilised qualitative data collection and analysis methods. Qualitative research seeks to develop an intimate understanding of people, places, cultures, and situations through detailed descriptions of events, situations, and interactions or even rich engagement and immersion into the reality being studied (Cooper & Schindler, 2011; O'Leary, 2010). Qualitative research is compatible with the objective of this study, with qualitative methods most suited to addressing the research question and generating the desired outcomes.

Qualitative methods have a long history and tradition within business and management research, and have permeated all aspects of the management research field (Cassell et al., 2006). In a paper that suggests implications for future qualitative corporate governance research, Ahrens and Khalifa (2013) analyse three qualitative studies of corporate governance that illustrate a variety of approaches to qualitative research. These approaches include interviews, observations, and document analysis. The interview study, in particular, develops specific recommendations to a broad agenda of improvement (Ahrens & Khalifa, 2013). This is similar to my research, one of the aims of which is to present implications that can be used for continuous improvement.

Qualitative approaches have also been predominantly utilised in studies that adopt a practice theoretical perspective. Halkier et al. (2011), for example, cite a collection of qualitative studies published in the Journal of Consumer Culture that engage with practice theory in a primary way, applying practice theoretical perspectives in different settings. They note that one of the interesting features of this collection of articles is the variety of data collection methods that the authors employed, such as in-depth interviews, participant observations, historical case studies and documentation of

behaviours (Halkier et al., 2011). These examples support the use of qualitative methods in my study.

Triangulation of Data

Methodological triangulation is where several methods are mixed to explore the same issue, explore it more fully and corroborate one against the other (Bush, 2012). Data are collected from different sources and combined in the study of the same phenomenon (Wilson, 2010). This technique obtains confirmation or verification of data to reach an appropriate standard of credibility in qualitative research (O'Leary, 2010).

A data triangulation strategy provides a richer, more holistic body of knowledge that has value to the PTE sector. By examining information collected through different methods and drawing upon multiple sources of evidence, findings can be corroborated across data sets and thus reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study (Bowen, 2009). When there is convergence of information from different sources, there is greater confidence in the trustworthiness of the findings (Bowen, 2009).

For my study, the sources of information that answers the research question were governance and management practitioners in high performing PTEs, NZQA EER Evaluators, and organisational documents containing information on governance and management practices of high performing PTEs. The qualitative methods used were case study, qualitative interviews, and document analysis. Such methods have been successfully employed in research in the broad field of management, including studies in corporate governance. These methods are discussed in the following sections.

Case Study

Case study is an extensive examination of a setting, situation, system, an individual, group, entity, or a particular sector with the aim of providing in-depth elucidation of the object of interest (Bell et al., 2019; Wilson, 2010). By focusing on the dynamics present within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989), the case study approach is useful for providing understanding of a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 1981). This is compatible with the aim of my research that seeks

to produce rich descriptions of governance and management practices within the New Zealand higher education context.

Furthermore, case study is the main method of investigation to illustrate, promote and encourage organisational policies and practices that are successful or exemplary (Hakim, 2000). In particular, an educational case study informs the judgements and decisions of practitioners, policy makers or theoreticians in order to improve educational actions (Bassey, 2012). In this research, the practices of a high performing PTE are illustrated as the exemplars that inform continuous improvement efforts of practitioners in the education sector.

The rich descriptions of phenomena in case studies are typically based on a variety of data sources (Yin, 1994), such as interviews, archival data, survey data, ethnographies, and observations (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). These data collection techniques are combined to study the social entity taken as the subject of the case study (Hakim, 2000). In my research, interviews with governance and management practitioners were combined with analysis of organisational documents from the case study PTE. Unfortunately, COVID-19 pandemic restrictions at the time of this study prevented the conduct of on-site observations.

Qualitative Interviews

The interview is the primary data collection technique in qualitative methodologies (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). It is a highly efficient way to gather rich, empirical data (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). A discussion or conversation in which the researcher learns what the respondents think is the basic building block of the interview (Vogt et al., 2012).

My study used semi-structured interviews which are based on a set of structured questions but at the same time provide scope for the research participant to elaborate on certain points and give the interviewer greater flexibility to introduce probing questions depending on the participant's answers (Bell et al., 2019; Wilson, 2010). This ensures that valuable insights are gained, and rich data is produced.

A key approach to limit bias in interview data is the use of numerous and highly knowledgeable informants who view the focal phenomena from diverse perspectives (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Key informants are the select individuals who have specialised knowledge, know what's going on and hold the answers to the research questions (O'Leary, 2010). In this research, the key informants were NZQA EER Evaluators who are knowledgeable about governance and management practices in high performing PTEs as well as the case study participants who have governance and management functions in the PTE.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic – that contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009). Pre-existing documents which are collected, interrogated, and analysed are treated as the primary source of data (O'Leary, 2010). As with primary research methods, document analysis yields data – excerpts, quotations, entire passages – that are then organised into major themes and categories specifically through content analysis (Labuschagne, 2003). As with other qualitative analytical methods, the examination and interpretation of data in document analysis serves to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation (Bowen, 2009). For my research, document analysis was combined with case study and qualitative interviews, with the documents examined providing supplementary research data (Bowen, 2009). All documentary evidence were combined with interview data (Bowen, 2009).

Sampling Strategy and Research Participants

Given the aims of this investigation, research participants were selected by employing purposive judgment sampling, a non-probability sampling method wherein samples are selected to conform to certain criteria using the researcher's judgment (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). This sampling methodology is appropriate as causal investigations and generalisations, which require a probability sample to ensure validity and reliability

as well as the use of inferential statistics, are not part of the study's purpose. A non-probability purposive sample that meets the criteria for exploring governance and management practices is fitting and adequate for the objectives of this study. While probability sampling may be superior, carefully controlled non-probability sampling often seems to give acceptable results (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

Snowball sampling was also employed to identify and locate more interview participants. This is a type of sampling where individuals are discovered at the initial stage then used to refer the researcher to others who possess similar characteristics and who, in turn, identify others (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

Case Study Participants

The criteria for selecting the case study organisations were:

- *Category 1 rating from the most recent EER at the time of this study (between 2016 to 2019)*
- *Relatively large size in terms of student numbers (at least 500 students at the time of sampling)*
- *Diversity of programme portfolio (a wide range of discipline areas)*

Larger student populations and a more diverse suite of programmes pose greater challenges for PTEs in managing organisational performance, hence data from these types of providers that achieved Category 1 status would be more significant compared to smaller PTEs or PTEs offering a more homogeneous mix of programmes. Larger PTEs with a heterogenous programme mix offer a more conducive environment to achieve my research objectives.

Purposive sampling for the case study was done in three stages. Given the four-year cycle for EERs, the provider category obtained between 2016 to 2019 was the prime selection criteria in Stage 1. PTEs that obtained a Category 1 rating during this period were selected. PTEs that maintained Category 1 standing from previous EERs were prioritised in this sample. Maintaining such a status in successive four-year EER cycles is indicative of highly effective processes in action which are worthy of investigation

and utilisation as models. As Bell et al. (2019) put it, researchers should choose cases where they expect learning is greatest.

Among these Category 1 PTEs, those with a diverse mix of programmes and larger student populations were selected at Stage 2. These characteristics were determined from comparisons of published organisational data at the time of investigation (NZQA EER reports, organisational websites).

To manage practical considerations, the planned sample size for the case study was three PTEs. This number is deemed sufficient to obtain the required information, especially that there are not many PTEs meeting the sampling criteria. Furthermore, theoretical saturation is reached sooner with a more homogeneous sample such as participants selected according to some common criteria (Guest et al., 2006).

The three PTEs to be sampled were identified after Stage 1 and 2 of the sampling process. They are referred to as PTE A, PTE B, and PTE C. All three PTEs achieved a Category 1 status in two consecutive EER cycles, indicating a sustained superior performance that provides confidence that these are organisations others can learn from.

Once these target samples were selected, I proceeded to identify key contact persons (senior managers) in each organisation. I had connections with senior managers in PTE A and B through existing professional and academic networks. For PTE C, I employed the assistance of the Chief Executive of ITENZ, the peak body representative for PTEs. Support from ITENZ to facilitate access was sought as it stands to benefit from the outcomes of this research. I provided the key contact persons of each PTE a copy of an abridged version of my research proposal. Unfortunately, PTE B explicitly declined to participate in the study, citing a desire to protect their "trade secrets". PTE C never responded to my communications despite several follow-ups. Only PTE A agreed to participate as a case study (see PTE profile in Appendix C).

Stage 3 sampling involved the selection of interview participants within PTE A. The criterion for selection was: *Staff in a sample PTE with key responsibilities related to academic leadership, human resources, data/ resource management, change/ innovation, or organisational leadership.*

These key responsibilities relate to the governance and management indicators in the TEI framework. Being the practitioners of governance and management, the staff in such roles can provide pertinent answers to the research question.

For Stage 3 sampling, my key contact person in PTE A disseminated information about my research to the Executive Team and requested access to the staff on my behalf. The staff members who met the criterion, including members of the Executive Team, all agreed to participate except one manager who declined due to time and workload constraints. Snowball sampling was later employed to obtain the participation of members of the Board of Directors who are working as executives as well as second-tier managers with oversight of key departments. COVID-19 pandemic restrictions at the time of the study posed obstacles to extending the interviews to non-management staff members in PTE A who can provide perspectives as recipients of governance and management practices in the organisation. A total of 12 people from PTE A participated in the research (see profile and participant codes in Appendix D).

NZQA Participants

NZQA EER Evaluators were the expert informants tapped for this study. Purposive sampling was also utilised to select participants from this group using the following criterion: *At least two years' experience as an EER Evaluator*.

Two years provide sufficient experience in assessing tertiary education providers in an EER, giving Evaluators knowledge of governance and management practices in diverse contexts. Experience as a Lead EER Evaluator was a preference, though not a requirement, as this lends more credence to their responses.

Access to NZQA participants was gained through my professional and academic networks. The Evaluators sought permission from their manager to participate in the research. Those who were full-time employees sought further advice from their Solicitor to ensure there were no legal and/or ethical impediments to their participation in the study. An abridged copy of my research proposal was provided to the manager, who gave these participants permission (as confirmed to me through email). The advice from the Solicitor also enabled the NZQA Evaluators to freely participate.

I employed snowball sampling with the initial group of participants and the manager to expand the sample size. A total of 12 NZQA EER Evaluators participated in the study, all with experience as Lead Evaluators. Their profile (see Appendix E with participant codes) underscores the credibility of the data collected in this study. Their responses come from what they observed in practice and the examples they gave are evidence-based.

Data Collection and Analysis

Research Framework

The TEI framework was used as the basis for data gathering. NZQA uses the indicators to evaluate the performance of a tertiary education organisation in an EER, so these are useful for determining the practices that lead to high performance in New Zealand PTEs.

Four domains of knowledge were identified in relation to the governance and management indicators from the TEI framework, which facilitated data gathering and analysis. These are Organisational Leadership, Data and Resource Management, People Management, and Change and Innovation.

Interview Questions

As I employed semi-structured interviews for this study, I prepared a set of structured questions based on the research framework. Additional questions were asked of NZQA participants pertaining to PTE performance and weak spots. Questions around the amalgamation of governance and management roles were also asked of PTE participants. Data from these additional inquiries were processed separately.

The interview questions are shown in Appendix F. The interview process is detailed in the following section.

Procedure

Interviews. Qualitative interviews were conducted for PTE A participants and NZQA EER Evaluators. Prior to these interviews, the participants were sent, through email, a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix G) and a Consent Form (Appendix H)

to be signed and sent back to me to indicate their consent to participate in the study. To encourage higher participation, my initial email communication with each participant stressed the benefits of my research to the PTE sector as well as the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Once the participants indicated their consent, an interview schedule was set. The pre-set questions were emailed to them ahead of the interview schedule. This enabled participants to come prepared with specific examples and supporting documents. Having advance knowledge of the interview questions made the participants at ease in responding, elaborating on responses, and answering probing questions.

Before commencing each interview, I established rapport and obtained verbal consent for recording the interview in addition to the explicit statements in the forms they had read and signed. Only one participant declined to be recorded. Furthermore, I reiterated the confidentiality of the research and their anonymity as research participants. I also stressed that they will be sent a copy of the interview transcript for their validation and that a copy of their recording will be made available upon request. They were reassured that their interview transcripts and recordings will only be viewed by me and my thesis supervisors.

The interviews lasted between 45 minutes to one hour through Zoom videoconferencing. This medium has many of the advantages of a face-to-face interview, such as the ability to observe body language onscreen and ask probing questions to clarify points. Technological problems impacted on the quality of two of the recordings and subsequently the data transcription (Bell et al., 2019). Issues of data accuracy were offset through the notes I made during the interviews and through validation of the transcripts by the interviewees.

All sample participants willingly and fully participated in the interviews, with no early terminations. A verbatim transcription was done for all interviews. Interview participants were given sight of their transcript to validate their responses prior to inclusion in the data. After the interviews, I sent each participant a 'thank-you' card as a token of appreciation for their voluntary participation in my research.

Document Analysis. As part of the case study method, the interviews with PTE A participants were combined with document analysis. Documents examined included their two most recent EER Reports, and the organisational records provided by interview participants. Other records available on their organisational website were also examined.

As part of document analysis, the two most recent EER Reports of PTE B and PTE C were also examined. Appendix I shows the codes for secondary data from the EER reports of PTE A, B, C. All EER Reports were accessed from this site at the time of the study: https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/eer-reports/. As the researcher and analyst of the data, I ascertained that all documents used were relevant to the research problem and fit the conceptual framework of the study (Bowen, 2009).

Part of document analysis is evaluating the documentary evidence in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced, and understanding is developed (Bowen, 2009). The exploration of content within these documents was done through an 'interviewing' technique where, in a sense, each document was treated as a respondent who can provide information relevant to the enquiry (O'Leary, 2010). I "asked" the same questions that were asked of the interview participants (or those pertinent to the type of document being analysed) and highlighted the passages in the documents that provided the answers (O'Leary, 2010). In the process of 'interviewing', I did my best to demonstrate objectivity and sensitivity in the selection and analysis of data from these documents (Bowen, 2009). The texts/ passages that were identified were compiled into a central document that is the equivalent of an interview transcription, and later added into the collated data. This enhanced the depth and breadth of data generated from the interviews.

Data Processing and Analysis

Approaches in qualitative data analysis aim to create new understandings by exploring and interpreting complex data from sources such as interviews, observations, archival documents without the aid of quantification (O'Leary, 2010). The main analytical steps are transcribing data; reading and generating categories, themes, and patterns; and interpreting the findings (Wilson, 2010). These steps are discussed as follows.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim. The process of transcription allowed me to analyse the data at surface level and become better acquainted with it. As O'Leary (2010) purports, it is impossible to 'manage' qualitative data without engaging in some level of analysis. Armed with this initial understanding of the data, I consolidated them based on the research framework. To facilitate analysis, data were processed and organised into tabular format in accordance with the four domains of knowledge from the research framework. These ensured all pertinent data were captured and included in the analysis. Consolidation documents were produced from this data processing activity.

Key ideas from the consolidated data were first identified by going back and forth on the text. Textual analysis such as this concentrates on deriving an understanding from the qualitative significance of the words and reading for embedded meanings (Fitzgerald, 2012). The key ideas were recorded in the consolidation documents and analysed. This analysis involved systematic identification of underlying themes, analysing them, and providing an interpretation (Fitzgerald, 2012).

Thematic analysis is a search for themes in transcripts which are categories related to the research focus and which provide the basis for a theoretical understanding of the data (Bell et al., 2019). The process involves a careful, more focused re-reading and review of data, then coding and category construction, based on the data's characteristics, to uncover themes pertinent to a phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). When searching for themes, repetition is emphasised as one of the most common criteria for establishing that a pattern within the data warrants being considered a theme (Bell et al., 2019). Repetition may refer to recurrence within a data source or across data sources (Bell et al., 2019). I identified repetitions across the consolidated data to recognise patterns. However, I did not stop there, as repetition *per se* is an insufficient criterion for something to warrant being labelled a theme (Bell et al., 2019).

Most importantly, I determined the relevance of the emerging patterns to the investigation's research question or focus (Bell et al., 2019). I also reflected on the initial key ideas generated to gain a sense of the continuities and linkages between them (Bell et al., 2019). Systematically drilling into the key ideas and reducing the data to build up categories of understanding (O'Leary, 2010) ultimately led to the identification of themes and sub-themes.

Providing an interpretation of the underlying themes (Fitzgerald, 2012) is the third analytical step. Interpretation of findings involves understanding data in the context of what is already known in the current literature on governance and management. This required making reflective, systematic, and critical judgements as well as making contrasts and comparisons with the literature to sharpen understanding (Watling et al., 2012). The practice methodology also provided an interpretation of data through the deconstruction of the sub-themes into the three components that make them up as practices - materialities, meanings and competences.

Ethical Considerations and Ethics Approval

Ethics approval was obtained prior to commencing the study. Central to the ethical principles of research is the well-being of the research participants and one key principle in ensuring this is 'informed consent', which concerns providing prospective participants with sufficient information for them to decide whether to take part or not in the study (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2014). For the current study, the key contact persons in the target sample PTEs were personally contacted to gain their consent to participate as a case study organisation and to gain access to the target participants within their PTE. The target participants in PTE A and the NZQA EER Evaluators were personally contacted. An abridged copy of my research proposal was provided to the key contact persons and the NZQA manager to enable informed consent.

The target interviewees (from PTE A and NZQA) were sent the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form, documents that enabled them to provide informed consent, prior to the interviews. In most instances, the advance provision of information about the study, including their right to withdraw at any time, is sufficient to gain informed consent (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2014). All research participants submitted a signed Consent Form.

The issue of harm to participants is addressed by advocating care over maintaining the confidentiality of records and anonymity of accounts, which means the identities and records of individuals and organisations are kept confidential (Bell et al., 2019). The researcher has a duty to respect the confidentiality/ anonymity of participants (Coughlan et al., 2007), giving them the opportunity to remain anonymous and assuring them that

they will not be identified (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The possibility of direct harm to interviewees from the interview process is comparatively small but potential harm is greatest when privacy is breached (Vogt et al., 2012).

Care has been taken to safeguard the privacy and anonymity of interview participants. They were assured of this prior to and during the interviews. Participant codes are used when quoting participants in Chapter 4 Findings. While references are made to participants' roles in their organisation, as their responses can only be appreciated in the context of that role (Collis & Hussey, 2009), such references do not pose the risk of identification as the roles have been broadly categorised (see Appendix D). Also, the NZQA EER Evaluator role is not unique to a single person in the agency, which eliminates the risk of identification.

Confidentiality focuses on the data collected and as this was a condition for giving access to information, participants need to be assured that the information will be kept confidential (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Some organisational documents were provided by PTE A participants to support their interview statements. These have been handled with utmost discretion and within the bounds of confidentiality stipulated in the Participant Information Sheet and signed Consent Forms. Care has also been taken to avoid any information, including textual citations, that might identify PTE A, B and C. Any identifying information that could not be removed from the text in Chapter 4 Findings is substituted with "XXX". Document codes are also used when quoting from PTE documents.

The Research Proposal for this study underwent the online ethics approval process at Massey University, including a peer review by the assigned Research Supervisors and the Professor for the Advanced Research Methods course, all from the Massey Business School/ School of Management. This research was assessed as low risk and received ethics approval from the Massey University Ethics Committee (Northern), with MU Ethics Ref: 4000022319 (Appendix J).

Chapter 4 - FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of this research based on the case study, qualitative interviews, and document analysis. I begin with a theme map that depicts the key themes and sub-themes that emerged from this research. The four themes represent the key features of governance and management in high performing PTEs found in this study. These are Purpose driven, Strong leadership, Reflective, and Valuing staff. Sub-themes which denote the governance and management practices associated with these key features are identified. Each theme and its sub-themes are presented in the sections that follow. Direct quotes from the interviews and document analysis are used to support the presentation.

Key Themes and Sub-themes

Results of this study show that high performing PTEs are purpose-driven, have strong leadership, are reflective, and value staff highly. These are the four key themes. A map showing the themes and sub-themes is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Governance and Management Practices of High Performing PTEs

Purpose-Driven	Strong Leadership	Reflective	Valuing Staff
Student-centric Mission, Vision, Values	Active and Knowledgeable Governance	Self-assessment	Staff Motivation
Community Engagement	Competent Academic Leadership	Robust Data Management that Informs Continuous Improvement	
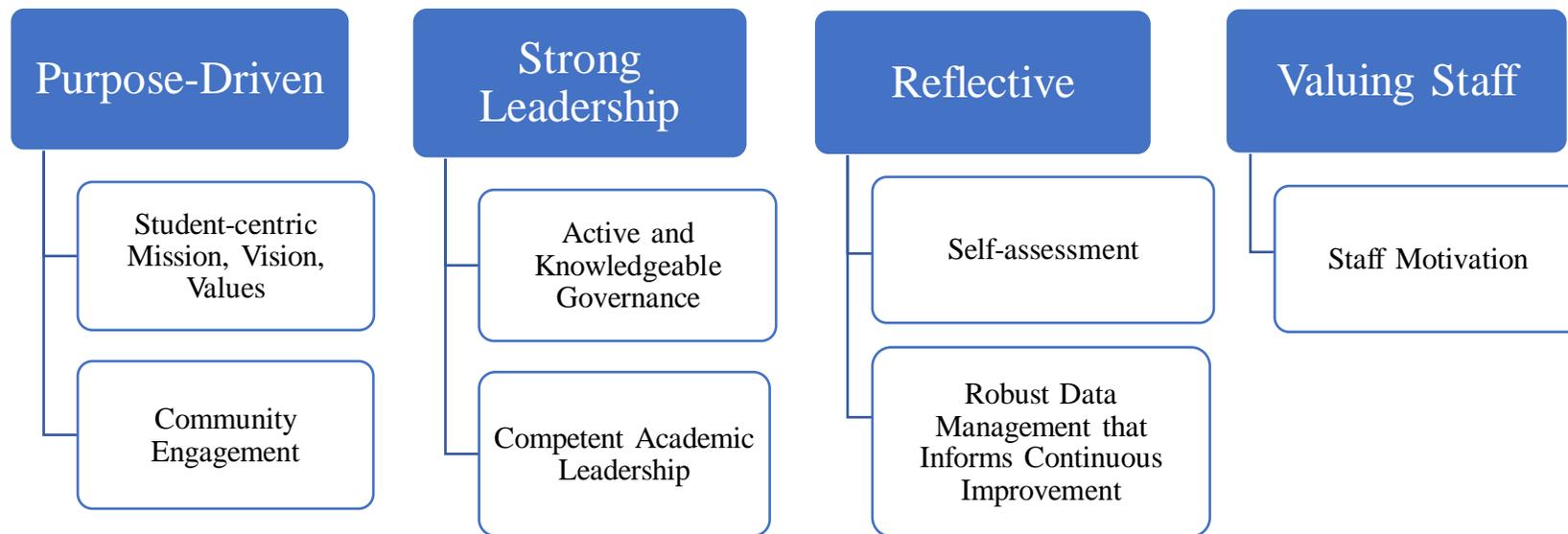
Being purpose driven is the first key feature of a high performing PTE found in this study. The two key practices of a purpose driven PTE are having a student-centric mission, vision, values, and strong community engagement. The second key feature emerging from this study is strong leadership. The two key practices of strong leadership are active and knowledgeable governance and competent academic leadership. The third key characteristic pertains to being reflective. The two key practices of a reflective PTE are self-assessment and robust data management that informs continuous improvement. The last key characteristic is about valuing staff. The key practice is staff motivation.

Theme 1 – Purpose Driven

The first key theme that has emerged from the study is that high performing PTEs are driven, not by profit, but by an educational purpose and direction that is clearly defined, well-communicated, widely propagated and owned by organisational members. Evidence from the NZQA interviews, case study, and document analysis support this.

'Being purpose driven' was unanimously identified and ranked by NZQA participants as one of the top three general characteristics of high performing PTEs. In the words of one Evaluator:

> *What's really important in a Cat 1 organisation is some purpose that's beyond just making money, whether that purpose be a commitment to students […]. They have commitment and passion towards something that's not just a profit bottom-line.* [NZQA8]

NZQA participants pointed out that organisations with a profit-focused business model are usually not high performing. They do not see a money-making focus as a good business approach as it can lead to decisions that compromise the quality of education and even integrity. The Evaluators did say that PTEs must remain profitable to sustain their business, but profit should not be their driving force.

NZQA participants emphasised the importance of staying true to the core purpose. Examples were given of PTEs that were unable to maintain their Category 1 standing because they deviated from their purpose in the pursuit of monetary gains (e.g. pursuing

international markets). They ultimately failed to deliver quality education because of operating outside their core competencies.

Another thing found notable in high performing PTEs is that their educational purpose is clearly articulated by governance, communicated throughout the organisation, lived out and reflected in the actions of people and how they do their business, from the top tier (the governance level) of the organisation, down the ranks. It is part of their culture and embraced by the people.

Data from the document analysis provide evidence to substantiate this view. A comment culled from an EER report provides an example:

> *The organisation has a clear purpose to bring about real and meaningful change to the students' lives. The values of the organisation, developed by staff, depict a whānau-orientated and supportive organisation that is creating a positive learning environment.* [PTE-B2]

Results of the case study interviews reinforce this theme. The case study PTE (PTE A) has a clearly defined and well-articulated purpose and direction. The mission, vision and values are laid out in their organisational website (sighted at the time of this study), accessible to all internal and external stakeholders. ***The statements are student centric.*** The main tenets (education, learners, and communities or linkages with other organisations) are focused on equipping and preparing students to become strong contributors in the global arena. This is the first sub-theme.

The PTE's core values of quality education and comprehensive support services ensure student success in an increasingly multi-cultural environment. These are manifested in the PTE's activities, such as study skills workshops, cultural support activities, Peer Assisted Learning system, and private counselling.

A PTE executive stated that the organisational core values *"set the tenor of the organisation from governance level and are most relevant to the day-to-day operations"* [PTE1]. He indicated that there is a strong sense of shared purpose and direction among the shareholders who have been working together for 30 years. The Executive Team relates major decisions to the strategic values, for example investing in a new Student Management System and a Student Support Department with a Study

Skills Advisor. These demonstrate how the student-centric educational purpose drives strategic planning and decision-making.

PTE A also has a well-articulated vision that the founders set out to achieve since its inception. One participant described their vision as *"audacious and large in scope with a focus on long-term significant investment [...] we are looking to ensure the PTE is still operating for the next 30 years and beyond and becomes stronger"* [PTE1]. Their vision has not changed but has continued to drive the PTE forward.

Interestingly, PTE A participants deem there is a lack of support from government which limits their strategic vision achievement and innovation. They want to deliver value to their learners but have faced restrictions, as revealed in these comments:

> *The problem is that there is not enough support from NZQA. For example, the procedures for approving offshore delivery are very hard. Every programme requires an approval process, and the PTE has 20 programmes. Also, Education New Zealand is focusing on higher value students who would go into university in promoting New Zealand offshore. The PTE has high value learners as well and needs better government recognition of the private tertiary sector.* [PTE1]

> *Innovation gets stymied by regulators. PTEs may know the market and want to offer programmes that suit this market but are blocked by regulatory hurdles.* [PTE2]

PTE A works around such challenges, as evidenced by the following comment:

> *The government may put resources in a state university but don't share the same resources to a PTE. We are never in a fair game, which means we have to think about it from a student perspective. You have to make the differentiation, find a flagship product, a differentiation product to make yourself outstanding.* [PTE10]

PTE A participants mentioned several means by which mission, vision and values are propagated, such as Staff Induction, Re-branding project, Staff/ Student Handbooks, collaterals (prospectus, posters, flyers), organisational templates and emails, advertising and marketing graphics, and staff intranet. The mission, vision, values of the organisation have *"become a real and practical part of the organisational branding to keep everyone in line and in tune with what we do"* [PTE1]. However, they also found that staff turnover diminishes the focus on the mission, vision, values which requires further effort to promote and propagate.

The NZQA interviews support the notion that high performing PTEs are student-centric, with learners at the core of everything they do. Students being well-supported is characteristic of Category 1 PTEs which leads to successful outcomes.

In addition to a student-centric mission, vision and core values, results of this research revealed that purpose driven PTEs have strong ***community engagement,*** which leads to better alignment with community needs. This is the second sub-theme.

There is widespread agreement on this among the NZQA Evaluators, as evidenced in comments such as:

> *Category 1 PTEs are embedded in the community, with strong community links, they know their city/ town/ people, they maintain strong relationships that enable them to be responsive, they know their industry, know the challenges for their target groups (e.g. if providing programmes for new settlers, they know the groups supporting new settlers). They are close to the world – and this is a sign of quality.* [NZQA2]

NZQA Evaluators reported that the convincing Category 1's are those that are really in touch with their communities, who are listening to industry and creating their business model from hearing the needs of stakeholders, and whose mission/vision come to life in the real outcomes in the community or workplaces whose needs they intend to meet. An example was given of an education provider with a strong involvement in community life, aiming to get people who have been unemployed for generations into a different mindset about work. The NZQA Evaluator said, *"They were part of the community, the community had a role in the organisation in formal and informal ways. […] People were transformed in the way they were thinking and led to employment or further training […] That made them a Cat 1 provider"* [NZQA6].

There is also evidence of this from the document analysis. Following are excerpts from an EER Report:

> *The PTE's commitment to the community and the learners that the TEC identifies as a priority is evident in the investment in teaching sites outside of XXX, which provides access to programmes in geographical areas lacking such provision.* [PTE-C1]

The document analysis revealed that high performing PTEs strategise around the priorities of their region. Some build collaborative links with local iwi and other

tertiary providers to respond to the needs of their community and sustain local growth as part of their educational purpose.

PTE A demonstrates strong community engagement. The PTE engages extensively with industry stakeholders to provide students internship and work placement opportunities. They have "*employed a Student Placement Advisor to help students go into internships*" [PTE1]. PTE A also has linkages with local and overseas groups, including representative groups in tertiary education, universities and schools in Auckland, Australia, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific Islands. Engagement with these groups provides their students with higher education pathways, a seamless transition into New Zealand study, opportunities for study tours, teacher exchanges, and offshore delivery support, all of which lead to the fulfilment of the PTE's mission to prepare students to work in a global environment.

Theme 2 – Strong Leadership

The second theme emerging from the research is that high performing PTEs have strong organisational leadership. NZQA participants identified this as a general characteristic of high performing PTEs.

There are two sub-themes. The first is that high performing PTEs have an ***active and knowledgeable governance group*** that is highly involved in the strategic direction, performance, and operations of the PTE, and has a working knowledge of the education sector.

Results of document analysis support this. Following is a comment from the EER Reports:

> *XXX has a well-established Board who are also the senior management team. The PTE has been successfully and effectively governed and managed with this structure for many years. The functions of governance and management are sufficiently separated to provide clarity on roles, lines of responsibility and decision-making.* [PTE-C1]

Active and knowledgeable governance contributing to high performance is also evident in PTE A, where three board members are also working directors. Their role spans both strategic governance and operational day-to-day management, with their operational

management jobs clearly delineated from their board member functions. The working directors, who are also shareholders of the business, take great pains to create a clear demarcation line in the exercise of their governance authority to avoid carrying their governance role into their daily dealings with staff members.

The working directors believe the amalgamation of both governance and management functions is advantageous as it makes them closer to the business, actively engaged and doubly invested in how it performs. An example of their comments:

> *The working directors function as a bridge between the shareholders and the staff; it is the function of the bridge to work on site so we can receive first-hand information about what they need, where the problem is, whether it is the infrastructure, facilities for the students.* [PTE9]

PTE staff likewise find mixing governance and management advantageous as it gives them easy access to high level consultation, strategic decision-making, and prompt response to operational needs. Some staff members do get intimidated by the fact that the working directors are also owners of the business. However, as one participant put it, "*The three directors go out of their way to make staff feel comfortable, identify with them and engage them*" [PTE3].

The working directors reported having to balance the tension between their two functions given the need to look after all parties, i.e. creating more return for shareholders/ investors and making staff happy to work in the organisation. An example is balancing the requirements of the Marketing Department (increasing business by getting more students into further study within the PTE) and the Academic units (maintaining academic quality by ensuring only deserving students move into further study). *"This is the kind of tension that I'm facing all the time and I'm balancing myself all the time"* [PTE10]. As an operational manager, he said he wants to see the organisation earn more revenues, but as a company director, he said he cannot cut corners that could jeopardise the PTE facing the future.

One of the ways that the working directors balance the tension in their roles is to always see and let employees see that "*staff members and investors are on the same boat, that if they all ensure the sustainability of the business in all aspects, then everyone can enjoy the fruits or the harvest*" [PTE9]. Management meetings that bring together a

representation of both employees and shareholders to discuss organisational matters and resolve issues are also mechanisms for mitigating the tension. This enables the working directors to receive staff feedback first-hand, it facilitates easy access to organisational information as well as open communication with staff.

Another way they balance the tension is thinking long-term and not pursuing short-term gains that can damage the PTE. As one of the working directors put it, *"If I'm just the manager of Marketing or one of the employees, just taking my salary, it's just the numbers and that's it. But as a company director, I have to think about strategic planning for the next 5 or 10 years"* [PTE10].

The NZQA EER Evaluators take a similar view of active and knowledgeable governance. Their responses suggest that in a high performing PTE, the governing members *"are highly interested and have input into the PTE, not just feeding in and feeding out of the organisation"* [NZQA1]. As a result, they know the organisation well, are aware of the outcomes and achievements and can speak into the performance data. They also "*have an educative knowledge base. They understand not just the periphery areas of marketing and accounting but understand industry needs and how education can fit with it – this is a strength for a PTE"* [NZQA1].

Strong leadership in high performing PTEs also comes from ***competent academic leadership***. This is the second sub-theme, evidenced in all three sources of data.

Comments gleaned from the EER Reports demonstrate this. For example:

> *Strong and enlightened leadership at XXX has been strengthened by recent strategic appointments and decisions since the last EER. Examples include [...] the academic board's inclusion in strategic decision-making.* [PTE-A1]

The results of the study show that academic leadership is exercised through specific leader roles and various committees. At PTE A, academic leadership roles include an executive and manager as well as programme leaders. People in these roles are suitably qualified, with years of senior management or programme leadership experience in the sector. One PTE participant did comment that in the past they *"have had people in positions who were not suitable, so academic leadership in the PTE is only as effective as the people who hold these roles"* [PTE11].

PTE A also has an Academic Board, Board of Studies, Teaching and Learning Committee, and Programme Committee. These committees have representation across the institute and have distinct functions to deal with various academic matters at different levels of the organisation. A PTE participant pointed out that some committees are more effective than others. The participants from PTE A deemed these structures effective for managing communication flows, and ensuring staff involvement, systems and process implementation, achievement of quality standards and management of compliance accountabilities.

NZQA participants ranked academic leadership among the top three contributors to high performance. They underscore the presence of a strong senior academic leader who understands pedagogy, is highly involved in education, focused on quality, and understands the tertiary education environment. In the words of one Evaluator, *"Failures amongst some PTEs are often driven around that indicator of academic leadership. This has been the problem with quite a number of PTEs that they basically became Category 3 and were managed out of the system by NZQA"* [NZQA12].

The NZQA responses indicate that competent academic leadership tends to be inward and outward looking. They are in tune with their institution and with current trends in the sector, globally and locally. Being backed by a competent team and the governance group is another important aspect. At PTE A, the academic executive is part of the Executive Team that reports to the Board of Directors, ensuring that academic leadership and the governance group are in sync in terms of strategy and organisational direction. However, *"there is a tension between academic and non-academic members of the Executive Team in terms of understanding quality requirements. This remains a challenge"* [PTE4].

The NZQA interviews revealed that academic leadership also occurs through oversight of the systems and processes in place for managing academic quality, such as assessment and moderation, induction, internal audits. PTE A reported having such systems and processes in place for managing academic quality.

Theme 3 – Reflective

The third theme that emerged from the study is that high performing PTEs are reflective organisations with high self-assessment capability underpinned by robust data management which leads to continuous improvements. There is evidence of this from all three sources of data. NZQA Evaluators pointed out that a high performing PTE is *"a reflecting organisation – with a management team who reflects"* [NZQA5].

Self-assessment stood out in the research as a key practice of a reflective PTE. This is the first sub-theme. As one of two scope areas that receive a confidence rating in an EER (NZQA, n.d.-e), self-assessment capability is an important indicator of high performance.

Responses from NZQA participants show that a well-embedded self-assessment process where honest reflection of their own performance is part of business-as-usual is what sets Category 1 organisations apart. An awareness and understanding of its own organisational performance, with staff across all levels of the organisation being able to explain the meaning and stories behind performance data, reflect good self-assessment capabilities.

High performing PTEs also exhibit an attitude of openness to improvement. One comment from the NZQA Evaluators:

> *Cat 1 PTEs are willing to admit weaknesses when struggling; they will tell you the problem straight up, not polish them or wait for an Evaluator to tell them. It's not a perfect organisation but knows its strengths and weaknesses and systematically addresses them.* [NZQA2]

Evidence from the document analysis support this sub-theme. A comment from an EER Report:

> *XXX has robust processes and practices that systematically monitor the performance of the whole organisation. There is a focus specifically on priority areas such as governance and management, performance of all programmes at all sites, the needs of the community, and providing education and training that supports the Tertiary Education Commission's strategies.* [PTE-C1]

The document analysis indicates the various means that high performing PTEs carry out self-assessment activities, including annual programme evaluation reports (APER), governance/ management/ operational team meetings, student progress reviews, campus reports, industry advisory groups that provide input into programme design, performance reviews/ appraisals, course summary presentation, annual quality assurance visits/ monitoring, formal/ informal applied research, service evaluations, surveys and staff forums. The document analysis suggests that in high performing PTEs, these activities are occurring at all levels of the organisation, are actively used to understand and respond to learner and stakeholder needs, and lead to improvements in the way work is done.

PTE A participants reported similar self-assessment processes, such as Self-assessment Reports, Managers'/ Executive Team meetings, Policy/ Procedure meetings, scheduled reviews of different areas reported to the Board of Studies, and a one-page status sheet which shows a concise overview of organisational performance using data on student and staff satisfaction, finance, learner achievement trends, enrolments, graduate outcomes, and research achievement. An executive interviewee said: *"This one-page status report is produced three times a year […] and has all the general information. We collect it and then we can talk to the different managers and heads of programme on how to improve it, how to solve their problem to make it more successful"* [PTE8].

Interestingly, self-assessment capability is seen by NZQA Evaluators as the most significant area for improvement across the tertiary education sector. The specific aspects of self-assessment that most need improvement are analysis of data, use of self-assessment processes to create improvements, and monitoring/ impact evaluation of improvements/ changes/ innovations to see if they are making a difference in educational performance.

Results of this research also show that having a ***robust data management that informs continuous improvement*** is another key practice in a reflective organisation. This is the second sub-theme.

Comments from NZQA Evaluators suggest that robust data management underlies good self-assessment and is a huge contributing factor for high performance. This includes gathering and using data effectively. A comment highlights this:

> *Higher performing ones are those that have a structured way of gathering data. Not only quantitative data, they also reflect on qualitative data; they have qualitative reflections on a regular basis (annually or bi annually), their whole group or team share experiences, brainstorm, they workshop to reflect on the past so they can move forward.* [NZQA5]

This finding is also supported by the document analysis, which suggests that data-rich organisations who use data to support educational achievement give NZQA a high level of confidence in their self-assessment capabilities. A comment gleaned from the EER Reports:

> *Increased data collection and analysis has enabled improved evaluative practice.* [PTE-A1]

The document analysis identified several means of collecting data, such as graduate surveys, student evaluations, staff feedback, internship evaluations, student management forum, teacher observations, exit survey, and student self-reports. PTE A reported similar methods of data gathering, including *"programme/ course/ tutor evaluations, first entry interviews with new students, student exit interviews, and student satisfaction surveys"* [PTE4]. They also generate *"reports from the Student Management System (such as qualification/ programme/ course completions, retentions, attendance), and conduct graduate destination surveys and marketing surveys"* [PTE8]. The data is shared across the organisation through staff meetings, a shared folder, and reports generated for Department Heads, Administrators and Committees. Moreover, PTE A has a dedicated team responsible for systematically capturing and reporting data, with a manager responsible for the data management system. The importance of having expert support, such as a data specialist or analyst, as part of data management practice was emphasised by NZQA Evaluators.

The research further suggests that robust data management does not necessarily require having a sophisticated infrastructure for data generation. NZQA Evaluators reported that while high performing providers generally make investments in technology to manage data well, this is not always the case. A provider can still be a high performing

PTE even if they are utilising a basic system. PTE A, for example, reported utilising their existing Student Management System to download data into an Excel file and generate reports using Excel tools. Staff have found this useful and are able to analyse data through these tools.

These responses indicate that data gathering mechanisms are not nearly as important as the analysis and use of data, which NZQA Evaluators ranked among the top three contributors to high performance. As one Evaluator put it, "*This is certainly Category 1 - having focused data, analysing it, drawing meaning from it, and then using it to make improvements*" [NZQA10]. Evaluators will verify whether an organisation is making sense of the data and what they are doing about it. PTE A participants reported that they are still improving in terms of analysing and utilising available data. Nevertheless, an example was given of data utilised by the Sales Team which became a selling point to encourage offshore students to undertake online study.

Continuous improvement in all aspects of organisational performance is the rationale for using and managing data in a reflective organisation. Results from the document analysis confirm that high performing PTEs continuously improve because of robust self-assessment. Comments from some of the EER reports demonstrate this, such as:

> *There was very good evidence that XXX recognises the value of self-assessment and uses it as a mechanism to raise its educational performance. A number of initiatives have been applied following annual programme reviews which have led to improvements in achievement. These include putting into practice literacy and numeracy strategies […], responsiveness to learner feedback, team teaching and developing individual learning plans that inform weekly review and progress meetings with learners.* [PTE–C2]

Other EER reports cited evidence of high performing PTEs using robust and meaningful self-assessment to develop new programmes, initiate organisational restructures in anticipation of growth, refine internal processes, innovate around technological tools, make significant staff appointments such as an Academic Support Specialist, and use a Student Journey tracking mechanism. Reports show that achievement in some programmes lifted because of well-directed self-assessment.

PTE A participants reported that continuous improvements are happening in the organisation because of internal reviews. An example is the transformation of the

library system, which used to operate as a traditional library, into a bustling learning hub with physical spaces and a library staff structure that support student learning better. This transformation was the result of a year-long review by a working group and was evaluated one year after so that further improvements can be made.

Improvements at PTE A are not just initiated from the top, but also from individual units when a team decides to *"try out an idea and if it works, we'll push to get it rolled out to other departments [...] it gets done faster and if there are problems with it, you are affecting one department, not everyone"* [PTE11]. Nevertheless, some participants deemed the PTE is not as innovative as it can be, given there are less layers of bureaucracy that will enable it to do so.

Theme 4 – Valuing Staff

The last theme that surfaced from the study is that high performing PTEs value their staff highly. Although valuing staff was not mentioned by any of the NZQA participants as a general characteristic of high performing PTEs, there is evidence in the three sources of data that valuing staff contributes to high performance.

Evidence from the document analysis show that staff are valued as professionals, with their views actively sought (formally and informally). Their feedback often leads to changes to programmes and delivery.

Data from the study showed that valuing staff was centred around ***staff motivation*** practices. The findings revealed various types of staff motivators. EER reports mentioned that staff feedback or views are sought by the organisation, listened to, and acted on. Also mentioned are regular meetings, professional development, sporting events, participation in strategic planning, staff inductions, collegiality expressed through team teaching or buddy system, and an open-door policy.

A PTE participant said that *"the most important resource is people"* [PTE11]. PTE A reported staff motivational initiatives such as staff consultations for major decisions, recognition in the staff newsletter, gift vouchers, thank-you notes, birthday celebrations, staff functions such as the annual Christmas party, milestone celebrations for long

service, long service leaves, and provision of clear KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). Staff development such as internal and external trainings are also part of motivating staff, with staff supported financially for job-related professional development and partially for trainings which are not job-related.

PTE A participants considered these initiatives effective, although there were suggestions for improving staff motivation such as better handling of data and increasing managerial financial accountabilities. One participant did say that "*academic staff do not feel as valued as the non-academic staff as they are the first people to lose their jobs when student numbers go down*" [PTE11].

Interviews with the NZQA Evaluators revealed that high performing PTEs value their staff through funding for research, provision of resources such as a data system, time allocation for professional development, or being allowed to try a new way of doing things. Other means of valuing staff are staff involvement/ communication, giving staff a voice, maintaining positive relationships with staff, fostering a strong research culture (even informal research), encouraging projects for professional/ personal growth, staff appraisal and training, opportunity for progress in employment status, feedback mechanism, induction programme that includes a buddy system for new staff, flexible work arrangements, going the extra mile such as paying for personal wifi connections during the COVID-19 lock down period, attendance in seminars/ workshops, and in-house development opportunities.

Other intangible means of staff motivation are affirmation, constructive feedback, supporting staff when going through crisis, making staff feel that they are part of a large working family, their voice is heard respectfully, their ideas taken seriously and acted upon. Also, "*Category 1 leaders talk about their staff in a positive way [...]*" [NZQA1], not "*as a commodity [...]*" [NZQA8].

Professional development has been highlighted as a key motivator for staff and a means of showing they are valued. Many PTEs have professional development plans, but "*what's unique to Category 1 PTEs is the regularity and consistency of it*" [NZQA5]. Professional development contributes to having "*well-qualified staff who are the guarantee of the long-term health of the organisation*" [NZQA9]. Evaluators usually

"*look for ongoing professional development as this is important for keeping the life blood of current teaching going*" [NZQA9].

The document analysis reinforces this. Following are some comments from the EER Reports:

> *Management places a high priority on professional development including an expectation that all full-time academic staff have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications.* [PTE-A1]

> *Professional development is mandated and encouraged and is occurring throughout the organisation. Resourcing of this has increased since the previous EER.* [PTE-B1]

In conclusion, this study's findings clearly demonstrate that the key themes and sub-themes identified are contributing factors to a PTE's high performance.

Chapter 5 - DISCUSSION

This chapter presents an analysis of the findings and how they relate to the literature on governance and management. The key themes and sub-themes are discussed, with the sub-themes framed using the insights and conceptualisations of practice theory.

My analysis follows the conceptualisation of practice-as-entity, i.e. practice is comprised of three elements – competence, materiality and meaning (Shove et al., 2012). This three-fold definition of practice is based on the idea that 'practice' should be considered as a whole unit of analysis consisting in the interaction between material objects, sets of embodied knowledge and competences, and cultural and symbolic images (Shove & Pantzar, 2005). Practices can be more easily simplified into these three main dimensions intertwined with one another and represent the outcome of the performative linkage of these three elements (Maggaudda, 2011). This is shown in my analysis.

Using the concept of practice-as-entity, the sub-themes that emerged from this study are deconstructed in terms of the three constituent elements of practice. Viewing governance and management in terms of the elements that make them up as practices enabled me to develop an account of these practices, thus gaining a deeper understanding of their nature within the context of this study. Each section in this chapter briefly discusses the array of materialities, meanings and competences of each practice denoted by the sub-themes. Please refer to Appendix K for details of these and the activities of each practice.

In addition, Shove et al. (2012) argue that connections form between practices in what they term 'bundles' reflecting the extent to which given practices are embedded. As Feldman and Worline (2016) purport, any practice is embedded in a web of practices. Governance and management practices can be seen as bundles that intersect with and are embedded or related to each other. This bundling is shown in my analysis.

Theme 1: Purpose Driven

The first key feature of high-performing PTEs identified from the current study is a clearly defined, well-communicated, widely accepted organisational purpose and direction that goes beyond profit-making. It is evident from the present research that a purely profit-oriented purpose does not lead to high performance. Examples were given of PTE failures stemming from an unwarranted focus on profit-making instead of an educational purpose.

This finding is well-supported by the prevailing thought in management and leadership literature, showing that most successful organisations have missions that express a noble purpose (Daft, 2018) beyond the mere pursuit of profitable ends. The implication is that success is more achievable if profit is not the primary driver of business. If an organisation is focused on offering what stakeholders need and value, a demand for its products or services will always exist, and the profits follow. The literature also indicates that the success of organisations with a noble purpose comes from attracting better workers who are imbued with a sense of purpose and therefore highly engaged, which leads to higher productivity and performance.

There are two findings that emerged from this theme which denote the key practices of a purpose-driven PTE: student-centred mission, vision and values, and strong community engagement. Both practices intersect as students and the community are part of an institution's stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals or groups that have interests, rights, or ownership in an organisation and its activities (Hellriegel et al., 2008). Performing one practice leads to the performance of the other, i.e. being student-centred leads a PTE to engage with its community (e.g. to provide work experience opportunities to learners), and community engagement informs how a PTE can serve student needs better (e.g. identifying training that leads to valuable outcomes for students). This is reflective of Shove et al.'s (2012) idea of practices forming 'bundles'.

Sub-Theme 1 – Student-Centric Mission, Vision, Values

The key activities in this practice include clearly defining and articulating the statements of purpose and direction, communicating, promoting/ propagating widely to organisation members through various means, then using them as the framework for

organisational strategy. The results of the present study reflect this. For example, PTE A has well-articulated, widely propagated statements of mission, vision and values which guide strategic decision-making. Examples were given of strategies implemented that demonstrate how a student-centric purpose guides organisational behaviour and actions. This illustrates what the literature identifies as a link between strategic management and a firm's mission, vision, and values. It can be noted from the literature that mission, vision, and values are critical inputs for strategic action. Strategy supporting purpose and direction leads to success.

There are contentions in the literature that, in the educational setting, mission, vision and values have limited impact and potential to provide guidance to organisations. This is contradicted, however, by the findings of this study. For instance, the practice at PTE A of using mission, vision, and values to guide strategic choices with successful outcomes stands in contrast to this.

Moreover, the literature also indicates that strategy in education organisations is limited by central government direction. In New Zealand, the TES with eight priorities that place learners at the centre of the education system (Tertiary Education Commission [TEC], 2020), sets out this central direction. The results of the present research demonstrate that a purpose-driven PTE shows a regard for these priorities, as exemplified by PTE A's student-centric mission, vision, and values. In which case, a counterargument can be made that the broader directions of central government do not necessarily restrict vision and strategy but provide a blueprint for tertiary education providers to operate successfully.

However, this study has also shown that government regulatory policy and sector priorities are deemed to have constricting effects on a PTE's strategy. Government priorities lie in promoting higher value segments in the sector (e.g. universities) and safeguarding the credibility of New Zealand education nationally and internationally. This overlay of central government directions is deemed as a roadblock for PTEs. It can be argued that this indicates a need for the PTE sector to lift their quality and credibility to attain better government recognition and reduce regulatory barriers. The aim of this study to provide insights and implications for practitioners contributes to meeting this need.

Materialities. The materialities for student-centric practice are the tools and mechanisms used for communicating, propagating/ promoting purpose and direction. The literature indicates that these materialities are manifestations of purpose being lived out in tangible ways, leading to shared understanding and widespread buy-in. For PTE A, these materialities preserve their mission, vision and values which can be easily lost with staff turnover. This confirms the notion that materialities provide a performative advantage that enables practices to continue to exist as they are enacted and re-enacted in a specific time and place (Nicolini, 2012).

Meanings. My research findings point to varied meanings that a student-centric mission, vision, and values can evoke. The literature coincides with these, indicating that a compelling and inspiring purpose and direction creates meaning which mobilises and motivates people and provides a common ground that binds their dreams into a shared vision (Daft, 2018; Manning & Curtis, 2009; Rampersad, 2001). The literature suggests that, for such meanings to be held by organisational members and manifested in their lived experiences, the purpose and values must enter into the daily practices of the organisation (Manning & Curtis, 2009), i.e. there should be widespread buy-in.

Competences. The various means of promoting and fulfilling purpose and direction (the materialities of the practice) require varied know-how to implement, showing the performative linkage between materialities and competences as elements of practice. These competences can be broadly categorised into identity definition, leadership competence, and strategy.

Sub-Theme 2 – Community Engagement

Strong community engagement is another practice of a purpose driven PTE that emerged from this study. As collaboration with communities is part of the priorities of the TES in New Zealand (TEC, 2020), active community engagement is a clear demonstration that the purpose-driven PTE is responsive to the TES.

'Community' includes industry, employers, professional groups, community groups, other education and training providers, government, and non-government agencies. Community engagement means being highly involved with such groups, understanding

their needs/ cultural distinctiveness, and aligning educational delivery. Alliances are developed and maintained to open opportunities for students or respond to regional needs. Communication and building close relations, networking, active involvement in community/ stakeholder groups, gathering feedback are key to building alliances. An Advisory Group comprised of different stakeholders also serves as a means for strengthening community engagement. These are the activities of this practice.

This key finding is supported by literature. Research and theory in governance recognise an organisation's accountability to all stakeholders and provide illustrations of successful organisations that exemplify this.

Materialities. The study's findings indicate the types of linkages that a high-performing PTE has with its community, such as with other higher education institutes (to provide further education pathways), industry (to provide employment), or with local groups (to sustain local growth). The materialities of this practice enable such linkages and enable the PTE to stay in tune with stakeholders to deepen their engagement. This provides performative advantages that preserve the practice and ensure it remains effective.

Meanings. Findings from the study suggest that community engagement enhances the meaning of a PTE's existence in several ways: a) making a difference in learners' lives b) which has a ripple effect on the community, c) impacting society as the needs of other stakeholders are served, d) thus preserving the PTE's relevance and legitimacy to operate.

Community engagement also enhances the meaning of social responsibility and social responsiveness for a PTE. Organisational social responsibility refers to an organisation's obligation to act and improve society's welfare as well as its own interests (Bartol et al., 2008). Social responsiveness refers to the development of organisational decision processes where the organisation anticipates and responds to changing expectations of various stakeholders (Bartol et al., 2008). The literature on the subject indicates that these are increasingly considered significant. Many stakeholders now pressure business leaders to move away from the utilitarian approach of focusing

on profits and instead contribute more actively to society (Hellriegel et al., 2008). This is supported by the findings of the study.

Competences. Practicing community engagement requires various competences for organisational members with linking roles. Social forecasting and social scanning are two of these competences and are required for effective environmental monitoring that comes with social responsiveness. Social forecasting is the systematic identification and evaluation of social trends while social scanning is the general surveillance of task-environment elements to find evidence of impending changes that will affect organisational social responsibilities (Bartol et al., 2008).

The three elements of practice are intertwined in the performance of community engagement. For instance, the practice requires competences (social scanning) associated with materialities (feedback mechanisms) which enhance the meaning of the practice (ripple effect on society). This reflects the performative linkage of these three elements.

Theme 2: Strong Leadership

The second key feature of high-performing PTEs identified in this study is strong leadership. This finding supports what leadership theorists and frontrunners have asserted about the significant role of leadership in government, institutions, societies, and all areas of life (Daft, 2018; Manning & Curtis, 2009; Maxwell, 1999), including the success of educational systems (Bush, 2007).

Two findings denoting leadership practices have emerged from this theme: active and knowledgeable governance, and competent academic leadership. Both practices are interrelated in that governance monitors managerial actions (including those of academic leaders). This illustrates what Shove et al. (2012) posit as a 'bundle' of practices.

Sub-Theme 1 – Active and Knowledgeable Governance

Findings from the study suggest that a high performing PTE has a highly involved governance group that is knowledgeable about quality education as well as the

organisation. This provides empirical support to the idea within the literature that both characteristics - active and knowledgeable - need to be present in a governance group for them to be effective. Indeed, knowledgeable but inactive governance is just as ineffectual as active but unskilled governance.

The notion of an 'active' and 'knowledgeable' board is embodied in the stakeholder plus model of governing board membership (Farrell, 2013) found in the literature. This model brings together two other models: the skills-based model which suggests that governing groups should be composed of those with the required expertise, and the stakeholder model which suggests that organisations are best governed by those who have an interest in them (Connolly et al., 2019). Those that have a high interest in the organisation, such as shareholders, are the ones who will be motivated to *actively* govern. However, they may not necessarily hold the requisite knowledge and skills to *effectively* govern.

The stakeholder plus model posits that those who have a stake to actively govern also hold the requisite knowledge and skills to govern (Farrell, 2013). The organisation will have a better chance of performing well if both characteristics are present in the governance group. This is exemplified by PTE A in this study. Their governance structure follows the stakeholder plus model. The working directors are shareholders of the firm who have a high interest in the PTE and, as part of operational management, also possess relevant knowledge of the business.

Developing a governance structure based on the stakeholder plus model is a key activity of this practice. Governance structure influences board membership decisions. Membership characteristics influence the quality of strategy, policy, monitoring, and decision-making as well as board member behaviours and interactions. These factors impact organisational performance.

The presence of working directors in PTE A depict an amalgamation of governance and management functions. The study's findings indicate that this has positive results for the PTE. However, the effectiveness of such amalgamation is only partially supported in the literature, with contrasting views and evidence of its effectiveness. In small organisations such as many New Zealand PTEs, amalgamating governance and

management functions is a means of economisation. However, actions are required to overcome the disadvantages of amalgamation.

It appears that successful amalgamation of governance and management in PTE A can be attributed to several factors. One is the clear delineation of the board functions and operational management jobs of the working directors. This avoids blurred lines of responsibility that prohibit stakeholders from fulfilling their mandate and the organisation from reaching its objectives (Kooli, 2019). As evidenced in the present study, the working directors of PTE A ensure that the demarcation lines between their governance and managerial roles are preserved in the way they interact with employees. This led to their identity definition of being the 'bridge'. The use of this metaphor enables them to relate to both their fellow investors and the staff in the organisation. As members of both stakeholder groups, they can identify with diverse needs/ expectations and are able to balance conflicting requirements, thus functioning as a bridge.

Secondly, because of their operational roles, the working directors can communicate the PTE's needs and resource requirements more effectively to their fellow shareholders. The strong commitment to a shared mission, vision and values among the shareholders provides an advantage when they seek support from this group. Having a solid base of investment support facilitates implementation of strategic plans and decisions for the PTE, contributing to high performance.

Finally, the working directors recognise the inherent tension between their dual roles of governing and managing and mitigate this tension through various means. These include long-term strategic thinking, being willing to carry short-term losses thus ensuring business sustainability; regular Managers' Meetings which bring them (as representatives of the governance group) together with the management team, thus positioning both groups to view the organisation from the same side; and narratives that unify the governing group and organisational members, such as *'everyone on the same boat'* and *'everyone enjoying the fruits of the harvest'*. These are powerful narratives that appeal to shareholders and organisational members alike, enabling them to work towards a common good. This leads to managers becoming stewards who act in the best interests of both the organisation and their own, as espoused in stewardship theory.

Such mitigating actions are critical activities of active and knowledgeable governance practice.

Materialities. As evidenced in this study, an essential materiality of this practice is the governance structure. It is the tool for ensuring the governing group is comprised of members who are actively involved and knowledgeable. The mechanisms for mitigating the pitfalls of amalgamating governance and management also comprise the materialities of this practice.

Meanings. The present study indicates that use of unifying narratives and a metaphor to define identity as well as shared vision evoke meanings for organisational members. They convey a shared commitment to a sustainable business, its long-term future and success. This is meaningful to internal stakeholders and unites them around a common dream.

Competences. Active and knowledgeable governance practice requires competences that the governing body should possess. As evidenced in this study, these competences are determined based on the functions of governance identified in the literature. The current study provides empirical support for the skills and desirable attributes identified in the literature which address these functions. These competences are required to perform the practice well. They must be present in the governance structure, thus demonstrating the performative linkage between competence and materiality as elements of a practice.

Sub-Theme 2 – Competent Academic Leadership

It can be noted from the literature that academic leadership impacts educational outcomes and overall academic effectiveness (Briggs et al., 2012; Bryman, 2007; Bush, 2019; Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2008). The results of the present study are consistent with this, with many PTE failures attributed to the lack of competent academic leadership.

Studies suggest that the impact of academic leaders on educational performance is more pronounced when leadership is distributed across the organisation or is coming from

multiple sources, not just from a solo leader (Bush, 2019; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Harris, 2004; Robinson, 2019). The findings of this study reflect this. For example, academic leadership in PTE A exists through various committees responsible for different academic aspects at different levels of the organisation. These committees are manifestations of the team-based structures in the distributed leadership model (Bush, 2019; Scribner et al., 2007). Furthermore, the composition of these committees (managers, teaching staff, sometimes students) suggests that expertise is tapped from different areas of PTE A, consistent with the notion presented in the literature that in a distributed leadership model, expertise is engaged wherever it exists in the organisation (Harris, 2004). This is a key activity of competent academic leadership practice.

Moreover, as evidenced in the current study, the committees in PTE A are part of an overall academic management framework that undergird academic leadership. Other parts are the structures, systems, and processes for managing academic quality which are implemented by the committees to ensure academic accountability within the institution. This is another key activity of academic leadership practice.

Materialities. From a materiality perspective, the framework for managing academic performance (including committees and academic quality management structures/ systems/ processes) is the tool for competent academic leadership in a high-performing PTE. The components of this materiality enable the effective enactment and re-enactment of competent academic leadership, providing a performative advantage to this practice.

As evidenced in the current research, the support of the governance group is another essential tool to enable academic leadership to be effective. However, this materiality may not always be present. As results of this study show, the academic and non-academic parts of the institution often co-exist in a state of tension. Non-academic goals such as increasing shareholder value can impede on academic goals such as maintaining education quality. Such a tension is reflected in the amalgamated governance and management functions at PTE A, which the working directors have been able to mitigate.

Meanings. The meaning of competent academic leadership practice is conveyed through the materialities of the practice as they lead to the fulfilment of the organisation's purpose. This demonstrates the interrelatedness of meanings and materialities as elements of practice. To illustrate, the PTE's academic management framework as enacted through the activities of competent academic leadership breathes life to its educational purpose, i.e. managing academic quality consistently and effectively leads to better outcomes for learners. The fulfilment of this purpose creates significance for the organisation. Meaning is derived from this.

Competences. The literature is replete with descriptions of competence in academic leadership which are consistent with the study's findings. The leader who has these competences can steer the organisation towards adopting effective strategies and quality practices that lead to excellent educational outcomes. As the findings demonstrate, academic leadership is only as good as the people in these roles.

It can be posited that the competences of academic leadership practice are enabling factors for the materialities of the practice (such as the academic management framework). For instance, without an adequate understanding of pedagogy, academic leaders will be unable to manage teaching quality. This shows the performative linkage between materiality and competence as elements of practice.

Theme 3: Reflective

The third key feature of high-performing PTEs that emerged from this study is being reflective. High performing PTEs critically assess their educational and operational performance so that improvements can be made. The literature supports this. It is through reflective awareness of past practice that present practice can be improved (Duignan, 1992).

Two inter-related findings arise from this key theme which constitute the key practices of a reflective organisation: self-assessment and robust data management that informs continuous improvement. Both practices can be seen as a 'bundle' of practices. As data is a building block for effectively performing self-assessment, robust data management is embedded in self-assessment practice and enhances it.

Sub-Theme 1 – Self-assessment

Results of this study indicate that having an organisational self-assessment process is not unique to high-performing PTEs. What is unique is that they have well-developed, well-integrated self-assessment protocols which enable them to be responsive to change. This is consistent with literature showing that change and continuous improvement are an integral part of successful organisations (Bartol et al., 2008; McShane et al., 2016).

The current study reveals that high-performing PTEs engage in honest self-reflection as a genuine effort to take responsibility for identifying gaps and areas of strength, then taking action to continuously improve and boost performance. These are key activities of self-assessment practice. PTE A's recognition of their need to enhance innovation and use of data as well as the improvements arising from internal reviews are manifestations of this practice.

Materialities. The mechanisms for self-assessment and resources required to carry out the ensuing improvements constitute the materialities of this practice. The findings of this study highlight these mechanisms, indicating that these mechanisms are present at all levels of a high-performing PTE and are actively utilised to understand and respond to stakeholder needs. This aligns with what is evident in TQM literature – that self-evaluation systems at institutional and programme levels, with results that are fed back into the organisational strategy, should be part of a school's quality system (Sallis, 2002; Temponi, 2005).

Meanings. Self-assessment as a reflective practice creates meaning for organisational members as the resulting performance improvements ultimately make a difference in the lives of stakeholders. Furthermore, continuous improvement arising from self-assessment contributes to the sustainability and success of the business, which leads to organisational members having a sense of achievement and pride in being part of something enduring and fruitful.

Competences. Being a competent self-assessment practitioner involves the capacity for evaluative reflection. It is clear from the current study that this capacity exists at all levels in a high-performing PTE. The mechanisms identified as the

materialities of this practice are the tools for evaluative reflection, demonstrating the performative linkage between competences and materialities as elements of practice. It is clear from the TQM literature that self-assessment is the pathway to total quality (Sallis, 2002), so a related competence is managing educational quality.

Interestingly, the study's findings indicate that self-assessment competences such as developing and implementing action plans for improvement, then monitoring and evaluating the impact are weak areas common among tertiary education providers. My study offers implications for practice that will assist practitioners in addressing this aspect.

Sub-Theme 2 – Robust Data Management that Informs Continuous Improvement

The findings of this study show that using data, such as educational performance indicators and stakeholder feedback, to inform decision-making is integral to the way high-performing PTEs do business. High-performing PTEs are not just data-rich because they systematically collect data, but they skilfully use data to inform their efforts to continuously improve. These are critical activities of a robust data management practice.

The study found evidence of improvements and innovations arising from the use of data. This is supported by TQM principles which purport that change can be planned and assessed based on data (Saunders & Walker, 1991) and areas for improvement can be identified through the collection and use of data (Zink & Schmidt, 1998). This is central to a robust data management practice.

Materialities. Data as well as robust data management systems constitute the materialities of this practice. There is evidence from the study that such data management systems do not require sophisticated technologies to be effective. The essential thing is how the organisation makes sense of the data to inform strategic action. This is what sets high-performing PTEs apart.

Meanings. Meaning is derived from the outcomes that a robust data management practice produces for the organisation. One outcome is the improvement of other organisational practices, which occurs as data is used to make improvements in every aspect of organisational life. For example, the use of data can shape practices such as strategy and decision-making, teaching and learning as well as other governance and management practices. Apparently, practices are not hermetically sealed off from other adjacent and parallel practices, from which lessons are learned, innovations borrowed, procedures copied (Warde, 2005). Practices can impact other practices.

Meaning is also derived from the consequential lift in quality across the organisation. The use of a robust data management system to inform improvements ultimately impacts the reputation and credibility of an institution, contributing to its competitive advantage and ability to serve its stakeholders.

Competences. A robust data management practice requires a range of competences for it to be effective. These include knowledge and skills in using the materialities of the practice, illustrating how competences and materialities are intertwined as elements of practice.

Theme 4: Valuing Staff

It can be noted from the literature that people are considered the most important resource in an organisation (Stone, 2008), and 'excellent' people are the scarcest (Morgan, 1992b). The findings of the study are consistent with this. The fourth theme highlights valuing staff as key to managing people. The sub-theme emerging from this is the practice of motivating staff that demonstrates they are valued.

Sub-Theme 1 – Staff Motivation
The findings of the study suggest that valuing staff is primarily about ensuring staff are well-motivated in their jobs. There is ample evidence of tangible and intangible motivators used by high-performing PTEs to show that staff are valued. Examples are recognition, awards, positive feedback, celebrations, participation and consultation, and empowerment. These activities of staff motivation practice are consistent with the

motivational theories as well as the concept of participative leadership presented in the literature.

It is evident from this study that such motivators contribute to lifting organisational performance as staff become more enthused and energised in the performance of their jobs. This is consistent with the literature, which indicates that a highly motivated workforce is positively correlated with high organisational performance (Hellriegel et al., 2008; Ngotngamwong, 2012; Schermerhorn et al., 2011; Stone, 2008).

Interestingly, professional development which supports career growth and promotion and contributes to superior performance is identified in the current study as a staff motivator. This suggests that staff motivation and professional development can be thought of as two intersecting practices where the latter is embedded in the former, reflective of the 'bundle' of practices put forward by Shove et al. (2012). However, while bundling of both practices is evident from this study, it is not clearly supported in the literature. The literature offers no clear contention of the extent to which professional development is embedded in the practice of staff motivation, i.e., the notion of professional development as a means of motivating staff is not clearly substantiated. Nevertheless, the literature validates professional development as a practice that is linked to organisational effectiveness and achievement of objectives, specifically to growth in teaching knowledge and skills, improvement of educational processes, and better student outcomes in the education setting (Bolam, 2002; Cardno, 2012; Spanbauer, 1995).

Materialities. Motivating staff entails a range of materialities for the practice to be performed well. As evident in the study, materialities for the provision of professional development opportunities are part of the practice, with professional development being embedded in staff motivation.

Meanings. The practice of staff motivation leads to positive shared meanings for organisational members. An enthusiastic and energised workforce produces a strong organisational culture leading to a sense of belonging and affirmation that makes work meaningful.

Competences. Being a competent staff motivator means possessing people-related competences. These competences enable an organisational leader to capitalise on the materialities of the practice for maximum benefit. For instance, a manager who is competent at power sharing will be able to capitalise on the formation of an ad-hoc committee to involve staff in strategic decision-making.

In the absence of these competences, the use of motivation strategies will not be as effective and will therefore fail to evoke the meanings associated with having a highly motivated workforce. This demonstrates the performative linkage between materiality, meaning and competence as elements of a practice.

In conclusion, my research recognises that governance and management practices have an important part in the operations of private tertiary providers. The lessons that can be learnt from the governance and management practices of high-performing PTEs can apply to any PTE or similar tertiary education provider. The succeeding chapter offers insights and implications for practice that highlight these lessons.

Chapter 6 - CONCLUSION

This final chapter concludes the thesis by providing a summary of the study and reiterating the key findings generated from the research question. The theoretical and practical contributions of my research are discussed. Following this, I offer insights, implications, and recommendations for practice. Lastly, I acknowledge the limitations of my research and provide avenues of enquiry that can lead to further investigation. This chapter ends with my concluding comments.

Thesis Summary

My research sought to better understand what constitutes good practice in governance and management in New Zealand private tertiary education by exploring the practices of high performing providers in the sector. A pragmatist epistemology underpinned my research, with the utility of the results for other practitioners being the desired end.

As with most exploratory research, my study employed a combination of qualitative methods to ensure verification of data and greater credibility in the findings. The case study of a PTE that fit the criteria for research captured rich descriptions of governance and management practices that are exemplary. This was supplemented by qualitative interviews with NZQA EER Evaluators as expert informants. Document analysis served to triangulate these data. Documents, such as EER Reports of high performing PTEs, were treated as primary data sources, 'interrogated' and analysed to yield data that were added to the emerging themes.

My literature review detailed the concepts and key dimensions of governance and management, with particular emphasis on the higher education sector. The literature provided a strong understanding of governance and management practices in the corporate setting. It was found that governance and management within the context of New Zealand private tertiary education has been largely unexplored. My study served to fill this gap. I also presented the practice lens as the theoretical framework underpinning my study.

My findings identified four key themes which can be thought of as the key features of high performing PTEs - *being driven by a purpose beyond profit, strong leadership, being reflective, and valuing staff*. The sub-themes emerging from these key themes embody the various governance and management practices that lead to high performance. These are *having a student-centric mission, vision, values; strong community engagement; active and knowledgeable governance; competent academic leadership; self-assessment; robust data management leading to continuous improvements; and motivating staff.*

The Discussion Chapter examined how these findings relate to the literature. There were areas of consensus and areas of difference. An amalgamation of governance and management functions and professional development as a practice embedded in staff motivation are two aspects not explicitly supported or only partially supported in the literature.

In the analysis of findings, a practice methodology with an empirical focus was applied to reconstruct the practitioners' perspectives from their descriptions of governance and management practices elicited from the interviews. The sub-themes were de-constructed in terms of the three constituent elements of practice – materiality, meaning and competence. This process of reconstruction and deconstruction enabled me to develop an account of governance and management practices of high performing PTEs. This also led to the construction of insights and implications that progress understanding towards good organisational practice. In doing so, this research proffers several recommendations to improve governance and management practice in the PTE sector.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

My research makes three key contributions. The first is to current discourses on governance and management, particularly in New Zealand private tertiary education. My review of literature has highlighted the dearth of systematic studies made of the subject. Conceptually, the study contributes to knowledge about governance and management practices that lead to superior performance in PTEs. The research offers a better understanding of these practices by viewing them in terms of the three elements comprising practice-as-entity – materiality, meaning and competence.

In utilising 'practice' that consists of the interaction of three constituent elements as the unit of analysis (Shove & Pantzar, 2005), this research contributes to practice-oriented organisational studies. Practice theory has been applied in studying many organisational phenomena (Feldman & Worline, 2016), such as organisational studies in the fields of strategy and knowledge (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011), resourcing, communities of practice and technology use (Feldman & Worline, 2016). My study fills a gap in the empirical literature on practice by extending the application of the theory to the field of governance and management.

Moreover, my study developed an account of governance and management practices of high performing PTEs through an empirical focus. By utilising an empirical approach which answers the 'what' of a practice lens (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011), this research contributes to studies that investigate practices empirically. Through the empirical approach, the views and perspectives of practitioners in the study were reconstructed to shed light on what makes the practice possible (through its component materialities and competences) and the meaning of the work that goes into what practitioners do (Nicolini, 2012). In focusing on the empirics of practice, this study added to the understanding of governance and management as an organisational phenomenon that is dynamic and accomplished in ongoing, everyday actions (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011).

Finally, the findings from this research identified organisational levers for enabling change in practices while supporting and reinforcing those practices that are working (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). I offer insights, implications, and recommendations to inform organisational interventions in New Zealand PTEs and similar organisations. The recommendations are not prescriptive as the findings from the study may not be directly translate-able to all PTEs given the differences of contexts in which they operate. However, the recommendations are capable of contextualisation to particular organisational settings and practitioners. They provide a starting point that will create the conditions to support continuous improvement and high performance. Hence, this study also contributes to the objective embodied in the charter of ITENZ, the nationwide peak body representative of New Zealand PTEs, to lift the quality and credibility of the sector.

Insights, Implications for Practice, and Recommendations

The insights from my study are relevant to practitioners in the sector. I offer here a number of insights, practical implications and recommendations that stem from the findings of this research. These contribute to practice by providing guideposts for what practitioners in the sector should consider doing to attain superior organisational performance. The two main recommendations, *a) Purpose beyond profit* and *b) Use of three leadership handles*, can be seen as an integrated leverage system that creates an advantage for a PTE leading to superior performance. This is depicted in Figure 3.

Purpose Beyond Profit is depicted as the fulcrum or the fixed point on which the three Leadership Handles will pivot. As the source of organisational identity, purpose is unchanging and everything the organisation does revolves around it, similar to the fixed fulcrum of a lever. The PTE's leadership operates around organisational purpose by applying its energies (through the three handles) to provide the organisational output, thus creating leverage similar to how a mechanical lever on a fulcrum works. A discussion of the elements of this leverage system follows.

Figure 3

PTE Leverage System
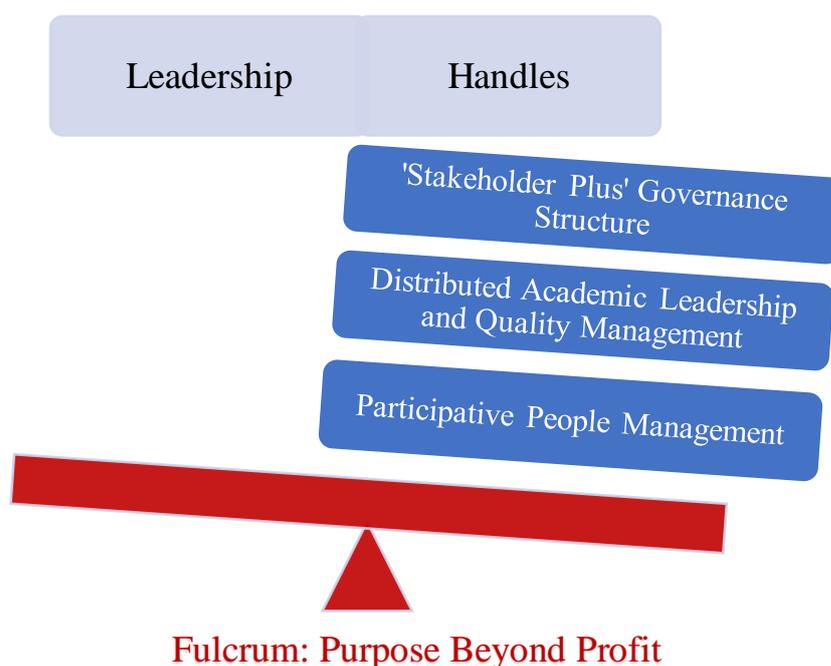
Fulcrum: Purpose Beyond Profit

The first insight that can be gleaned from this study is that having a purpose bigger than money is a cornerstone for success in New Zealand PTEs. The implication here is that a PTE needs to adopt a grid which interprets profit as an effect instead of the driver of the business. Profits will follow as the PTE endeavours to fulfil its bigger purpose of serving the needs of stakeholders. As these needs are met, the demand for its offerings grows.

Profit certainly has its place in business. Financial resources have been identified as a materiality in governance and management practices. Having a profitable business ensures those practices are performed well and the organisation is able to fulfil its purpose. However, profit can be seen as a means to an end instead of an end in itself.

This implication may require a fundamental change of heart in everyone involved so that the motivation shifts to a bigger agenda. Coupled with a change of heart is a change of mindset so that the focus of internal conversations shifts from financial performance metrics to the higher purpose. This could be challenging for a private enterprise created to exist in a profit-oriented, competitive market. However, as this study has demonstrated, there is strong evidence in favour of the idea of a higher purpose driving organisational life.

My recommendation to PTEs is to have a well-defined and clearly articulated over-arching purpose expressed in a mission statement centred on the learner and the community in which these learners are situated. This purpose should reflect a real impact that is compelling and inspiring to internal and external stakeholders. This may require a PTE to revisit their current mission statement or craft one that truly encapsulates the reason for its existence. The statement doesn't need to be lengthy but should be one that organisational members can easily remember and express.

Inextricably tied to an organisation's mission is its vision. While mission is the enduring identity that keeps the organisation grounded, vision is the bigger dream and hope for the future that keeps it moving forward (Daft, 2018). It is the Point B that the organisation wishes to move towards from where they are at Point A. Both Point A and

Point B need to be defined and understood with equal clarity (Nayar, 2010). This means that PTEs need to understand, not just who they are but also the current landscape of the education sector, the changes that are happening, the trends that are discernible, and where they are at in this landscape before they can determine where they want to go. This may entail revisiting the current vision or crafting a new one.

Like mission, vision needs to be strong and inspiring for it to fire people's imagination, renew their sense of pride in the organisation, lead to greater employee motivation and higher organisational performance (Daft, 2018). Also, enabling employees to co-create the mission and vision so that their personal purpose and dreams are bound into it leads to a greater sense of ownership and buy-in (Daft, 2018). This means widespread consultation, open communication and transparency, and a willingness to dream big and take other people along on the journey.

The organisational mission and vision should be the bigger agenda that drives the organisation, the fulcrum on which the organisational lever turns. This means mission and vision are deeply embedded in the organisation's culture so that it operates in ways that bring the purpose to life and enable people to move towards the same dream. Embedding mission and vision into organisational culture and ensuring buy-in of organisational members do not necessarily require grandiose culture building and change programmes. Even small initiatives can become catalysts that can have broader effects. Part of this is translating mission and vision into strategy that leads to execution, and then promoting and widely propagating the organisational purpose and direction across the organisation.

Strategies for promoting and propagating organisational purpose and direction include ensuring visibility in various organisational media (website, intranet, handbooks, documents, emails, collaterals, advertising, and marketing materials), consistent communication in meetings and informal conversations, incorporating into staff onboarding activities, and most especially modelling by organisational leaders through their actions and behaviours. Promotion and propagation need to be consistent for the narratives to take root.

So, defining the organisational purpose and direction is the first step. This is a core function of governance. Creating the environment that ensures mission and vision permeate every aspect of organisational life is the second step. This is a function of management. Governance and management need to work together for this endeavour to succeed.

Leadership Handles

The second insight that can be gleaned from this study is that there are three groups of leadership practice which play a crucial role in the success of an organisation. These are: governance practices, academic leadership practices and people management practices. These practices can be thought of as the handles of leadership that pivot on the fulcrum of the PTE's purpose. The implication here is that these leadership handles need to be strengthened, well-integrated and maximised for an effective leverage system that leads to optimal organisational performance. Based on these three leadership handles, my recommendation is three-fold. I discuss these recommendations in the sections that follow, offering further insights and implications for governance and management practice in PTEs.

Handle 1 – Governance: Governing Structure. The first handle of leadership in a PTE is governance practice. The results of this study point to the significance of the composition of the governance body to governance practices. Governance composition is a determinant of whether a PTE will have 'active and knowledgeable' governance, which this study has revealed is a factor for success. This implies that decisions on board composition need to be carefully and objectively considered so that the governance structure provides effective monitoring, control, and support for management.

My recommendation is for PTEs to use the 'stakeholder plus' model of governance as a basis for making decisions on board composition. In this model, governing members have the appropriate level of motivation to *actively* govern as well as the requisite skills and degree of independence from management to *effectively* govern. This is consistent with the "professional board" that many corporate governance codes require, comprised of majority non-executive board members who will competently and actively provide

oversight and supervision of executive activities and achievement of corporate objectives (Tricker, 2019).

Smaller PTEs may have an all-executive director board structure as they may not yet have reached a stage where non-executive directors are needed (Tricker, 2019). It is recommended for these PTEs to consider having more outside member representation in the board, which is likely to affect board monitoring and counsel activities (Johannisson & Huse, 2000). Bringing in more outsiders as non-executive directors provides a degree of freedom from relationships that can interfere with independent judgement (Adebayo et al., 2014) in the board's monitoring, counselling, and linking roles (Heracleous, 2001) as well as the strategic and operational practices required for the governance group to fulfil its mandate (Kooli, 2019).

An amalgamation of governance and management functions commonly exists in smaller firms such as many PTEs in New Zealand. In such firms, owners may play multiple roles in managing and governing the firm, thereby blurring the governance relationships (Mustakallio et al., 2002). A strict differentiation and separation of ownership on one hand and management/ directorship on the other hand is recommended (Karoui et al., 2017). However, this may not be easily accomplished. In small firms, there is less separation between ownership and management control as those managing them also own a significant percentage of the firm (Hitt et al., 2013). Therefore, actions to mitigate the risks carried by an amalgamation of governance and management functions should be put in place.

Mitigating actions can include clear job descriptions for the management roles played by governance members, coupled with a clear understanding of the demarcation lines between governance and management functions, and a commitment to keeping them. Directors who wear the dual hat of governance and management should not comprise majority of the governing group as this can lead to weak monitoring and control of managerial decisions (Hitt et al., 2013). Insider board members cannot be reasonably expected to undertake the function of monitoring and supervising themselves (Hart, 1995).

The working directors also need to provide unifying mechanisms for both governance and management groups to effectively work through competing expectations and requirements. Management meetings represented by members of both the governance and management groups, and the use of unifying narratives embedded in everyday organisational language are examples of unifying mechanisms. Another mitigating factor is the strength of a shared mission and long-term vision. This has been found to be associated with strategic decision quality and commitment (Mustakallio et al., 2002). It provides an alternative perspective to short-term pragmatisms that confront working directors who are part of managing a PTE on a day-to-day basis.

Handle 2 – Academic Leadership: Distributed Model and Quality Management. The second handle is academic leadership practice. Results of this study highlighted the impact of academic leadership on learner outcomes and the PTE's overall educational performance. A model of leadership that has grown particularly in the educational leadership arena is distributed leadership (Bolden, 2011). There is considerable evidence about the impact of distributed leadership practice on student outcomes (Robinson, 2019) as well as on academic capacity building (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Harris, 2004). This implies that multiple leadership distributed widely across the organisation has better influence on an institution's educational performance than traditional models with a singular leadership approach.

My recommendation is for PTEs to establish a model of distributed academic leadership and leverage this for superior performance. This means that responsibility for leading academic processes does not reside in a sole academic role or a few persons with academic duties but distributed among formal and informal leaders. It requires that academic expertise is tapped across the organisation through team-based structures, such as committees that look after various aspects of academic performance. Examples are an Academic Board, Teaching and Learning Committee, Continuous Improvement Committee, and Programme Committee among others. While there may be an executive role that provides oversight and overall accountability for academic outcomes, such as an Academic Director, this role needs to be properly supported by the team-based structures as well as the governance group. This role should also be filled by a person with the appropriate credentials and academic experience for them to have the capacity to lead.

A significant aspect of academic leadership is managing academic quality. In this regard, the education sector borrows from the principles and tools of the TQM concept derived from industry. TQM builds on existing quality in an institution and develops this into continuous quality improvements through a culture of institutional self-assessment (Sallis, 2002). Institutional self-assessment is becoming increasingly important in education (Sallis, 2002). It has been suggested that this should become an integral part of educational quality systems (Temponi, 2005).

Interestingly, self-assessment was identified in the current research as a common area for improvement across the PTE sector in New Zealand, specifically the use of self-assessment to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate quality improvements. It is, therefore, recommended for academic leadership in PTEs to focus on building institutional self-assessment capability. The principles of TQM, such as customer focus, employee involvement, process approach, fact-based decision-making, and continuous improvement (Rampersad, 2001) can be applied to educational quality systems to build self-assessment capability.

Building this capability entails using the tools of TQM, such as benchmarking, brainstorming, and force field analysis for the clear establishment of quality improvements (Rampersad, 2001). It also entails vigilant scanning and monitoring that will enable the organisation to understand the environment and the implications of what is going on so it can respond effectively. This requires robust data management practices that enable data to be systematically gathered, analysed, and used to inform strategic decision-making.

TQM requires a change of culture that represents a permanent shift in focus away from short-term expediency to long-term quality improvements that enable an institution to lock into a cycle of continuous improvement (Sallis, 2002). Developing a mindset of quality, where quality is seen as everyone's responsibility not just the responsibility of academic quality roles, is part of this culture change. Embedding institution-wide self-assessment into the strategic management practices of the organisation, with a clearly articulated quality policy, quality systems and structures that support a quality culture is essential.

Handle 3 - People Management: Participative Model. The third leadership handle is people management practice. The final insight that this study offers is that while a learner-centric purpose (which demonstrates learners and their communities are highly valued) is key to high performance in a PTE, organisational members should not be overlooked and valued any less. Valuing people to leverage what is considered a scarce organisational resource (Morgan, 1992b) can impact considerably on organisational performance. This implies that PTEs need to have a clear understanding of how to value their people and apply a combination of strategies to achieve that.

As seen in this study, the needs of people and the motivating factors present in an organisation will determine the approach to motivation. As people in the education setting are knowledge workers, some of the most significant motivating factors identified are staff involvement and communication, having a voice, being empowered to try new things, and professional growth.

My recommendation, therefore, is for PTEs to apply a participative model in managing people. This approach entails high involvement of employees in strategy, decision-making, problem solving which heighten employees' commitment, motivation, and connection to the organisation, (Furukawa, 1992; Lewis et al., 2007). Employee empowerment, engagement, and development signals strongly to organisational members, especially in a knowledge economy, that they are valued.

A success story which can be used as an exemplar of employee empowerment and engagement is HCL Technologies Limited, a leading global IT services company operating in 52 countries with over US$11 billion in revenue (HCL Technologies Limited, 2022a). The company has received accolades worldwide, including various recognitions as an employer of choice (HCL Technologies Limited, 2022b). The company has also been taught as a case study at Harvard Business School (Nayar, 2010).

A revolutionary move at HCL Technologies which proved to be a highly effective route to true employee empowerment and increasing revenues was to organise the company around the principle of *employees first, customers second* (Daft, 2018). The company's leaders understood that true value is created in the interface between the customer and

the employee, so by putting employees first, this brings about a fundamental change in the way the company creates and delivers unique value for the customer (Nayar, 2010). HCL Technologies understood that what customers really seek is whether the employees providing them service will walk the extra mile and get excited enough to engage their whole selves in their work with them (Nayar, 2010). By reversing the standard equation and putting employees first, the organisation was able to provide the environment for employees to deliver just that to their customers, thereby creating more value for them (Nayar, 2010).

A similar principle lies at the heart of the participative management approach that can be employed in PTEs. By applying the principle of *employees first, learners second*, a PTE positions itself to create the very environment that will empower and enable its employees to grow and provide better value for the learners and the communities that they serve, thereby fulfilling their core purpose. Indeed, the employees' working conditions impact the learners' learning conditions, and ultimately the outcomes for all stakeholders.

It is important to note that in applying this principle, HCL Technologies did not employ elaborate programmes of organisational transformation but simple actions that helped to transform a locked-up culture into one that was constantly changing (Nayar, 2010). Their initiatives included four main elements that other organisations can learn from (Nayar, 2010):

- Mirror Mirror – organisation members examine themselves and their teams, looking in the mirror everyday to face the reality of where the organisation is and how they can move forward.
- Building trust through transparency – bringing important, even sensitive, information out into the open so employees feel included; online portals where employees could raise issues and comments, ask questions even of the CEO and vice versa; problem management system to quickly resolve internal issues between different units across the organisation; strategic plans shared across the organisation enabling employees to contribute.
- Inverting the organisational pyramid – management and the enabling functions such as HR and Finance become accountable to the value creators at the bottom of the pyramid.

- Recasting the CEO's role – shifting the responsibility for change and ownership of collective problems to the employees, with the CEO becoming merely an enabler.

These initiatives led employees to want to deal with their professional and personal lives in a very different way as suddenly they saw the company as their own enterprise and their energy quotients leaped up (Nayar, 2010). In similar fashion, PTEs can create actions that serve as catalysts for powerful transformation that leads to superior organisational performance. The four main elements described above can be used to inform efforts to practice participative management and engage employees for higher productivity and performance.

Limitations

My research shed light on what constitutes good practice in governance and management of high performing PTEs in New Zealand. Notwithstanding my research contributions to theory and practice, there are limitations within my work that need to be highlighted.

Firstly, my research utilised a case study of a single PTE that met the sampling criteria. Findings from one case study may not be representative of all high-performing PTEs in New Zealand. This has been mitigated by interviews with NZQA EER Evaluators as expert informants. They provided a wide-ranging perspective of superior organisational performance encompassing not just PTEs, but all other tertiary education organisations that fall under the NZQA-operated national quality assurance regime. Notwithstanding this, given the contextual variations across organisations even within the same sector, the transferability of my findings and the applicability of the practical implications to other similar organisations should still be considered.

Secondly, I was unable to employ observation as a research method within the case study. This was largely due to accessibility issues brought on by the COVID-19 lockdowns occurring during the time of my investigation. This was mitigated through employing document analysis that covered other high performing PTEs that did not participate in the research to triangulate the information from the interviews. However,

this still posed some limitations on the ability to triangulate descriptions of governance and management practice in the case study organisation through interpreting the doings of staff members in relation to the social environment in which they are positioned (Mattern, 2011).

Thirdly, the number of participants within the case study as well as the NZQA expert interviews did not enable me to reach theoretical saturation. Challenges faced by the case study organisation during the COVID-19 pandemic posed barriers to extending the interviews to lower-level non-management staff. This limited the ability to triangulate the descriptions of governance and management practice through eliciting the views of those at the receiving end of such practice. With the NZQA participants, further attempts at snowball sampling failed to enlist more Evaluators as research participants.

Finally, bias from a single researcher undertaking data collection and analysis is unavoidable in this study. Mitigating this limitation is the recording of the interviews and subsequent validation of the transcripts by the interviewees as well as the use of document analysis to triangulate the data.

Future Research

Results of my study can inform the judgements and decisions of practitioners to improve educational actions, which also contributes to building a scaffolding for other researchers to climb (Bassey, 2012). This section suggests the directions that other researchers can climb.

My research employed the empirical enquiry approach which focuses on the everyday activity of organising, answering the "what" of a practice lens (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). This approach emphasises the importance of practices in organisational life in terms of the actions performed by people which are central to organisational outcomes (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). To extend the results from this study, future research can employ another approach in studying governance and management practice - the theoretical approach that answers the "how" of a practice lens, explaining the dynamics of people's activities, how these are generated, reinforced, and changed, and how they operate within different contexts and over time (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011).

This approach can follow the conceptualisation of practice-as-performance, i.e. practice is the doing of individuals which are situated within particular times and places (Bukhave & Creek, 2021; Twine, 2015). My study followed only the conceptualisation of practice-as-entity. Practices-as-entities may be recorded and remembered but do not endure unless performed (Shove et al., 2012). Using the notion of practice being performed, researchers can further investigate aspects which the current study had not sought to explore, such as why a practice is what it is and how it contributes to, or interferes with, the production of organisational life (Nicolini, 2012). Exploring governance and management practice within the New Zealand PTE sector through a theoretical lens that analyses performance of practice within various contexts that provide structure and meaning to what people do can further deepen our understanding of the subject. As Ahrens and Khalifa (2013) purport, good governance is a result of behaviour whose dynamics unfold as part of corporations' specific contexts, and more qualitative research is needed to illuminate such contexts.

In addition, my research presented meanings interpreted from the key practices of governance and management emerging from the findings. 'Meaning' is one of the components of practice-as-entity. Future research can continue to develop the interpretation of multiple meanings found in the field through a qualitative study of conflicting meanings that arise from the divergent interests of owners, managers, and other corporate governance actors (Ahrens & Khalifa, 2013). Ahrens and Khalifa (2013) purport that studying meanings that are not reconciled among the different actors of corporate governance is a largely untapped potential of qualitative corporate governance research which can generate new insights into some of the determinants of important questions of corporate governance practice.

Concluding Comments

My thesis contributes to understanding governance and management practices that lead to superior organisational performance in the New Zealand PTE sector. It proffers insights, implications for practice and practical recommendations that can inform continuous improvement efforts in PTEs. This research has played a small part in supporting practitioners of governance and management and ultimately increasing the quality and credibility of the sector.

It is my hope that this research will spark more interest in further understanding governance and management practice and prompt further discourses on the subject within the context of New Zealand tertiary education. The sector plays a significant role in nation building and deserves further exploration and systematic study that can lead to improved practice.

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Appendix A. PTE EER Results: 2009-2020

Year	Number of PTEs				Total EERs
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	
2009	5	3	0	0	8
2010	86	51	45	3	185
2011	77	71	33	13	194
2012	61	103	33	5	202
2013	64	71	23	7	165
2014	75	51	22	4	152
2015	75	71	21	6	173
2016	61	69	26	5	161
2017	57	41	20	3	121
2018	56	41	22	2	121
2019	53	34	25	2	114
2020	27	28	7	0	62
TOTALS	697	634	277	50	**1,658**
ANNUAL AVERAGE	58	53	23	4	**138**
PERCENTAGE	42%	38%	17%	3%	**100%**

Source: NZQA Quality Assurance Division (September 2021)

Appendix B. Cancelled PTE Registrations: 2009-2021

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	**TTL**
Number of De-registered PTEs	40	64	45	53	50	52	38	36	49	37	31	19	10	**524**

Yearly Average: **40 PTEs**

Reasons for de-registration include:

- Board decision for closure of business due to varied reasons (e.g. cost of business, registration and compliance)
- Liquidation arising from inability to support business operations
- Existing NZQA action arising from compliance issues and failure to meet the criteria for delivering quality education
- Lapse of programme accreditations
- Decision to deliver non-NZQA recognised training or training not required to be listed in the New Zealand Qualifications Framework
- Assets and operating activities purchased by another PTE (transfer of ownership)

Source: NZQA Quality Assurance Division (February 2022)

Appendix C. Profile of Case Study PTE

Case Study PTE	Student Population[a]	Programme Portfolio Discipline Areas[b]
PTE A	941	Business, Business Administration, Hospitality, Information Technology, Tourism Management, English Language, Health and Wellbeing

[a] *Source: March 2019 EER Report*

[b] *Source: Organisational website at the time of this study*

Appendix D. PTE A Case Study Participants

To protect their privacy and preserve anonymity, the roles of the participants are categorised broadly. The knowledge domains covering the questions that the PTE participants responded to in relation to their specific functions provide an indication of the areas that they have oversight in the PTE to ensure their responses can be contextualised. The 'Responsibilities' column provides an indication of these areas.

Participant Code	Role in the PTE	Gender	Responsibilities
PTE1	Executive	Male	Organisational Leadership
PTE2	Executive	Female	Organisational Leadership – Business Model Data and Resource Management Change and Innovation
PTE3	Manager	Female	People Management
PTE4	Manager	Female	Organisational Leadership - Academic Data and Resource Management Change and Innovation
PTE5	Director	Male	Organisational Leadership - Academic
PTE6	Manager	Female	Data and Resource Management
PTE7	Director	Male	Organisational Leadership - Academic
PTE8	Head	Male	Data and Resource Management
PTE9	Executive	Male	Organisational Leadership
PTE10	Executive	Male	Organisational Leadership
PTE11	Director	Male	Organisational Leadership Data and Resource Management Change and Innovation People Management
PTE12	Manager	Female	Organisational Leadership – Academic Data and Resource Management People Management

Appendix E. NZQA Participants

Participant Code	Number of Years as EER Evaluator (at the time of the study)	Gender	Employment Status	Experience as Lead EER Evaluator
NZQA1	12	Female	Contractor	Yes
NZQA2	7	Male	Contractor	Yes
NZQA3	6	Female	Contractor	Yes
NZQA4	12	Female	Contractor	Yes
NZQA5	3	Female	Full-time employee	Yes
NZQA6	12	Female	Contractor	Yes
NZQA7	3	Female	Full-time employee	Yes
NZQA8	12	Male	Contractor	Yes
NZQA9	12	Male	Full-time employee	Yes
NZQA10	12	Male	Full-time employee	Yes
NZQA11	11	Female	Full-time employee	Yes
NZQA12	8	Male	Full-time employee	Yes

Appendix F. Interview Questions

Questions for Case Study PTE – Executives and Management Staff

Organisational Leadership
- Is there a clearly defined statement of organisational purpose and direction? If yes, what is this? If no, what do you think is the organisational purpose and direction?   - How are these communicated across the PTE?   - In what ways are these manifested in the PTE? Give examples.   - What roles in the PTE provide academic leadership?   - How is academic leadership demonstrated?   - How effective is this and why? Give examples.   - How does the business model align with the educational purpose of the PTE?
Data and Resource Management
- Are resources sufficient for learning, teaching, and research?   - How are resources allocated and managed?   - How effective is this process and why? Give examples.   - How is educational data generated? reported? utilised? managed?   - How effective are these processes and why? Give examples.
People Management
- What are your practices around staff recruitment? Staff development?   - How effective are these and why? Give examples.   - Do you feel valued as a staff member?   - Do staff members feel valued in general?   - How does the PTE show that it values staff members?   - How effective are these practices and why?

Change and Innovation
- How well does the PTE respond to change?   - Why do you say so? Give examples.   - How innovative is the PTE?   - Why do you say so? Give examples.

Questions for Case Study PTE – Working Directors

- How do you balance any tension between your governance and management roles?

- What are the benefits of being in both roles? (benefits to you and to the organisation)

- What have been the challenges? How have you addressed these challenges?

- How effective has it been to have both governance and management roles played by business owners/ shareholders? Why do you say so?

Questions for NZQA EER Evaluators

- What are the practices that you have observed in Category 1 PTEs related to the governance and management indicators in the TEI framework?

- How have these been managed? Provide specific examples.

- What are the key characteristics you have observed in PTEs that have achieved a Category 1 rating?

- What is the most significant area for improvement across the PTE sector?

- Rank the top 3 governance and management indicators that contribute most to high organisational performance.

Appendix G. Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

Study Title

An Exploration of Governance and Management Practices of Category 1 PTEs (Private Training Establishments) in New Zealand

An Invitation to Participate

My name is Leah Ingrid Seno, a student at the Massey University School of Management completing the Master of Business Studies (Management) programme. This study was approved by the Massey University Ethics Committee (Northern). Your agreement to take part in this study will be greatly appreciated.

Before deciding whether to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to discuss this with relevant persons as deemed fit. Please keep this sheet for reference and contact me for questions/ clarifications: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Purpose of the Research

This research aims to explore governance and management practices and processes of PTEs that have attained a Category 1 rating in their most recent NZQA external review in order to gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes good practice in the sector. This will provide a body of knowledge and present guidelines and implications for practice that will inform the improvement efforts of PTEs and contribute to lifting the credibility and quality of the sector.

Why have you been invited to participate?

You have been identified as an appropriate person to include in the target research population because you have met either of the following criteria:

- Staff in a sample PTE with key responsibilities related to academic leadership, human resources, data/ resource management, change/ innovation, or organisational leadership
- An NZQA EER Evaluator for 2 years or more

Do you have to take part?

Participation is completely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether you will take part in this study. If you do decide to participate, you will be asked to sign a Consent Form. Even if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason or experiencing any disadvantage.

What will happen if you decide to participate?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to have a face-to-face, telephone or virtual interview with the Researcher at a time and place that is suitable to you. The interview will last for no longer than 1 hour. The interviewer will ask a series of questions related to any or all of the following:

- Organisational leadership, including academic leadership
- Data and resource management
- People management
- Change and Innovation

For NZQA Evaluators – you will be asked about organisational practices/ processes related to the above points which have been observed in high performing PTEs.

Your responses will be included in the analysis along with the findings of the secondary research.

Will what you say in this study be kept confidential?

The interviews will be recorded, and the recordings will be transcribed. You will be given sight of the transcript of your interviews to confirm their validity and ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

Transcriptions will be made anonymous before being archived in a secure and confidential area for a period of 3 years following completion of the study. The recordings will be destroyed after three years.

Every effort will be made to preserve participants' anonymity. Results will be aggregated to ensure non-identification of individual responses. The raw data will be accessible only to the Investigator and the Research Supervisors.

The results of the research may be disseminated within Massey University, academic agencies/ professionals in relation to academic quality procedures, ITENZ (Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand) as the peak body association for PTEs in New Zealand, and in scholarly publications.

What should you do if you agree to participate?
If you agree to participate, please read and sign the attached Consent Form. This will be collected by the Investigator on the day of your interview.
Note: All research participants should keep a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form.

Validation of the Research
For validation purposes and if you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact:
Research Supervisors:
    a. *Dr Jason Cordier – J.Cordier@massey.ac.nz, (09) 414 0800 ext. 43415*
    b. *Dr Bill Kirkley – W.Kirkley@massey.ac.nz, (09) 414 0800 ext. 43407*
OR:
Massey University Ethics Committee Chairperson (Northern):
    a. *Dr Fiona Te Momo – humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz; (09) 414 0800 ext. 43347*

Thank you.

Leah Ingrid Seno

Appendix H. Consent Form

Interview Consent Form

Study Title: An Exploration of Governance and Management Practices of Category 1 PTEs (Private Training Establishments) in New Zealand

Please tick the appropriate column to signify your consent.

	Yes	No
I have read the information sheet concerning the above-named study.		
I understand the purpose of the study and the nature of my involvement.		
I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study.		
All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.		
I understand and agree that I am free to request further information at any stage.		
I understand and agree that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary.		
I understand and agree that I am free to withdraw any time, including withdrawal of information provided, without any disadvantages.		
I understand and agree that my interview responses will be recorded.		
I understand and agree that the information I provide will be processed and used solely for this study.		
I understand and agree that I will not be paid for my involvement in this study.		
I understand and agree that if I decide to withdraw from this research, the information I have provided up to the point of withdrawal will continue to be processed and used in the study unless specifically withdrawn by me.		
I understand and agree that I will be given sight of the transcription of my interview for validation purposes.		
I understand and agree that the transcript of my interview will be made anonymous and held in secure storage for 3 years, after which it will be destroyed.		
I understand and agree that every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity and any personal information will be made confidential.		
I understand and agree that the results of the investigation will be aggregated to ensure non-identification of individual responses.		
I have a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and this Consent Form		

I agree to take part in the study.

Name:

Signature: Date:

Appendix I. Codes for Secondary Data (EER Reports)

PTE EER Report Code	Date of EER Reports
PTE A (Case Study Organisation):	
PTE-A1	2019
PTE-A2	2015
PTE B:	
PTE-B1	2017
PTE-B2	2014
PTE C:	
PTE-C1	2017
PTE-C2	2013

Appendix J. Massey University Ethics Approval

1. Official Ethics Approval Letter:

Human Ethics - Low
Risk Notification Let

2. Ethics Notification:

From: humanethics@massey.ac.nz <humanethics@massey.ac.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 5 May 2020 7:33 am
To: Leah.Seno.1@uni.massey.ac.nz <Leah.Seno.1@uni.massey.ac.nz>; Cordier, Jason <J.Cordier@massey.ac.nz>; Kirkley, Bill <W.Kirkley@massey.ac.nz>
Cc: Human Ethics <gmhumeth@massey.ac.nz>
Subject: Human Ethics Notification - 4000022319

HoU Review Group

Ethics Notification Number: 4000022319
Title: An Exploration of Governance and Management Practices of Category 1 PTEs in New Zealand

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again answering yes to the publication question to provide more information to go before one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter, please login to the RIMS system, and under the Reporting section, View Reports you will find a link to run the LR Report.

Yours sincerely

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix K. Activities, Components of Governance and Management Practices

Theme 1: Purpose Driven

Sub-theme 1: Student-Centric Mission, Vision, Values Practice

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
• Clearly defining, articulating the mission, vision and values that focus on learners • Communicating, promoting and propagating the student-centric mission, vision and values widely across the organisation • Using student-centric mission, vision and values to guide strategic planning and decision-making, checking that strategies align with these	• Organisational structures (teams, departments, business units) through which managers cascade mission, vision, values to staff members • Meetings, planning sessions, informal conversations • Staff induction, Orientation • Organisational re-branding • Organisational documents (handbooks, templates, collaterals, advertising material) • Staff intranet • Organisational website • Student support roles on campus (Study Skills Advisor, e-Learning Manager) • Student-centric cultural activities	• Sense of significance in the work and life of organisational members • Passion for educational purpose as people link their personal purpose with the organisation's • Sense of oneness and belonging as the shared vision provides the common ground for organisational members • Alignment with the organisation	• Understanding the organisation's offerings, target market, rationale, reason for existence • Understanding of stakeholder needs and how they can be met • Understanding the educational landscape, issues and trends, central directions from government • Ability to determine what the organisation believes and stands for • Ability to envision the future and how to chart this future • Astuteness, intuition in determining organisational identity • Leaders modelling behaviours, passion and energy • Other leader competences:

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
	• Strategic planning and decision-making processes • Leader communications/ reinforcing vision in an actionable manner • Co-creation (consultation and participation • Vision as a decision-making guide • Vision made visible • Behavioural reinforcement • Financial resources to implement activities and provide these materialities		Communication skills, empathy, interpersonal skills, understanding of staff motivation • Strategic management know-how and ability

Sub-theme 2: Community Engagement Practice

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
• Developing and maintaining strategic alliances with the community of stakeholders through communication and relationship building, networking, involvement in community/ stakeholder group activities, gathering feedback	• Resources for building community linkages – materials for meetings/ gatherings/ public conferences/ events/ community group activities, linking roles, collaterals and documents with organisational information	• Making a difference in learners' lives • Having a positive ripple effect on the wider community (producing skilled graduates to fill roles in industry and business, enabling learners to develop soft skills that enhance their	• Knowledge and awareness of stakeholder groups and diverse needs • Ability to translate understanding of needs to real action • Environmental analysis skills • Communication • Interpersonal skills • Empathy

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
• Creating Industry Advisory Groups • Strategising around regional priorities/ needs	(flyers, brochures) • Mechanisms and resources for gathering formal stakeholder feedback (surveys, interviews, focus groups) • Resources for implementing region-specific strategies	whanau, or provide technical knowledge and skills for people in voluntary community roles) • Impact on society as a whole as the PTE serves the needs of a wider group of stakeholders (migrant groups, professional bodies, non-profit organisations, business and commercial entities) • Preservation of the PTE's relevance and legitimacy to operate in society • Social responsibility • Social responsiveness	• Collaboration • Ability to monitor external environment (Bartol et al., 2008) • Developing and using internal response mechanisms (task forces, committees, or individual roles that lead to decisions and actions in response to changing social trends, stakeholder needs and expectations) (Bartol et al., 2008) • Social forecasting • Social scanning • Implementing feedback mechanisms • Utilisation of feedback in strategic management

Theme 2: Strong Leadership

Sub-theme 1: Active and Knowledgeable Governance Practice

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
• Developing and using a governing structure based on the stakeholder plus model (those that have a stake to	• Governance structure (board composition) • Mechanisms to mitigate the pitfalls of amalgamating	• Shared commitment to the business and its long-term success • Sense of pride in being part of an	• Availability and time for governance activities • Experience and knowledge of the education sector

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
actively govern also have the requisite knowledge and skills for governing) • Mitigating the effects of amalgamating governance and management functions where this is the case	governance and management (clear job descriptions for management roles, long-term strategic thinking, shared vision and values, combined meetings, use of metaphors and unifying narratives)	enduring and sustainable entity • Shared vision as a focal point for governance strategy, a shared dream	as well as the requirements of quality education; education skills • Understanding organisational performance indicators • People management skills • Business and financial skills • Legal skills • Leadership skills (strategic management, vision, results orientation, communication, interpersonal, risk management, critical thinking, networking, internal and external scanning • Planning and decision-making • Integrity • Intellect and critical faculty • Strength of character • Persistence • Assertiveness • Political abilities • Ability to bring information and legitimacy through own credibility and external networks

Sub-theme 2: Competent Academic Leadership Practice

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
• Apply a distributed leadership model through the use of team-based structures, such as committees with academic responsibilities that engage the expertise of people across the organisation • Developing and managing structures, systems, and processes for managing academic quality	• Framework for managing academic performance, including committee terms of reference, policies, and procedures for effective implementation of structures, systems and processes for academic quality management • Organisational members with roles that support the academic leader • Support of the governance group	• Sense of significance and justification of the PTE's existence coming from the fulfilment of its educational purpose - quality management leads to better outcomes for learners and tangible results for all stakeholders	• Solid understanding of education, complexities of learning delivery, legislative and regulatory environment, compliance accountabilities that need to be managed • Cognitive abilities (strategy, flexibility, responsiveness, diagnosis) • Interpersonal skills (empathising, influencing) • Passion and commitment • Decisiveness • Self-regulation • Communication • Goal setting • Ensuring quality • Leading teacher development • Ensuring a safe environment • Pedagogical knowledge • Problem solving • Trust building • Openness • Being attuned to the organisation and external trends • Desire to achieve a strong reputation for the PTE

Theme 3: Reflective

Sub-theme 1: Self-assessment Practice

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
• Engaging in honest self-reflection to identify gaps and areas of strength using various mechanisms established at all levels of the organisation • Planning and implementing continuous improvements that respond to stakeholder needs and lead to quality education	• Mechanisms for self-assessment such as programme reviews, annual programme evaluation reports, governance/ management/ operational meetings, student progress reviews, performance appraisals, surveys, quality monitoring activities, industry advisory groups, campus reports, course summaries, staff forums, service evaluations • Financial, human and material investments to implement continuous improvement initiatives	• Making a difference in the lives of stakeholders and creating ripple effects in the wider community through performance improvements arising from self-assessment • Sense of achievement and pride in being part of an enduring and fruitful endeavour as continuous improvements contribute to the sustainability and success of the PTE	• Analytical skills • Critical thinking • External scanning • Monitoring • Responding effectively through developing and implementing improvement plans • Monitoring and assessing improvements made • Managing academic quality: Understanding quality standards and requirements in teaching and learning; Understanding and utilising quality assurance methods • Drive and passion for excellence

Sub-theme 2: Robust Data Management Practice that Informs Continuous Improvement

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
• Systematically collecting self-assessment data, such as student achievement	• Data from key performance indicators, students, graduates,	• Impact of this practice in shaping other organisational practices, such as	• Knowledge and skills in data collection, including survey design, using

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
outcomes, feedback from industry • Analysing, interpreting and using self-assessment data • Problem-solving and decision-making in response to meaningful data	industry, internal staff • Data management systems, including mechanisms and tools for collecting, processing, analysing, reporting and sharing data (surveys and interviews, feedback and evaluations, forums, observations, Learner Management System, shared organisational folders, performance reports, IT infrastructures) • Role or team dedicated to systematic data management • Budget allocation to establish and maintain a robust data management system	strategy and decision-making, teaching and learning, programme development and design, learner support, other governance and management practices such as setting purpose and direction • Lift in quality across the organisation through data-informed changes • Improved reputation and credibility of the institution which contributes to competitive advantage • Improved ability to serve stakeholders	questionnaires/ survey platform • Data processing and presentation, interpretation and drawing conclusions • Knowledge of data generation through IT infrastructures and technologies • Ability to ascertain and prioritise areas for improvement based on data • Ability to review and assess outcomes and effectiveness of the improvement process

Theme 4: Valuing Staff

Sub-theme 1: Staff Motivation Practice

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
• Using tangible and intangible motivators to	• Financial resources to	• Strong organisational culture arising	• Interdependent skills • Empathy

Activities	Materialities	Meanings	Competences
show staff that they are valued, such as awards and recognitions, incentives, appreciative notes, celebrations, participation and consultation, empowerment and involvement, delegation, autonomy • Developing staff through training and career growth initiatives	provide pay and incentives • Policies and procedures for staff promotion and rewards • Systems that lead to employee involvement in strategy, decision-making and problem-solving (e.g. ad-hoc committees where staff can participate) • Budget and time allocation for professional development • Policies and systems for staff development and appraisals	from a highly energised workforce • Sense of ownership, belonging and connection to the organisation resulting from high engagement • Sense of affirmation and self-actualisation resulting from professional/ personal growth	• Understanding diverse needs and motivational factors • Knowledge of conditions that foster employee satisfaction • Knowledge and skill in applying motivational strategies and tools • Delegation skills • Power sharing/ empowerment skills