Joy and pain – a visit into scholarship:

Managers' lived experience as part-time doctoral researchers

Towards the development of a conceptual framework

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Abstract

This research provides an in-depth study of the lived experience of German managers who undertake part-time doctoral study at a British University. The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), as a professional doctorate with its initial structured taught phase, is the subject of investigation. It is of particular interest to German business professionals as the national education system does not provide opportunities to undertake part-time doctoral study, especially in such a format. The focus of this study is managers' experienced stress and the coping strategies applied as part-time DBA students, within their context and through the perspectives of other lifeworlds. Previous research on the doctoral experience has not focused on the DBA and, specifically, its related stress, or by applying interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

A case-by-case and across cases analysis is used to provide a holistic understanding of managers' lived experience in their context. Four student cases were explored over 8 to 10 months through several interviews, with the students, their supervisors, their partners, and their work colleagues. The analysis generated six superordinate themes: Learning and challenging identity, balancing: negotiation and adaption, managing emotional fluctuations, relying on significant others, motivating and persisting and moving forward.

Van Manen's (1990) four existentials – (temporality, spatiality, corporeality and relationality) as the core structure of lived experience – provide a theoretical basis to illustrate the relationships and dynamics of those themes in a holistic conceptual framework of DBA students' lived experience. Central in this framework is students' research development as embodied practice, challenged by destabilising forces (experienced as stress) primarily arising from issues within temporality and relationality. In response, students seek control in the form of maintaining balance by negotiation and adaption, managing emotional fluctuations, and seeking support from significant others. Development happens in a cyclic fashion, where a maturation process appears to be characterised by passing a threshold while experiencing pain.

Core findings reveal most stressors arise from the discrepancy between an individual's mindset as a manager and the academic thinking and rigour required of a DBA. Being a 'student' in a novice role creates uncertainty and destabilises self-confidence and thus a manager's identity. This illustrates that students' research development requires learning and identity work. The findings illuminate the barrier between practitioner and academic thinking that DBA students need to overcome and emphasize the need for consideration in programme conception and acknowledgement by educators, supervisors, and prospective students of the individual's process of development.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

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List of abbreviations

DBA   Doctor of Business Administration

EdD   Doctor of Education

HE   Higher Education

IPA   Interpretative phenomenological analysis

KMK   Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in Germany

PhD   Doctor of Philosophy

RD1   Final research plan

HESA   UK Higher Education Statistics Agency

TNE   Transnational Education

TNHE   Transnational Higher Education

1. Introduction

'Doing the next step', to enhance, to develop, or to challenge oneself – this is the language managers use when embarking on a doctorate. The question of whether this means joy or pain does not seem to be relevant or part of their considerations. Rather, managers' attention centres on practical considerations, such as advantages of a specific programme structure and the title as the outcome. To reach this goal, bringing together professional practitioner experience and theory would seem an ideal route for such a manager. It is also a precondition for most managers that a doctorate is studied part-time, enabling them to remain in their full-time position. Therefore, it is also unsurprising that, for many, they choose to investigate a research topic that is relevant to their work and that informs their professional practice. However, part-time doctoral study, tailored to the needs of such professionals by focusing on a practice-oriented approach, is not a common model in every country's Higher Education system, particularly not in Germany. The reasons for this are multi-layered.

The German Higher Education System, in terms of doctoral work, is still, to some extent, "a purely academic affair" (Kehm, 2020, p. 86) not directed to applied science (at public universities that have the right to award doctoral degrees). Also, informal practice in supervision regulation (Kehm, 2020) makes it difficult for 'externals' – which is what part-time doctoral students are considered as they are not members of faculty, as are their full-time counterparts – to find a supervisor whilst remaining in a full-time job. Even though policymakers and institutional leaders have started to pay increased attention to doctoral education, particularly given goals to accelerate the knowledge economy, concerns about maintaining standards by professors prevent, or at least hamper, the development of new approaches and programme structures in doctoral education (Kehm, 2020).

In other countries, including the UK, new forms, such as professional doctorates, have long been established (Banerjee & Morley, 2013; Hawkes & Yerrabati, 2018). The UK Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) is of particular interest for German managers, as a few British universities offer their DBAs in the German

market. For German managers, this affords completely new avenues for the doctoral endeavour that make this student group unique and worthy of exploration. Therefore, this study applies a phenomenological approach to understanding the lived experience of these students in-depth.

Before outlining the purpose of this research followed by the research questions and its theoretical basis, professional doctorates, as a special form of doctoral education, will be introduced through its historical development, distribution, aim and programme structure while addressing the DBA in particular.

1.1 Professional doctorates

Originally, professional doctorates were developed in the USA at Harvard (EdD) in 1921 (Bourner et al., 2001) and were adopted in the UK in the late 80s, in Australia in the 90s (Kot & Hendel, 2012; Lee et al., 2009) and Canada in the late 90s, based on changes in governmental funding and policy reformation (Neumann, 2002; Neumann & Rodwell, 2009). Universities in continental Europe, especially in Germany, have not adopted this form of the doctoral programme (Gill & Hoppe, 2009). It is only the very latest developments that show (Kehm, 2020) that the professional doctorate is starting to emerge in Germany, but so far only in a few disciplines such as the natural sciences and engineering. In other European countries, universities have started to offer a form of practice-oriented Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on a more individual basis, but not as a structured programme, such as is the case within a professional doctorate (Banerjee & Morley, 2013).

Professional doctorates exist in many disciplines, including medicine, law, psychology, engineering, education (Gill & Hoppe, 2009) counselling and business administration. They started in education and engineering (Silvester, 2011) and rapidly increased in other disciplines to cover over 20 subjects (Bourner et al., 2001). By 1999, in the UK alone, more than 16 universities offered the DBA (Bourner et al., 2000) – Henley being the first in 1992 – which further increased to 37% of the total number of UK universities by 2003 (Banerjee & Morley, 2013). This emphasizes the increased popularity of the DBA as a response to universities' efforts to contribute to the knowledge economy.

Generally, in comparison to the traditional PhD, professional doctorates have been developed to provide research-based career development for experienced senior practitioners in their profession (Bareham et al., 2000; Taylor, 2007). Usually, the programme structure differs from that of the PhD in the form of integrated coursework and a cohort approach, where a group of students with a similar background enter the programme at the same time and are encouraged to build learning groups and support each other during their study time (Ellis & Lee, 2005; Fink, 2006; Wellington & Sikes, 2006). Nevertheless, a clear distinction is difficult to provide as neither PhD programmes nor general professional programmes are homogeneous in their structure across institutions and across subjects, which has led to several debates (Bourner et al., 2001). Discussions have additionally taken place about quality and academic rigour generally, but also concerning the DBA as a specific award (e.g. Anderson et al., 2015; Bourner et al., 2001; Evans, 1998b; Lee et al., 2009; Taylor, 2007).

As a response, further development has taken place in the form of programme re-conceptualisations in so-called 'second and third-generation approaches' (Garrick & Rhodes, 2002; Malfroy & Yates, 2003; Maxwell, 2003; Maxwell & Shanahan, 2001), where the emphasis changed from mode 1 knowledge production (theoretical knowledge within one discipline) to mode 2 knowledge production (applied interdisciplinary knowledge, contextual) (Anderson et al., 2015). The first generation reflects a kind of PhD that includes some taught modules and focus on a business-related problem rooted in Mode 1 knowledge production (Maxwell & Shanahan, 2001). The second generation began to move to the knowledge production of mode 2 to promote engagement with practice (Tranfield & Starkey, 1998). Key to mode 2 knowledge production is the result of the interaction between theory and practice – in the form of applied theoretical knowledge (Anderson et al., 2015). After 2004, many of the professional doctorates available could be classified as second-generation (Lester, 2004); around 2014 the third generation started to emerge with an emphasis on professional practice and the development of professional knowledge for employability outside academia. Here the focus is on the development of transferable skills to meet the requirement for employment in a knowledge economy (Anderson et al., 2015).

This also illustrates the importance of DBA programmes for the knowledge economy and here the aim is to bridge the theory-practice gap by giving a reply to the critique levelled at business schools –that they fail to use research findings to inform practice or to take academic ideas and translate them into practice (Thorpe & Rawlinson, 2014). Anderson et al. (2015) suggest helping practitioners to make use of findings in the form of practical lessons and implications.

So, currently, DBA research usually starts from a particular problem, primarily located in the workplace. Research problems are hence often micro-organizational processes in the candidates' organization (Banerjee & Morley, 2013). Most DBA programmes, therefore, focus on professional practice, reflection, and professional development as key attributes. The DBA is intended to train researching professionals, where candidates contribute to both the literature on management and business and to professional practice (Anderson et al., 2015). This also gives universities the chance to enhance their research profile and promote interaction with industry and practitioners (Banerjee & Morley, 2013). Furthermore, the DBA, as with any professional doctorate, can create further value in its ability to offer an opportunity for reflection on theory in action (Pervan & Kortt, 2018) for both the university and students. Given those opportunities for universities and students, this study gives further insight into DBA students' experiences, which then informs programme improvements and understandings of doctoral education.

1.2 Study purpose

This research provides in particular an in-depth study of the lived experience of managers from Germany who undertake a part-time doctoral study at a British university. As the German education system does not easily support part-time doctoral study and, to date, non-traditional students' needs have not been addressed in the German higher education system (Bundesbericht Wissenschaftlicher Nachwuchs, 2017), a professional doctorate, such as the DBA, with its structured taught elements and potentially shorter thesis, and within an education system that facilitates part-time study, is consequently an alternative opportunity for German professionals seeking to embark on a doctorate. Since

2009, the University of Gloucestershire, as one of the first and few providers of the DBA in the German market, has facilitated a part-time DBA through in-country delivery of taught modules and is supported by a local German Agency. This gives students the advantage to take the taught modules in Germany and have the Agency as a point of contact about organizational matters. On these grounds, this operation creates an opportunity to examine part-time DBA students' experience – students who are usually difficult to access and ones where the institution they are studying with is in another country. It reflects a transnational education approach but differs in that it combines more than one criterion about what is defined as transnational education (Healey, 2015). This study does not focus on cultural issues, but rather on individuals' experiences. If culture is raised within this exploration, the issues are explored, but culture is not used as a point of conceptual departure.

While most research focuses on the structure and content of DBA programmes (e.g. Gill & Hoppe, 2009), their distinction from the PhD (e.g. Fink, 2006; Hay & Samra-Fredericks, 2019; Stoten, 2016) and new ways of knowledge production and its learning outcome (e.g. Davies et al., 2019; Hay & Samra-Fredericks, 2019; Pervan et al., 2016), not much is known about the experience of DBA candidates (Banerjee & Morley, 2013). Only a few explored student experience with the focus on e.g. motivation and its impact on careers (Grabowski and Miller, 2015), knowledge creation and learning approach (e.g. Farrell et al., 2018), relationships between professional and academic identities (Simpson & Sommer, 2016), the concept of liminality to understand the space between professional and educational world looked (Hay & Samra-Fredericks, 2016). However, there seems to be no further, comprehensive and holistic exploration of the lived experience of part-time DBA candidates from a phenomenological view. That is why this research aims to establish a holistic understanding of the lived experiences of such DBA candidates through the development of a conceptual framework. Undertaking a doctorate whilst working full-time in a managerial position, and having responsibility for a family, requires the adoption and management of different life roles. This can cause stress and additional pressure (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Leger, 1996; Phillips & Pugh, 2010). Consequently, this research focuses

particularly on stress, and the resultant coping behaviours, taking both the educational context and the other lifeworlds into account. How professionals apply different coping strategies to stresses that arise from their different lifeworlds, and how this affects their lived doctoral experience are the principal focus of this research.

Also, whilst the literature about stress in doctoral education considers it as a serious matter (as the cause of psychological disorder, low academic performance, drop out decisions), this study focuses more widely on DBA part-time students' *experiences of* stress. As the educational setting is not a life-threatening situation but rather presents a challenge for mastery, based on the students' decisions, in this research, stress is explored in a broader sense, including seeing a stressor as a cause (e.g. pressure, insecurity through a new situation), but also as an effect (e.g. failing of coping strategies). It is also worth noting here that classical stress research usually focuses on being able to measure its prevalence. Therefore, 'stressor' is here understood from the students' perspective – what students experience, and describe, as stressful, challenging and burdening without seeking to 'measure' this.

Furthermore, in applying a phenomenological approach to gain a holistic understanding and to develop a conceptual framework, the research questions first aim to address students' doctoral lived experience as a whole, before focusing on stress and coping behaviour in particular.

1.2.1 Research questions

The following questions guide the research, with its focus on the lived experience of part-time DBA candidates:

How do managers experience being part-time DBA students?

- **What stressors do managers face as part-time DBA students?**
- **What coping strategies do managers apply to overcome those stressors to progress their research?**

Phenomenology, as the study of experience (Smith et al., 2009), provides an approach to examine lived experience where an individual's meaning of the situation is brought into focus (Osborne, 1994). Phenomenological inquiry explores the structure of the lived world "as experienced in everyday situations and relations" (van Manen, 1990, p. 101), which consists of multiple and different lifeworlds e.g. of a mother, student, teacher, supervisor (van Manen, 1990). This means a person inhabits several lifeworlds (Schutz et al., 1973). In terms of many part-time doctoral students' lived experience, three lifeworlds can be seen to play a major role – the student lifeworld as a part-time doctoral researcher, the professional lifeworld as a manager or colleague and the private lifeworld as a partner and/or father/mother and/or friend and/or son/daughter. To gain a holistic understanding of the lived experience of a part-time doctoral student, I take those lifeworlds into account. van Manen (1990) defined four existentials as the fundamental structure of a lifeworld (see also Meleau-Ponty, 1962 cited inSmith et al., 2009) – spatiality, corporeality, temporality and relationality. I will draw on this as the theoretical basis to define the core elements of lived experience.

1.1.2 The lived experience: van Manen's core structure of lifeworlds

A lifeworld consists of four existantials (van Manen, 1990):

- **Spatiality: lived space – one person's 'comfortable' space**

  This can be seen as the space where doctoral students work on their research e.g. a tidy desk at home or a quiet space in the library, but it is also possible, for example, that this might be reading on the plane or train during a business trip. Such practices may vary over time, through changing life conditions and the need to balance all lifeworlds.

- **Corporeality: lived body – being bodily present – the external/outside body**

  For doctoral students, this concerns body matters in the form of physical and mental fitness, which can either positively or negatively influence concentration, creativity and mental performance during their studies. Any form of illness can also interrupt the research work and can lead to delay of the doctoral research.

- **Temporality: lived time – subjective time perspective on life**

  For doctoral students, and based on university regulations, time matters in terms of a given period for thesis submission and the timely completion of structured programme elements. In their other lifeworlds, students may need to negotiate time as a resource and their subjective perception of time and its nature, and views on its passing may differ from clock time. This can lead to pressure and strain. "The temporal dimensions of past, present, and future constitute the horizons of a person's temporal landscape" (van Manen, 1990, p. 104), which means that past learning experiences can influence present and future learning experiences and intended goals.

- **Relationality: lived human relations – relations shared with others – developed impression(s) about others**.

  For doctoral students, embedded in different lifeworlds, relationships to others matter. van Manen (1990) describes that those relations with others allow us to transcend ourselves, which means in the study context that the new student will be initiated into the academic community through engagement with others e.g. university staff, peers, lecturers and supervisors. Throughout the doctoral journey, such people can have a significant impact on students' doctoral experiences and progress. Even people from outside the university can influence doctoral students' experiences and can be significant in seeking a balance between the different lifeworlds.

These fundamentals provide a theoretical basis to understand the "lived experience" of part-time doctoral students – where lived time, lived space, lived bodily experience and lived relationships to others are relevant to candidates' assumed lifeworlds. van Manen (1990, p. 34 referring to Dilthey, 1985) describes lived experience as "involve [ing] our immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life". This can only be grasped reflectively as past presence, which brings specific meaning to us. In this study, I explore the lived experience during the doctoral journey in the form of students' reflective essays and through interviews. I see the doctoral journey as a process and development. This encompasses, for example, different elements/phases of the programme structure, the learning process; the

development of the research itself; the motivation to maintain engagement, and time management – all embedded, and influenced by, a candidate's different lifeworlds.

The current research gives insight into four individual stories to gain a better understanding of the lived experience of part-time doctoral students and the challenges to such part-time study from other lifeworlds (and vice versa). To generate a holistic understanding in the form of a conceptual framework, it is necessary to consider the context in which things take place. In this research, context refers to the students' identified lifeworlds that encompass the students' professional, private and doctoral lifeworlds. This provides an integrated understanding of the stressful situations encountered and the coping mechanisms students might apply to progress successfully in their studies. To better contextualize the doctoral journey as part of the student lifeworld, the following chapter provides an overview of the contextual background and conditions under which these students study.

2. Study context

This chapter outlines the contextual background and describes the study conditions of doctoral students in Germany as a reason for interest in British professional doctorates. It also addresses the transnational education approach and describes the content and programme structure of the Doctor of Business Administration at the University of Gloucestershire, where the student cases in this study are enrolled, followed by a definition of part-time study. The nature of business managers and the business world in general and a brief overview of students' professional life illuminate the professional context, while a detailed description of students' profiles generates insight into their personal lifeworlds and general literature about stress research closes this chapter to clarify the study's approach to stress and provide a basis for the next chapter.

2.1 Doctoral lifeworld

2.1.1 Background – Why German managers studying at a British University

In recent years, the number of students studying part-time in countries such as Canada, the United States of America (USA), Australia and Britain (Bates & Goff, 2012; Bennion et al., 2011; Deem & Brehony, 2000; Kehm et al., 2018; Tight, 1991) has significantly increased (and whilst in the last year there has been a decrease in part-time student numbers in the UK, the relative numbers remain high in comparison to other countries (Hubble & Bolton, 2020)) and these part-time students include those studying at a doctoral level. In the UK for example, in 2016/17 part-time students made up 21% of the total student population (Hubble & Bolton, 2020) and 25% of all doctoral students studied part-time (Deem & Dowle, 2020). Key to part-time doctoral study is the ability of programmes to meet students' needs by providing flexibility, which enables them to balance their private and professional lives with study (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012). In those countries where part-time study has become significant, there has also been the development of infrastructure to support such flexibility.

In comparison, in Germany, the total amount of enrolled part-time students in 2016 was around 8%, which includes 2% in formal part-time study,1% in full-time study with formal individual part-time regulation and 5% with informal self-assessed part-time study (Middendorff et al., 2017). Doctoral students are not included in these numbers, as they are neither formally registered in the German Higher Education system (Shin et al., 2018) nor does any appropriate infrastructure exist to support part-time study at the doctoral level whilst working full-time outside the university (Bundesbericht Wissenschaftlicher Nachwuchs, 2017).

Although the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany started to promote the development and establishment of part-time studies across the entire higher education (HE) system in response to the demographic change and the resulting expected lack of qualified employees, this policy was taken up in terms of Bachelor and Master studies (Minks et al., 2011), but not at the doctoral level. With the decision from the "Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs" (KMK) in March 2009, based on the Bologna accord, where admission regulations for HE study were opened to those with vocational qualifications and several years of professional work experience, without the need for a school-based HE entrance qualification (Jürgens & Zinn, 2015), the demand for part-time study in Germany increased. Students seeking such a study route are usually older and belong to the group termed 'non-traditional students' that demands a more flexible study format (Maschwitz & Brinkmann, 2015; Wolter et al., 2015). Nevertheless, part-time study at German universities has limited take up because of its lack of a flexible structure and limited adaptation to such students' needs (Maschwitz & Brinkmann, 2015).

Due to historical development, most universities in Germany still primarily focus on full-time students, while the offer of customized part-time study is limited and is often met by universities of applied science and private institutions (Brokmann-Nooren, 2015; Jürgens & Zinn, 2015). This general situation is replicated at the doctoral level, but the restrictions on which institutions can award a doctorate make the situation starker. In Germany, only 'traditional' universities can currently award doctoral degrees (with few exceptions, though current discussions are underway to review this position) (Kehm, 2020). Given this, universities of applied science

and private institutions started to cooperate with foreign universities to offer part-time doctoral study, this partnership provided the necessary infrastructure for part-time study. Traditional German universities still do not offer a part-time mode of study for doctoral candidates nor do they have the infrastructure to support such 'external' doctoral candidates who also work full-time in business (Kehm, 2012). The latest development in German doctoral education evidences the appearance of some structured programmes, but these are in mathematics, the natural sciences and medicine and healthcare, not in business management (Kehm, 2020).

As 83% of all doctoral candidates in Germany have some form of employment (Kehm, 2020), this implies many doctoral candidates in Germany study 'part-time' to some extent. Indeed, 60% of doctoral candidates are employed as research assistants, working for the professor who supervises them (Kehm, 2020; Schneijderberg & Teichler, 2018), which represents a completely distinct set of conditions in comparison to 'external' doctoral candidates who work full-time outside the university (Berning & Falk, 2005). The lack of a standardized admission process to doctoral study, except for a few graduate schools funded by the government, makes it difficult for candidates coming from outside the institution to access application systems (Kehm, 2020). In practice, it is often the case that a potential doctoral student, either informally receives an offer from a professor to work towards a doctoral degree or that the student makes a request to a professor with a proposal for doctoral work (Kehm, 2020). Therefore, doctoral study usually follows directly after a master's degree, with the student remaining at the same university (Schneijderberg & Teichler, 2018). Doctoral study in Germany hence depends strongly on the individual professor, which means if they move to another University, the doctoral candidate also needs to move (Schneijderberg & Teichler, 2018). The situation equally affects the research topic addressed in the doctorate, which is usually carried out in the professor's field of expertise. Most professors also offer doctoral candidates a part-time contract as junior teaching, or research, assistants while working on their doctoral thesis (Schneijderberg & Teichler, 2018). Each full professor, as a chair holder, has several such positions for doctoral candidates funded by the university (Berning & Falk, 2005). However, doctoral

candidates usually have no official status as a student at the university and there is no integration into an organized programme that supports doctoral study (Berning & Falk, 2005). Rather, a master-apprentice model is still the norm, where universities sometimes offer additional research courses that are voluntary (Banerjee & Morley, 2013; Kehm, 2012; Schneijderberg & Teichler, 2018). There is no personal incentive for a professor to supervise many doctoral candidates, and tuition fees are not due in Germany, which may also be one reason for the lack of support and infrastructure (Kehm, 2020). For an external doctoral candidate, without as many opportunities to develop a network within the institution, it can be challenging to find a professor who will agree to supervise them without the potential student working as a teaching or research assistant (Kehm, 2020).

By comparison, the infrastructure for part-time doctoral study is much more developed in other countries such as Canada, the USA, Australia and the UK, especially with the emergence of professional doctorates that focus on the needs of practitioners. This provides UK universities with the opportunity to offer their professional doctorates, in particular the DBA, in the German education market as part of their approach to transnational education.

2.1.2 Transnational education

The concept of transnational education (TNE) refers to distance or e-learning courses offered outside (offshore) of the institution's country of residence, while the academic responsibility remains usually, or partly, to the institution (DAAD, 2014). It is also called "educational export" (Bennell, 2019, p. 29) or "…the mobility of education programmes and providers between countries" (Knight, 2016, p. 34).

In the UK, transnational education is a long-established form of education (Bennell, 2019; Bennell & Pearce, 1998; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006). The UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) based on UK's QAA and higher education literature (Bennell & Pearce, 2003; Drew et al., 2008; Healey, 2015; Knight, 2007) classify offshore provision in four main categories: Overseas branch campus owned by a university, distance learning independent from a particular time and location, overseas collaborative/franchised provision delivered or assessed

through a partner organization and offers of validated degrees by a UK university through overseas educational institutions. However, those categories no longer encompass all UK universities practices and organizational forms of TNE as these have become more complex and sophisticated (Healey, 2015, see also other new forms) where partnerships now often simultaneously have characteristics of two, or more, types (Healey, 2015), which demonstrate the diversity and complexity of TNE partnerships and its multidimensionality (Healey, 2015). Equally, the cooperation between the University of Gloucestershire and a German Agency does not meet the HESA defined classification. Despite the delivery of the University of Gloucestershire's 'Doctor of Business Administration' programme in cooperation with a German agency potentially being seen as a form of distance learning during the research phase, as it is independent of a particular time and location, the initial taught phase delivered in Germany through a 'flying faculty' approach depends on a particular time and location and is supplemented by regular voluntary face-to-face events and meetings at the University's UK campus during the entire study. This makes classifying this form of educational provision a challenge that might necessitate a 'flying faculty' approach being viewed as a novel TNE cooperation format (see e.g. Bennell, 2019, p. 30). This also serves to highlight the distinctive nature of the programme beyond the standard classification. To aid appreciation of the particularities of the context further, the following section describes the nature of the University of Gloucestershire's DBA programme in more detail (during the time of this study).

2.1.3 The University of Gloucestershire DBA delivered in Germany

The University of Gloucestershire offers the Doctor of Business Administration, through a "flying faculty" format in Germany, supported by a German Agency. The Agency is responsible for organizational matters (not the content) and recruits and consults German applicants, collects applications, forwards these to the University and organizes all taught events in Germany.

The DBA programme consists of four taught modules in the initial phase of the programme, which takes place in Germany, delivered by academics from the University. Each taught module consists of 3-4 teaching days and requires a

written assignment of 7500 words. The 'module phase' lasts around 18 months. Students must pass the assignments to continue with their research. The first module is "reflective professional development" and adopts Schön's (1987) approach of ongoing reflection about the student's business experience, as well as their research topic, its contexts and the learning process throughout the module phase. The second module "systematic literature review" introduces students to theoretical frameworks and approaches to engage with literature in their research area. The third module "methodological fundamentals" gives a platform for research thinking and an understanding of the philosophical assumptions that are the basis for a particular methodology. The fourth module "research methods and analysis" discuss different forms of research methods and provides students with information to support the choice and justification of their research design. Based on a cohort approach, students start the programme in a group that (ideally) remains throughout the entire module phase, students are also prompted to build smaller learning groups to support each other. After the module phase, students need to submit a research proposal (RD1) that needs to be approved through a formal process by experienced independent academics. After approval, with the guidance of two supervisors, candidates continue to develop and conduct their research projects. The University regularly provides additional research training on campus in the UK, as well as colloquiums and conferences where students can individually participate (though this is not mandatory). In the end, the student is required to submit a doctoral thesis of between 50-60,000 words (though some are nearer 80,000) where they evidence a research project that contributes to theory and practice. All German students are part-time, most work full-time as professionals and are primarily based in Germany. Travelling to the University campus in the UK is not compulsory but it is recommended occasionally. Supervision usually takes place either in Germany during teaching events, in the UK on-campus or, most often, via virtual tools. Based on University regulations, part-time students are expected to submit their doctoral thesis after four years and before eight years of registration. There is the opportunity to ask for de-registration, but this does not extend the total study time. The Agency is a key contact point in Germany during a German DBA student's studies and supports local organizational issues.

2.1.4 Definition of part-time study

There seems to be also little consensus in the literature about how part-time is defined (Bates & Goff, 2012). Rodwell and Neumann (2008) defined it as a half-time course of study in comparison to full-time; others (Barnacle & Usher, 2003; Moro-Egido & Panades, 2010) construe part-time on the basis that the learner is employed full-time. Statistics about part-time students can vary, as full-time students can also 'stretch' their studies and also work alongside their academic endeavours (Middendorff et al., 2017).

In this study, 'part-time' refers to "part-time research students in full-time professional work" (Barnacle & Usher, 2003, p. 356; Bates & Goff, 2012), as managers who work full-time are the focus of this research. They remain in the part-time mode during their entire study, whilst working full-time as a manager in business (and explicitly outside of a university). Here, full-time work is seen as being 40.5 hours per week based on the 2019 OECD statistics for Germany (see https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=AVE_HRS). This also falls within the EU's Working Time Directive (2003/88/EC), where the average working time for every seven days must not exceed 48 hours, including overtime; depending on national legislation and/or collective agreements, the 48-hour average is calculated over a reference period of up to 4, 6 or 12 months.

2.2 Professional lifeworld

2.2.1 The business world

Many German managers who are interested in the British DBA are in a senior position with several years of work experience, often employed in an international company, running their own business, or working as freelancers or consultants. Their professional lifeworld is usually characterized by economic interests that focus on maximising profit while facing competitive conditions in an international market.

Their professional practice is thus dominated by seeking practical and economic benefits, where a timely and strategic decision can make a difference for their competitive advantage in the employment and work market.

This can lead to working conditions such as time pressure, long working hours, require quick decision-making and a high degree of responsibility for employees and corporate budgets. Parker (2004) describes a manager as always accessible through mobile phones and e-mails, always available to staff and their queries. Mischenko (2005) describes her own managerial experience as pressure to perform and produce while trying to be the best and survive and to achieve all objectives. She compares business life to 'taken for granted' discourses and shares the belief that it is the ultimate commodity. This confirms Reynolds (1998) statement that critical reflection has not become established within management education, as it can lead to a critical discussion about a manager's position and work – that may well destabilize much of contemporary practice in this sphere.

Louhiala-Salminen (2002) confirms the presence of persistent time pressure in daily business, as time is viewed as a source of 'differentiation and competitive advantage' (Bennett-Woods, 2004; Palmer & Schoorman, 1999) and predominantly understood to be linear (Bennett-Woods, 2004). Bennett-Woods (2004) summarizes traditional organizational perspectives of time as seeing time as "a commodity … [which can be] divided into discrete units that can be predicted, scheduled and controlled to increase personal productivity (p. 20). The aim is to achieve a maximally efficient allocation of time (Hassard et al., 1999; McGrath & Rotchford, 1983). The effective use of time is hence described as an attribute of a successful manager (Mullins, 2007).

In general, managers' activities are described as planning, organizing, coordinating, motivating and controlling. The specific job of a business manager can, however, vary in many ways and depends on the nature of the organization, the activities and tasks, the technology and methods used and the level of management at which a person operates (Mullins, 2007). As a result, the "essential nature of managerial work is not easy to describe…" (Mullins, 2007, p. 423). Mintzberg (1973) suggests that a manager must "have formal authority over the unit they command…" (Mintzberg, 1973 cited in Mullins, 2007, p. 424), which lead

to a specific status in the organization and results in a set of managerial roles with a high degree of responsibility. In particular, management is active and not theoretical (Mullins, 2007), which succinctly illustrates the primary difference between the professional and academic lifeworld.

Gerber (2021) also differentiates between the entrepreneur – who invents business as unique and anticipates changes and needs in the marketplace – whereas he describes a manager as a person who "produce results through employees by developing and implementing effective systems" (Kuratko, 2016, p. 7) and effectively leads and manages employees to produce superior results and follow the entrepreneurial vision through planning, implementation, and analysis (Kuratko, 2016). This suggests that 'entrepreneur' and 'manager' are not identical constructs and that whilst some people may fulfil both simultaneously, there is also a need to recognize that differences may also be present – these may stem in large part from how a manager is defined.

2.2.2 Definition – manager

The DBA is designed to address experienced and senior professionals in management positions, for example, middle-managers who are aspiring to senior posts and who have access to strategic or other higher levels of information or senior executives within the context of strategic management (Bareham et al., 2000). An experienced manager is described in the literature as having at least 5 years of work experience within a management position (Mant, 1975). In this study, a management position is understood as the accomplishment of activities and mastering of routines, but also (which is often seen as a contrast) the ability to influence others and create visions of change in the form of leadership (Bennis, 1986). As both constructs overlap – to manage and to lead – a manager can influence people to meet a goal and a leader can be involved in planning, organizing, staffing and controlling. Therefore, a manager is understood in this study as a practitioner with several years of work experience who may both manage and/or lead, and, therefore, has significant responsibility in their job.

The following section gives a brief overview of students' professional profiles to help identify the nature of the professional roles that they occupy.

2.2.2 Students' professional life – an overview

The four students that form the basis for the cases examined in this research have been given pseudonyms (as any other person mentioned in their narratives): Sugar, Dove, Diamond and Book. See also chapter 4.4.2, table 1, which provides and overview of participants' characteristics. Three of the students worked in a large international company.

While working directly for the board, Sugar faced a high degree of pressure and faced an in-flexible schedule as she was required to deliver reports to specific deadlines in the year. She worked within a small team and had no personnel responsibility for other staff members, but high responsibility within the company for reporting. She has several years of work experience and had studied always part-time.

This also applies to Dove. Additionally, as the youngest of the four students, he was working in his first line management position, responsible for over 23 locations worldwide, which required business a considerable number of international trips, in particular within Europe and to the U.S. He was responsible for initiating change in supply chain structure and participants' behaviours and faced high workload and pressure. In the research phase of his doctoral study, Dove decided to work as a freelancer to be more flexible.

Diamond is in a senior management position, and she too is responsible for the initiation of change due to the acquisition of a company. This involved constant business trips to the U.S. and a complex schedule - where she was always working and always available, attending one meeting after the other, even having meetings with her boss during flights.

Book, as the owner of a company, working with two other business partners, can be described as an entrepreneur with visions and ideas and is seen as the creative heart of his company. He has several years of work experience in leadership consultancy and has run the business for over 16 years and has also written a book on management. He has regular business trips within Germany and a long drive to his office. His company has grown, and he and his business partners

decided to restructure areas of responsibility within the company, which led to further workload. He also initiated change through his consultancy work.

All students found the part-time mode and structured cohort approach of the DBA supportive, pursuing a professional doctorate also enabled them to combine their professional experience with theoretical knowledge to gain an award and all started their studies with the ambitious aim of submitting their doctorate in three years.

2.3 Students' personal lifeworld

The following give a brief overview of each students' private context.

2.3.1 *Sugar* - profiles overview

Sugar is in her mid-forties, has no children and has been living with her partner for several years. She enjoys cooking, meeting friends and travelling, as well as learning and gaining new knowledge.

After finishing school Sugar at first undertook an apprenticeship as her entrance into the professional world, as this was expected by her parents. Nevertheless, she asserted herself and studied language and translation after her apprenticeship. After completing her studies and following another year of work experience, she felt the desire to change something in her professional life and decided to apply for a part-time master's course. The wish to learn, develop herself and gain knowledge had already rooted in her youth, although her parents had not wanted her to go to university. Also, being a woman, she felt underpaid and underestimated. Due to this experience, her ambition had been growing and increasing over the years. Sugar wanted to show her potential and gain more appreciation through gaining a doctoral title – she described this as a "life dream". This motive developed during her doctorate and changed into the desire to learn, gain further knowledge, and develop her professional and academic skills. She is committed to "lifelong learning".

Since her second year of study as a doctoral student, Sugar has fulfilled a highly responsible job, with a demanding work schedule in a large international company. During the first years in her new job, Sugar struggled to balance her job and make progress in her doctoral studies at the same time. She settled on an agreement with her boss to take unpaid leave during quiet months, enabling her to work on her doctorate.

The structure of the specific programme and the possibility to study part-time convinced Sugar to start the DBA. Her partner was not involved in this decision, and at the beginning was not happy about her ambition. Over time, his attitude developed into a supportive one, her partner became the first person she turned to for discussions about her research and motivated her to keep going. Sugar had been interested in her research topic since childhood. In the beginning, though she struggled to define her topic and find the appropriate approach. Her research methodology changed a few times.

The first interview took place during the research phase, Sugar's fifth year of study. Sugar had successfully finished the module phase after one and a half years, but, due to supervision problems, her final research plan was not approved until three years and nine months from the initial start.

By the time of the last interview, Sugar was in her sixth year but had asked for a de-registration of her study, due to the high workload. At that time, she had been writing up her methodology chapter and working on data analysis.

2.3.2 *Dove* - profile overview

Dove is in his thirties, has no children and was in a long-distance relationship at the beginning of his doctorate. During the module phase, he moved-in with his partner and got married. He likes sports and meeting friends.

At the beginning of his doctorate, Dove was also working in his first line management position in a large international company, with responsibility for 23 locations worldwide. He had started this position during an extensive and challenging restructuring initiative. After the module phase of the doctorate, he had

decided to give up his position in the company and had worked as a freelancer to realize a more flexible schedule that better suited the demands of the doctorate.

Dove had always studied part-time. He had passed his bachelor's in economics in a dual study programme, which had meant working in a company and studying at the same time. Subsequently, he had continued to work full-time and had passed a part-time MBA programme in the UK. He had taken over a management position one year after he had finished his master studies and had started the DBA a year later.

Dove had been interested in his research topic since his first studies. After the experience of managing several projects in his business, he had noticed recurring problems in practice and wanted to learn and understand more about the issue. Being a curious person, and given his interest in training and education, he reflected on possible avenues for professional development and identified a doctorate as an appropriate way to link practice and theory. As the DBA is a practice-oriented doctorate, where issues from business are explored and combined with theory, he decided one year later to start. He liked the practice-based approach and the programme structure, and he appreciated the British academic culture, already familiar from his prior MBA studies.

The first interview took place in his fourth year of study, one week after Dove had successfully passed his oral defence with minor amendments. The last interview took place one year later when the award had already been officially approved. Dove had successfully finished the module phase in the first one and half years and his final research plan had been approved after two years and two months. Dove conducted case studies in two companies in a period of two months full time, worked simultaneously on the data analysis, writing it up during the third and fourth year, and he submitted his thesis after three years and five months. His award was approved after three years and ten months.

2.3.3 *Diamond* – profile overview

Diamond is in her mid-forties, has no children and has been living with her partner for several years. Besides work, she likes to watch ice hockey matches, go out with friends and travel.

She gained several years of work experience and took on a senior management position in a large international company in her second study year as a doctoral student. She has been highly committed to a complex schedule with business trips all over the world. Most of the time, Diamond had only been able to work on her doctorate at the weekends and during her holidays.

After school, she undertook an apprenticeship to enter professional life and had then decided to study part-time, whilst continuing to work full-time. In her reflective essay, she had described her motivation for the doctorate as being rooted in her childhood and youth when her parents did not want her to go to university. After a successful professional career in several positions, she had come to the point of seeking a new challenge and remembered the aim of her youth – a doctorate. After consulting a mentor at work, and a lively debate with her partner, she decided to give up her position and to start the DBA, a practice-oriented doctorate, which suited her background and interests very well. While knowing that a doctorate did not mean a rise in salary, nor an enhancement in her professional life, she wanted to challenge herself. It had been "just for fun".

After one year of study, Diamond received a job offer, which had been a great professional opportunity and was the job she had always wanted. She decided to take the post, which meant that at the end of the module phase, during the research phase, she had had to focus on the new job in a new industry. This situation was a challenging time for Diamond in both her doctorate and her professional life. It had taken several drafts and discussions with her supervisors, to get her research plan approved, which had been the first challenge and hurdle in her doctoral journey.

At the time of the first interview, Diamond was in her fourth year, in the final research stage, discussing and re-working chapter by chapter with her supervisors. At the last interview, Diamond's thesis had been successfully

approved with minor amendments. In terms of the study timeline, she had successfully finished the module phase in the first one and half years and her final research plan had been approved after two years and three months. Diamond had continued with interviews and data analysis during the third year and had started the final writing process at the beginning of her fourth year. Diamond submitted her thesis after five years and four months. Her award was approved after about six years of study.

2.3.4 Book - profile overview

Book is in his fifties and has four children aged 1, 13, 15 and 19. He has been married twice and lives in a house with his current wife and his youngest child. Book loves to read and to gain knowledge, his wife and his business partner nicknamed him "the professor".

Embarking on a doctorate programme displays Book's hobby and interest. He always wanted to complete a doctorate but could not do so part-time within the German system. When he discovered he could undertake a DBA, he was highly motivated and started the programme one year later.

Book had a German diploma in Business Administration and Banking Management and had had over 15 years of experience in leadership and sales, furthermore, he had worked for over 12 years as a management consultant. Based on the experience gained during his work as a consultant, he had written a book that was also the basis for his research topic. Book was highly motivated and interested in the topic.

For the last 14 years, he and two other business partners, have owned and run a company. The company is the focus of his life. Book is the creative head in the company developing innovative ideas and visions. Findings from the doctorate will also flow into the company's business concept and ideas. Despite his high level of work responsibility, he is flexible in his time management. He works one to two days a week from home, as the distance to the company is almost two hours' drive by car. He worked on his thesis two hours every morning before work, including weekends and holidays.

At the time of the first interview, Book was in the research stage and in his third year (after two and half years of study), he had finished data collection and had already written several chapters. Book had successfully finished the module phase after one year, as one of the first of his cohort. He had even submitted the last assignment early. His research plan had been approved straight away, after one year and seven months on the DBA.

By the time of the last interview Book had been in his fourth year, he was re-working his literature review chapter for the fifth time. In addition, he had to meet increased demands in his job, due to re-structuring processes in the company and a higher amount of business trips. This had restricted his time resources for the doctorate. Book submitted his thesis after round about five to six years.

2.4 Theoretical context of stress and coping

2.4.1 Historical development of classical stress research in health psychology

The concept of stress has a long history in health psychology. Stress research began in the late 17th century with Hooke (cited in Hinkle, 1973) in the physical science domain. Later, during the Second World War and Korean War, stress research was promoted in the context of military combat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As the father of contemporary stress research, Hans Selye postulated in 1957 that stress is a biological concept and described the bodily conditions evident during stress and its pathological changes as a result (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). He described stress as a physical reaction to a stimulus from outside (Aldwin et al., 2007), namely that it is a stimuli-response process.

This concept was further developed in 1972 by Levi who identified different environmental stressors and took psycho-social stressors and their effect into account. His stress conceptualization described, for the first time, a "non-linear process" (non-stimuli-response), but rather a "cybernetic system" in which all factors influence each other and where individual characteristics also play a role (Mann, 1999). From such an understanding, three types of stress have been defined – environmental stress, individual stress and the interaction between

environment and individual (Mason, 1975). Debates took place whether stress was a function of personality or an objective characteristic of the environment or the interaction of both.

The interactive view was supported in the 1980s by the transactional model of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) where stress arises through the interaction of person and environment, and cognitive processes are central in the form of 'appraisal' (Mann, 1999). This model is still applied, and current research refers to it as a core proposition (see e.g. Aldwin et al., 2007; Nixon, 2019; Proulx & Aldwin, 2015; Russell-Pinson & Harris, 2019; Segerstrom & O'Connor, 2012). Over time, further developments in the literature discussed the complexity of the stress and coping mechanisms and the influence of personality and age (Aldwin, 2010; Segerstrom & O'Connor, 2012). Aldwin et al. (2007), for example, emphasized the relevance of age, where coping behaviour changes over a life span and stress-related growth can occur (Aldwin, 2010). Here it is also evident that there is a clear conceptual inter-relationship between 'stress' and 'coping', the two often considered simultaneously.

As such, "coping" can be seen as part of the stress process and within the stress research tradition coping has been highlighted with increasing frequency since the 1960s (Lazarus, 1991) and has been investigated in the areas of psychosomatics, behavioural medicine, health psychology and clinical intervention. As such, the academic literature has applied three main approaches to conceptualize coping (Aldwin, 2010, p. 267 ff.): Psychoanalytic approaches (such as the unconscious defence mechanism associated with psychopathology (e.g. Freud, 1966; Vaillant, 2003)) coping styles (classification of individuals based upon typologies of coping such as avoidance or repression-sensitization, styles are seen as personality-based and stable see, e.g. Byrne (1964); Millon (1982); Roth and Cohen (1986); others say styles change over a life span, see, e.g. Freund and Baltes (2002); Rothermund and Brandstädter (2003)) and process approaches (e.g. Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

As it is not the intention of this research to identify pathological patterns based on the psychoanalytic approaches neither is the aim to uncover pure personality-based strategies (which have been criticised for their methodological shortcomings

and inconsistency (Cohen & Lazarus, 1973)), the transactional model by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), in the form of a process approach, provides a more flexible approach to considering cognitive processes concerning an individual's subjective perceptions of these processes, as influenced by both personality and situational characteristics.

I see doctoral work itself as a process where cognitive processes are influenced by the interrelationship of several components (the student and the context). Even if the validity of retrospective accounts is criticised (Aldwin, 2010) and debates still exist about the consensus of the amount and form of coping strategies, I will draw on this as a theoretical basis, as it refers to psychological stress in the form of a mental process and mental product (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stress research also refers to 'psychological stress', that arise through mental work – which resonates with undertaking a doctorate. In addition, the aim is here to reveal students' meaning of their experience and hidden patterns of contextual influence rather than seek generalization and the confirmation of categorization of coping strategies. The following details the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) model, its components, and in particular the role of appraisal and different forms of coping.

2.4.2 The transactional model by Lazarus and Folkman
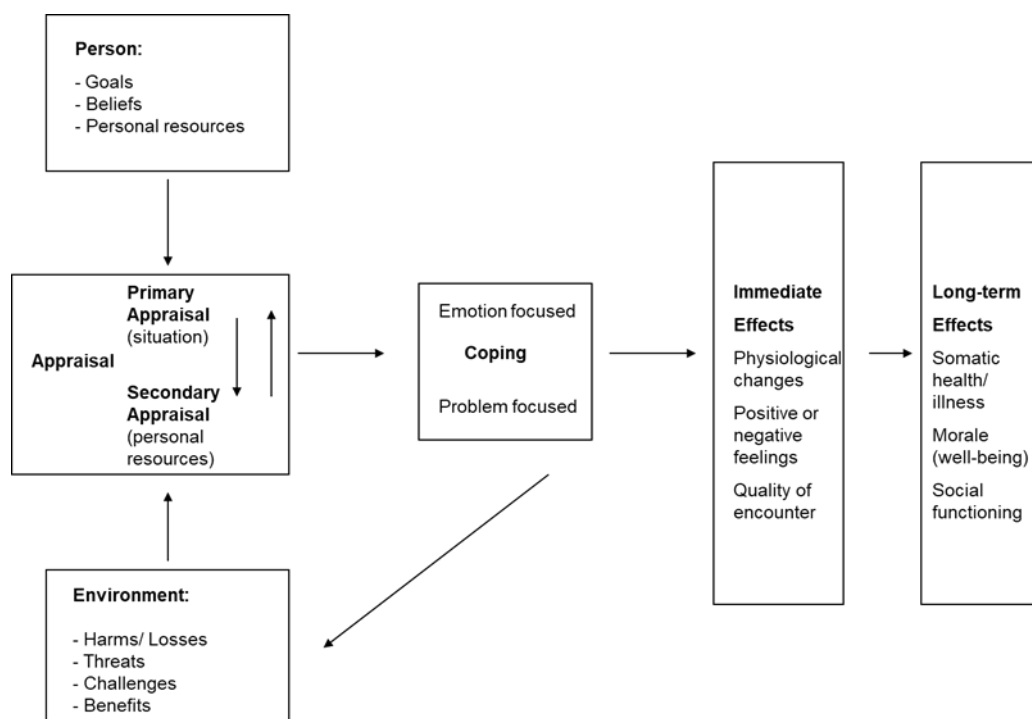
Figure 1: The transactional model by Lazarus and Folkman (1984)

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) describe the process of stress and coping as a transactional process between person and environment. The person perceives a stressor from the environment (physical stressor or sociocultural stressor) and appraises the stressor as positive (benefit), threatening (harm, loss, threat), challenge or unimportant (*primary appraisal*). Aldwin et al. (1996) added further forms of appraisal, such as '*hassle'*, 'the uncertainty of what to do' and 'worry about others'. If the person appraises the stressor as threatening, the person analyses available resources to deal with the stressor (*secondary appraisal*). If the resources available are not perceived as sufficient, stress arises, and the person responds to it through several forms of possible coping behaviour.

Drawing this into the context of education and doctoral study, DBA students perceive a stressor from the study environment, e.g. a deadline for an assignment or the thesis, part-time student stressors can also occur from their personal or professional environment in the form of pressure or demanding tasks (e.g. Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2017). Based on their educational background or previous personal and professional experience, students' beliefs,

goals and personal resources influence how they appraise the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). If an assignment deadline is appraised as challenging and difficult to meet, the student will consider which resources are available to cope with the situation. Given many DBA students are more mature than, for example, most undergraduates, they may have more personal resources available to them through longer life experience (Aldwin, 2010). Support can also exist in several forms from faculty, family, friends or peers (Gardner & Gopual, 2012). For example, to gain more time to meet the deadline for an assignment, or the final submission of the thesis, a DBA student could take days off from work or pursue support from family and friends for other commitments to make more time available. An immediate effect could occur in the form of relief about the time gained. If no possibility is given to gain more time, stress will arise, and the student needs to find another coping strategy. If no solution has been found, a long-term effect could arise in form of a somatic reaction when stress lasts too long. This example highlights the centrality of appraisal, and particularly secondary appraisal, to the process and as a mental product.

Russell-Pinson and Harris (2019) describe the clinical definition of stress as 'elusive' as studies often refer to either the cause or the effect of a threatening stimulus (Folkman, 2013; Segerstrom & O'Connor, 2012; Wagner, 1990). As this study is not interested in the disease pattern of doctoral students, stress is understood in a wider sense and includes both, the source (stressor) and the reaction (stress), that challenge and stress the student.

Appraisal

How an individual appraises the situation is core to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model. In an educational setting, a demanding situation will probably be appraised as challenging, hassle or uncertain, rather than as a real threat or harm. Uncertainty can arise through ambiguous situations that can be typical for a learning situation. Knowledge gives people a sense of control and the ability to better assess the situation and apply appropriate coping abilities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Uncertainty, in comparison, often increases stress and causes mental confusion. The students in the current study are in a specific learning situation. These students are undertaking this form of project for the first time and

need to develop new knowledge and create new knowledge. As managers, returning to study will be a new experience for most and can produce tension and uncertainty. In general, evidence has shown that during the doctoral journey uncertainty arise in several situations (e.g. Pifer & Baker, 2016) and it is clear that doctoral study is a challenging endeavour (e.g. Bates & Goff, 2012; Byers et al., 2014; Katz, 2016; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009; Pyhältö et al., 2012). If, and to what extent, stress arises in those situations depends on the student's individual appraisal.

In this study, '*appraisal*' is understood from a phenomenological perspective as the "meaning-making" of the experience. Students face a situation and need to evaluate what this might mean for them and how they cope with the situation. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) how people appraise a situation is influenced by personal and situational factors. Personal factors here may include a students' beliefs, their assessment of the level of importance of the situation and their sense of personal control about the situation. Situational factors refer to the time and duration of the situation and its context. Other challenges experienced at the same time can also affect 'appraisal'. This can lead to limited resources available for coping.

Appraisals can take place at an automatic, unconscious level, but also as a rational process (Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Kirby, 2011). This leads to coping that can also happen consciously and voluntarily or unconsciously and involuntarily (Compas et al., 2014). In their model, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) focused on conscious processes. Unconscious strategies are often difficult to assess through metric scales (Cramer, 2000), nevertheless a phenomenological approach is perhaps also better able to reveal such unconscious mechanisms.

Forms of coping

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping is the attempt to deal with internal and external demands that are perceived as burdening and overstraining to avoid negative consequences. This can be reached through appropriate behaviour, emotional and motivational reactions and a determined way of thinking (Skinner et al., 2003). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) distinguish, in a wider sense,

between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Taking action and trying to change the situation into an improved state is a problem-focused coping strategy, whereas, dealing with emotions, for instance through positive thinking and replacement refers to an emotion-focused coping strategy. Discussion in the literature (Carver, 2019; Skinner et al., 2003) centres on whether these strategies can clearly be distinguished, as they can be both applied at the same time and facilitate one another. For example, problem-focused coping can reduce the threat, and this can also reduce negative emotions. Emotion-focused coping can also help to diminish negative feelings, making it possible to calm down and think more clearly to develop a better problem-focused coping strategy (Carver, 2019).

Folkman revised the transactional model in (1997) and introduced a new category of coping: meaning-focused coping and positive emotions. Meaning-focused coping is, at its essence, appraisal-based coping in which the person draws on their beliefs (e.g., religious, spiritual, or beliefs about justice), values (e.g. "mattering"), and existential goals (e.g., purpose in life or guiding principles) to motivate and sustain coping and well-being during a difficult time (Aldwin et al., 2007; Folkman, 2008; Park & Folkman, 1997). Folkman assumed that when the outcome of coping was not favourably resolved, and the person needs to find new coping strategies, meaning-focused coping will be triggered. This would lead to positive emotions that influence appraisal, which in turn influence the stress process in the form of restoring coping resources and motivation to maintain problem-focused coping over the longer term.

Meaning-focused coping appears not to be specific to the situation and can be divided into five categories: benefit finding, benefit reminding, adaptive goal processes, reordering priorities and infusing ordinary events with positive meaning (Folkman, 1997, 2008; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2007; Folkman et al., 1997). Based on this, Folkman (2008) offers evidence about the role of emotions in the stress process, where positive emotions can impact the ability to cope in the form of restoring physiological and psychosocial coping resources to relieve stress. This was confirmed by further research in the health domain (e.g. Fredrickson et al., 2003). Studies in doctoral education also confirm students' experience of emotions during their studies as being either positive (Cotterall, 2013; Hopwood et al., 2011)

or negative (Byers et al., 2014; Devonport & Lane, 2014; Russell-Pinson & Harris, 2019) and the importance in the context of the latter to find a workable way with which to deal with such feelings (Russell-Pinson & Harris, 2019). Because if these emotions are unacknowledged, it can hinder a doctoral student's progress. This underscores the importance of effective coping mechanisms to be successful in a doctorate. What emotions part-time doctoral students face whilst being both working professionals and how they respond to this can bring further insight into the role of emotions during experienced stress and as a coping mechanism in doctoral study.

As appraisal depends strongly on the person, one individual may experience stress, whereas another person in the same situation would not. As such, Aldwin and Werner (2009, p. x) stated "Coping is complicated… there is simply no single strategy that works for everyone, in every place, at every time" Furthermore, she points out the need to contextualize coping as it depends greatly on individual motivation, interpersonal dynamics and other factors such as the situation and culture. She highlights that a transaction takes place between the mind and body of the person and the environment. Without an understanding of the occurrence of these individual perceptions and interpretations, "it is impossible to understand the individual's experience of and response to stress" (Aldwin & Werner, 2009, p. 33). Using a phenomenological approach, this study seeks to shed light on individuals' experiences of, and response to, stress where I consider not only the individual student's perception and meaning but also their environment and their context. This offers the ability to provide a more integrated and detailed picture of the entire stress process and of coping as a part-time doctoral student and manager. Other studies (e.g. Ashikaga, 2010) confirmed the need for such qualitative work in stress research, and therefore the potential to adopt a phenomenological approach, to understand the process of coping, as it provides a more detailed picture of the stressful event.

To develop a platform for this, the following material first provides evidence of the relevance of stress research in a doctoral study context through its impact and consequences and then offers a synopsis of relevant studies in doctoral

experience and education. These serve to focus attention on the specific phenomenon that this research addresses.

2.5 The relevance of stress research in doctoral study

In the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983), stress is described with feelings of overload, uncontrollability, negative emotions such as anger or anxiety and low ability to cope. Lasting stress can affect students' performance and productivity in writing (Badenhorst, 2010; Inman & Silverstein, 2003; Sosin & Thomas, 2014) and can even lead to psychological disorders (e.g. Marshall et al., 2008) and finally to the decision to drop out from the study programme (e.g. Hales, 1998; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; McDermott, 2002).

2.5.1 Attrition rates in doctoral studies – caused by stress?

Drop out and attrition rates in doctoral studies have led to comprehensive investigations of doctoral students (see overview Bair & Haworth, 2005). Usually, several stressful events and the lack of coping resources precede a student's decision to give up (Gardner, 2009; Hales, 1998). Studies (e.g. Bair & Haworth, 2005; Church, 2009; Devos et al., 2017; Gardner, 2009; Kearns et al., 2008; Santicola, 2011; Wyman, 2013) identified several reasons as a source of stress and why doctoral students drop out. This comprises environmental factors, such as programme structure, the field of study, departmental and institutional culture (Bair & Haworth, 2005; Gardner, 2009), which includes lack of funding (Attiyeh, 1999) or lack supervisor support (Löfström & Pyhältö, 2017), and limited integration and support from the research community (Lovitts, 2002), but also personal factors (Gardner, 2009). Students described personal problems concerning marriage, children or family responsibility, but also mental health issues and general physical health concerns (e.g. Beall et al., 2015; Divaris et al., 2012; Kizhakkeveettil et al., 2017; Levecque et al., 2017; Marshall et al., 2008).

Role conflicts or different life roles, that may influence from outside are mentioned but not examined in any detail, e.g. by Pazin (2000) in terms of a partner or children as having an impact on exhaustion and by Cole (2011) as an environmental

influence factor on health in form of lifestyle characteristics, individual and community relations, and socio-economic conditions. You and Chen (2012) mentioned occupation and employment as possible predictors of completion status and McDermott (2002) investigated students from an Ed.D. programme who had full-time employment during their doctoral study but only mentioned experiencing a period of critical stress influences the time to completion. There is no detailed insight into the situation and what caused the period of critical stress. Clark et al. (2009) measured role conflict and social support from family and friends but did not, however, report any significant results or detailed information about role conflicts and their incidence. Rocha-Singh (1990) reported environmental and family and monetary stress but offered no detailed explanation. The studies identified above emphasize the existence and importance of environmental influences but fail to particularize the context and its role in doctoral study, this is one of the chief reasons this study applies a qualitative approach and takes context into account.

Other studies (e.g. Hales, 1998; McDermott, 2002) investigated predictors of doctoral degree completion and confirmed, that student perception of faculty support and accumulated life stressors are significant predictors of doctoral degree completion (see Hales, 1998, in particular). Students who report more stress were less likely to complete their degree or took significantly longer to obtain their degree (Hales, 1998). McDermott (2002) added other influence factors and confirmed personality, internal locus of control and a period of critical stress as predictors of degree completion. This shows that both person and environment matter in the form of an experienced stressful event, especially the characteristics and skills of a person. This reflects the complexity of coping behaviour in Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model as depending on the available coping resources. What is missing in McDermott's (2002) and Hales' (1998) studies is a deeper insight into students' life stressors and critical stress, they confirm the incidence of stress, but not its origin and development in its specific context. As such, there is scope to gain a greater insight into the occurrence and reasons that lay behind the stress situation experienced in doctoral studies, particularly when considering the

complexity of the context. If stress research in a doctoral study can provide a greater insight is discussed in the following.

2.5.2 Stress and its health impact

Looking at classical stress research in psychology, there seems to be no study that looks at the experience of doctoral students in the specific context of the current study. Studies about doctoral students in classical stress research mostly apply a quantitative study design and investigate correlations, relationships and causalities of different variables or they look at differences and similarities of student groups and measure the extent and the prevalence of stress with a developed scale or inventory (Beall et al., 2015; Divaris et al., 2012; Kizhakkeveettil et al. 2017; Levecque et al., 2007; Marshall et al., 2008). They do not consider the complexity of the context in its totality and are more guided by questions about factors that can predict stress or the behavioural or cognitive patterns of students to formulate general statements and rules. Nevertheless, those studies demonstrate the seriousness of stress in doctoral studies and how stress can impact health and doctoral experience. The emphasis in this study is not on health issues in detail, but the following provides a concise overview of current studies that refer to doctoral students and shows their higher risk of experiencing stress, its health impact and possible influence factors on stress.

Lasting stress can lead to the development of psychological disorders such as depression or burnout, which is why some studies in the health area focus on stress concerning fatigue, burnout and psychiatric disorders (Beall et al., 2015; Divaris et al., 2012; Kizhakkeveettil et al., 2017; Levecque et al., 2007; Marshall et al., 2008). Levecque et al. (2007) confirmed that 32% of PhD students developed disorders such as depression; this proportion is significantly higher than that of the general student population. Pazin (2000) gave evidence that counselling doctoral students with relatively low financial status, less social support and childcare problems experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion, which lead to burnout. This confirms the contextual influence of daily life where social support is crucial.

You and Chen (2012) demonstrated that academic stress directly, and positively, predicted the suicide ideation of doctoral students at four universities in China. Students with a lower level of self-efficacy reported more academic stress and a higher degree of suicide ideation was detected during the deepest period of depression. Other studies (Beall, et al., 2015; Divaris et al., 2012; Kizhakkeveettil et al., 2017; Levecque et al., 2007; Marshall et al., 2008; Pazin, 2000) also offer evidence that stress among doctoral students does exist and that this can even lead to serious health problems. Further, self-efficacy seems to play a role in doctoral study; however, You and Chen's study lacks detail about the form of self-efficacy and how students experience and appraise the context that refers to self-efficacy and how they may try to cope with it.

In general, the previous studies applied a quantitative approach where relationships and causalities were the focus. A qualitative exploration may bring more insight into the experience of being a doctoral student as the complexity of context can be incorporated. This study seeks to take such an approach, building on prior work, while recognising its limitations in generating a detailed and nuanced understanding of the complexities at play.

2.5.3 Well-being as a positive impact

As well as factors that can facilitate stress, some factors can prevent stress. The development, or the movement, of "positive psychology" led to further studies that focus on factors that promote well-being and maintain health, instead of focusing on stress and disorders as negative outcomes or consequences of stress (Benjamin et al., 2017; Lonka et al., 2019; Marais et al., 2018; Perepiczka & Balkin, 2010; Pyhältö et al., 2012).

The concept of 'well-being' is defined as "… contentment, satisfaction, or happiness derived from optimal functioning" (McDowell, 2010, p. 70). Drawing this into the academic context, well-being can have a positive influence on doctoral students' persistence (Hunter & Devine, 2016; Jairam & Kahl, 2012) and academic skill development, which in turn lead to successful degree completion (Ali & Kohun, 2006; Ali et al., 2007; Bair & Haworth, 2005). As well-being is associated with satisfaction and happiness, this confirms the effect of positive emotions, such as

those indicated by Folkman (1997, based on the transactional model of Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) where positive emotions maintain motivation and lead to effective problem-solving coping.

E.g. the positive psychology intervention termed CARE (Coherence, Attention, Relationship, Engagement) by Shankland et al. (2016), which is an 8-week programme composed of several positive psychology practices, showed a positive effect on student well-being. This indicates the capability of students to actively promote and maintain their well-being to be successful in their doctoral study by active coping. Benjamin et al. (2017) also describe "managing relationships" as having a positive effect on well-being, which can be one form of active coping. This also illustrates the preference for active coping in comparison to passive coping.

2.5.4 Coping in the form of social support

This leads to considering coping behaviour in stressful situations. Specific coping mechanisms in response to stress seem to be the key to persistence and success in doctoral study and have been the focus of significant research. Studies confirmed that, in particular, a good support system seems to be essential to cope with stress whilst undertaking doctoral study (e.g. Cornér et al., 2017; Peltonen et al., 2017). Discussions consider whether social support plays a moderating role in the relationship between perceived stress and overall well-being or if a lack of social support, and changes in support, are stressors themselves (Miller, 2007). A recent study (e.g. Peltonen et al., 2017) shows that students with a good support system who experience stress suffered less from burnout and developed fewer drop-out intentions than students with insufficient support. This is supported by Cornér et al. (2017) who focused, in particular, on supervision as a support system, where dissatisfaction and low frequency of supervision lead more frequent to burnout and attrition intentions. Scheidler (2008) confirmed the positive effect of perceived social support and marital satisfaction on perceived stress. This again supports the assumption that a good support system is essential in doctoral study, which includes supervisor support but is also evident in the student's private life. Both are coping resources from the environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Adding another component, Clark et al. (2009) found that alongside global stress

and advisor support, a psychological sense of community was a significant burnout predictor. This supports the argument for the formation of a study group, potentially such as the cohort approach used in a DBA structure, that can promote and lead to a sense of community and strengthen persistence in the form of social support. Nevertheless, Clark et al. (2009) study does not provide a detailed explanation of the characteristics of global stress and how advisor support is best understood and configured.

2.4.5 Summary

The previous studies have identified several reasons as the source of stress (Bair & Haworth, 2005; Gardner, 2009) where often a lack of support had been determined (Attiyeh, 1999; Lovitts, 2002; Löfström and Pyhältö, (2017) and psychological disorders and drop out intention can be the result (e.g. Beall et al., 2015; Divaris et al., 2012; Kizhakkeveettil et al., 2017; Levecque et al., 2017; Marshall et al., 2008). Stressors from other lifeworlds had been mentioned but not further detailed (e.g. Pazin, 2000; Cole, 2011). Self-efficacy (e.g. You & Chen, 2012), well-being (e.g. Hunter & Devine, 2016; Jairam & Kahl, 2012) and locus of control (e.g. McDermott, 2002) seem to be identified as principal factors for success whereas social support (e.g. Cornér et al., 2017; Peltonen et al., 2017; Kaufmann, 2006) seems to play a significant role in reducing stress. This gives evidence about possible influence factors and the relationships of those factors to stress and its relevance in doctoral study, but the findings give no further indication about the context as a whole.

Insight into the multifaceted lifeworlds of the student could uncover hidden events and experiences and explain in-depth how students feel and act whilst embedded in the complex conditions of life. In addition, most studies explore PhD students or students of doctoral programmes in the health disciplines, where the study mode is not plainly indicated. It can be assumed that most students are full-time in such research – offering scope for more research on those undertaking both professional doctorates and as part-time students.

Stress is also not described from a qualitative perspective as experience and through narratives, but rather as a concept that has to be measured through scales

or inventories. This emphasizes the need for an in-depth exploration of stress in doctoral study, which can give further understanding of how educators and policy makers may deploy support mechanisms to mitigate dropout intentions, particularly in professional doctorates aimed at part-time students. This study meets this need by exploring the experienced stress of part-time DBA students and students' responses in the form of coping behaviour.

Classical approaches in stress research were also criticised as imprecise and simplistic (Segerstrom & O'Conner, 2012), which supports the need for a more sophisticated and integrated approach– these are provided within the qualitative methodology that I use in this study. Aldwin (2010) also suggests that a multidisciplinary perspective is required to understand the development of stress and coping, especially when looking at sociocultural issues such as role constraints and historical circumstances. As this research study draws on literature in the fields of psychology, education, phenomenology, and social science, it seeks to meet the need for a multidisciplinary perspective. The consideration of context, with its different lifeworlds and associated roles, also enables exploration of the impact of such roles on students' experiences as part-time DBA students influenced by their historical circumstances.

As this research concerns an educational context, coping and stress are seen in a wider sense, not simply from a clinical perspective, where the focus is on serious disease patterns and chronic stress, but rather with a developmental view on educational learning in the context of a particular and challenging situation – the doctoral journey. That means, stress is defined in this study in relation to a life event or daily stressor, which reflects the student's life stage as a part-time doctoral student who also has several other social roles (Aldwin, 2010), some of which may be associated with particularly stressful life events. Such stressful life events can include changes of social role(s), for example, job changes, marriage, birth (Aldwin, 2010). Methodologically, stress, as explored in this study, does not differ between stressor as cause or effect (e.g. the failing of coping strategies) as here 'stressor' is understood from the student's perspective, not from a probabilistic position. What students experience and describe as stressful, challenging and burdening is, therefore, understood to be a 'stressor'.

Coping includes any form of behavioural and cognitive strategy utilized as a response (Aldwin, 2010) to fulfil the task and overcome hurdles and challenges of the doctoral endeavour. I want to shed light on how students make meaning out of their doctoral experience (appraisal) and how they respond to stress and appraise the problematic situations they may encounter to progress their research.

In the following chapter, I give an overview of current research on specific aspects of doctoral students' experience, which also reveals challenges and possible strategies to overcome these in more detail.

3. Literature review

3.1 Introduction

The research draws on literature in the field of psychology, education, phenomenology and social science. Its interdisciplinary nature provides more than one perspective on the research addressed.

The previous chapter has illustrated the context of students' different lifeworlds and has demonstrated the relevance of stress research in doctoral study, illuminating the effect of stress on health, the relation to well-being and its impact on study performance, mainly derived from a probabilistic approach.

After a short overview about research on stress and coping in the context of education in general, this chapter addresses relevant literature surrounding the doctoral student experience and provide an overview from this stream of research highlighting key resulting issues covering aspects such as part-time study, motivation, emotions, social interaction and support, learning and identity development. This is followed by consideration of studies on professional doctorates and, in particular, on the experience of DBA students. These studies tend to apply a qualitative approach to the phenomenon, such as the analysis of student diaries, observations, interviews and focus groups and offer a more detailed understanding of the student experience. Considerations are closed by the provision of a short overview of research on the student experience in transnational education to illuminate contextual issues.

3.2 Stress and coping in the context of education

In general, stress has been comprehensively examined in the context of education and work addresses a broad range of student types, such as college students (e.g. Gallagher et al., 2019; Giancola et al., 2009; Macan et al., 1990); undergraduates (e.g. Böke et al., 2019; Brown, 2008; Cleugh, 1972; Leger, 1996; Medhurst, 2008; Oswalt & Riddock, 2007), and masters (e.g. Christie et al., 2008; O'Connor & Cordova, 2010; Siabi-Mensah et al., 2009). Such studies also often derive

implications for institutional improvements (e.g. Bauer & Mott, 1990; Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Bradley & Graham, 2000; Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002; Chartrand, 1992; Graham & Donaldson, 1999; Home, 1998), suggesting that addressing student stress in education is also a matter that continues to concern educators.

The literature on students' stress highlights that exam stress, in particular, seems to be a challenge for full-time students, whereas adult learners face additional stress in terms of role conflicts (Giancola & Grawitch, 2009). This starts to demonstrate the potential for stress from the activity of education itself as well as from outside aspects related to other roles the learner inhabits, suggesting that both issues are relevant in examining stress in this context. There is also a growing body of literature about part-time students (e.g. Beccaria et al., 2016; Boorman et al., 2006; Callender et al., 2006; Chikoko, 2010; Medhurst, 2008; Moro-Egido & Panades, 2010; Ramsden, 2006) that emphasizes students' diversity and the challenge to balance and negotiate space, energy and motivation, where family is seen as main support mechanism (Medhurst, 2008).

In contrast, family responsibilities can also be demanding and need to be balanced with study commitments (Gardner, 2009). Fairchild (2003) describes that part-time students need to overcome several barriers through their multiple roles. Situational barriers can occur through financial issues, career compromises or feelings of guilt when having less time for the children. Dispositional barriers exist through experienced stress and anxiety through role overload, role conflicts and role contagion. Institutional barriers occur through a lack of institutional infrastructure for part-time students. Besides the challenge of balancing multiple roles, part-time students can also have an advantage. They are often older, which is why they are more focused and possess a complex knowledge base developed from meaningful real-life experience that they can draw on in addition to classroom learning (Bennion et al., 2011; Fairchild, 2003; Jamieson et al., 2009). This could also refer to DBA students as they are experienced professionals, and further detailed investigation through a phenomenological approach may help understand if they experience similar barriers. O'Conner and Cordova (2010) took a phenomenological perspective on the learning experience of postgraduate taught students and confirmed challenges in balancing several demands, particularly that

part-time students face unexpected challenges in their workplace. In addition, they confirmed Medhurst's (2008) results, that strong social and family support lead to the reduction of stress, whereas strong internal motivation and self-assurance helped to maintain motivation. This experience may also resonate with part-time DBA students. Nevertheless, the learning approach and duration of a doctorate differ from those of taught study and may require different coping strategies at some points. Therefore, the following section will illuminate several aspects of doctoral student experience which may also illuminate differences to other student groups.

3.3 Aspects of the doctoral student experience

3.3.1 Part-time study - multiple life roles

Studies focusing specifically on part-time doctoral students are scarce (e.g. Barnacle & Usher, 2003; Cumming & Ryland, 2004; Deem & Brehony, 2000; Evans, 2002; Harman, 2002), in most doctoral studies the study mode is often not indicated, or there is a lack of details about the context.

What part-time students in general report, is often a feeling of being non-traditional or a sense of otherness, with a lack of closer relationships to faculty members and peers (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012). They felt they missed out on something and that they could not be part of the overall process (see also Bircher, 2012). Furthermore 'balancing' multiple roles and demands are described as a common challenge for doctoral students, especially those who are part-time (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012).

Some studies looked specifically at the experience of mothers as part-time doctoral students. Thinnam (2011) e.g. explored eight Thai mothers, all mid-career or mature professionals working full-time in education or business. Results showed mutual interaction between life roles, which were varied in their negative or positive perception. Role conflict exists (Kahn et al., 1964) when roles are mutually incompatible, and when meeting one demand can make it difficult to meet demands from other roles. Not all students were able to maintain a balance between their roles from work, study, family and self-demands. Also, unexpected

situations like health issues in, or after, pregnancy led to timeline delay in their doctoral study and, as a result, feelings of stress (see also: Holm et al., 2015).

Most students in the study of Byers et al. (2014) also reported challenges in balancing the multiple roles they occupied. Those students were full-time students, older with family responsibilities, but it is unclear if any job obligations existed. Here the notion of the potential stress created through the student having multiple roles is also evidenced – and appears to add further to the complexity of doctoral study. This has also been confirmed by Devonport and Lane (2014), who explored the stress and coping strategies of two male doctoral students and their female partners in their last year of study. Stressors that resulted directly, or indirectly, from the doctoral study as a shared experience by the couples included financial concerns, meeting targets for doctoral output, concerns about future career and relationship. Students described competing commitments as a further stressor, which led to negative emotions such as fear, guilt, anger and frustration. The research demonstrates the influence of other life roles, irrespective of if students' study is part-time or not, and specifically, the effect on partner relations during doctoral work, which can lead to tension in the relationship. Students in this study were also full-time students, and their coping mechanisms have not been explored in much detail. To gain more insight into the influence of relationships as a stressor and the applied coping mechanisms as a response, there is a need to include the perspective of students' partners, and not simply consider that of the student. As such, this research examines both the student and their partners' experiences and perspectives.

Bates and Goff (2012) considered the advantages and disadvantages of being a part-time doctoral student. Besides greater flexibility through structure, programmatic reasons such as scarce availability of part-time doctoral programmes, and the distance between institution and peers leads to the lack of closer relationships to faculty members and peers. These issues were also recognized by Gardner and Gopaul (2012).

As an advantage, Bates and Goff (2012) see the chance to become experts in time management through balancing multiple roles and the potential that work and research can inform each other. Though it may be the case that successful

business managers studying part-time already possess competence in time management, the advantage of the beneficial mutual relationship between work and research may be particularly valued. This was also evident in the form of positive emotions mentioned in work on Thai students who are mothers (Thinnam, 2011). The availability of more than one perspective – work and research – may offer a greater basis from which to generate ideas.

Gardner and Gopaul (2012) also emphasized the complexity and diversity of part-time students and the requirement of institutional and empirical effort to understand and develop diverse support systems. It is evident, therefore, that there is still research needed on the part-time doctoral experience – and how that experience sits alongside the other roles that such students are likely to have.

While Gardner and Gopaul (2012) confirmed the challenge of balancing several roles and commitments as part-time students, they emphasized the importance of support from family and friends, as did Byers et al. (2014). In Thinnam's (2011) study students applied coping strategies varied from active to passive strategies and support from people as coping resources were emphasized as essential. Additionally, Gardner and Gopaul (2012) indicated part-time students' received support from their employer through job flexibility. Equally, work colleagues and friends can provide essential mentorship in daily interaction at the workplace (Bircher, 2012). This kind of benefit, of what having a full-time job can provide alongside undertaking study, adds another source of support to possible coping mechanisms. Integrating the perspective of a colleague at work can bring more insight into the experience of part-time students. It seems reasonable to hence suggest enfolding colleagues' views into this research is also likely to add value and insight.

Managing work-life-balance

The requirement of balancing several roles lead to the definition of work-life balance in general. Models describe the relationship between work and life outside work in terms of the different degrees of their connectivity (O'Driscoll, 1996). The ability to balance also differs between individuals and depends on the individual's locus of control and is also associated with well-being (Guest, 2002). Guest (2002)

defines balance as "stability of body and mind" (p. 261) and work-life balance as having "sufficient time to meet commitments at both home and work" (p. 263). He states that in most studies, work and non-work are difficult to define and, therefore, the focus is on the subjective experience of imbalance and on subjective attributions of causes that reflect the phenomenological inquiry in this research. Therefore, his subjectively focused definition is the "perceived balance between work and the rest of life" (Guest, 2002, p. 263).

Drawing this into the doctoral experience and considering what it means for the students, balance can be interpreted as the perceived balance between study and the rest of life (Martinez et al., 2013) to be able to progress with the doctorate. In other words, balance is satisfaction or well-being, and good functioning in students' study – just as it is at work and home and with a minimum of role conflict (Clark, 2000).

Nevertheless, studies looking in particular at the concept of work-life-balance refer mainly to professionals in the workplace (e.g. Bailey, 2008; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Oludayo et al., 2018; White et al., 2003), consider theoretical implications (e.g. Evans, 2002; Guest, 2002) and gender issues (e.g. Gregory & Milner, 2009; Wattis et al., 2013) while predominantly using quantitative study designs (Agyapong & Aowusu-Ansah, 2012). Research in the education area refers more to role conflicts (e.g. Fairchild, 2003; Medhurst, 2008) and are scarce concerning doctoral studies (e.g. Haynes et al., 2012; Holm et al., 2015; Martinez et al., 2013).

Several studies connect work-life balance with control theory (e.g. Adkins & Premeaux, 2019; Karkoulian et al., 2016; Michel et al., 2011) where individuals with a high internal locus of control should be able to effectively balance their work and family demands (Michel et al., 2011). Internal locus of control refers to the belief that control is based on your own hard work and effort whereas an external locus of control reflects the belief externalities are responsible for success and happenings are beyond one's own control (Rotter, 1966). Control in general "can be seen as a process of achieving goal results in the face of disturbances (changing circumstances) that would otherwise prevent the achievement of these goals" (Mansell & Marken, 2015, p. 5). Keeping 'control' of the process of research

development is both important and necessary to succeed in doctoral studies (e.g. Grover, 2007).

This also goes along with Bandura's (1997) concept of self-efficacy, which refers to one's confidence to "execute a course of action to bring about a certain performance outcome" (Locke & Schattke, 2019, p.12) and is significant in doctoral performance (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Kerrigan & Hayes, 2016) and as a lower level of self-efficacy can lead to stress (You & Chen, 2012). To further control desired performance, in the self-regulation model by Carver and Scheier (2001) people adjust their behaviour to regulate the discrepancy between the current and the desired end state in three steps – goal setting, goal operating and goal monitoring. Self-efficacy in attaining academic outcomes and setting milestones and goals to control intended outcomes reflects strategies such as time management that is also necessary for the management of doctoral research.

Time

Therefore, another significant component of part-time study, and the balance of multiple roles, is time. This is evident in Thinnam's (2011) study where all students realised that their studies took more time than they expected, which caused stress. Research on doctoral completion also confirms that critical experiences in a time of stress can influence time to completion (e.g. Hales, 1998; McDermott, 2002). Part-time doctoral students often describe as the cost of their study a loss of leisure time and less time for family and friends (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Leonard et al, 2005).

Looking at literature on the concept of time in general, Flaherty's (1999) theoretical model of variation in the perceived passage of time explains that there are three different kinds of subjective temporal experience: protracted duration, synchronicity and temporal compression. A person perceives time as passing slowly (protracted duration) in specific situations, such as suffering and intense emotions, violence and danger, waiting and boredom, altered states, concentration and mediation and shock and novelty. Synchronicity happens when subjective and objective time match. However, when contradictory, a person experiences that time flies (temporal compression) during habitual conduct where conscious

attention is low, or even during high-attention activities or in a complex situation when the processes are routine or practised actions. This explains how subjective temporal experience can differ, or vary, to clock time and may produce stress, which Araújo (2005) describe as "conflicting time perspectives" (p. 198). She describes clock time as linear time that collides with the lived time of the PhD experience as 'circular time'. Conflicting time perspectives result in the change of daily and biographical plans, which need to fit the linear requirements of clock time and are often accompanied by negative emotions.

As a response to the experienced discrepancy between subjective temporal experience and clock time, Flaherty's (2003) concept of 'time work', describe the "individual or interpersonal effort to create or suppress particular kinds of temporal experience" (p.17) in maintaining regular events or constructing time schedules to use the time resource efficiently. Looking at doctoral education, several guidebooks (e.g. Kamler & Thomson, 2014; Phillips & Pugh, 2010; Thomas, 2016) for doctoral students give advice surrounding time management to help students use time efficiently.

Research on professionals (Moen et al., 2013) describes four active strategies for how professionals cope with time strain that can be understood as an example of time work and the effort to take control: prioritizing time, scaling back, blocking out work or nonwork time and time-shifting. It can be assumed that such approaches may be drawn into their doctoral study by part-time students who are also managers to direct their time efficiently and balance their different life roles. Martinez et al. (2013) mention doctoral students' strategies in this respect as prioritizing, creating personal time as nonwork time or making tradeoffs. Students in Gardner and Gopaul's (2012) study had to sacrifice and compromise one aspect of their life for another, which also reflects e.g. prioritizing time. Rockinson-Szapkiw et al.'s (2017) participants – doctoral students as mothers –understood time as "segments of the day" (p. 62) and also tried to block out time for their doctorate. Nevertheless, most studies in doctoral research do not solely focus on the experience of time but rather indicate that time management is necessary, without providing further details. The current study may provide further insight into the experience of time.

Time work also depends on the social context, which has a cultural, organizational and relational aspect (Flaherty, 2003). That means students' intention to influence their time experience is coined by their cultural background, driven by organizational demands such as the company they work for/with or the university they study at and is also influenced by other individuals. This mirrors the notion of subjective time, which can vary within social groups or organizations and across their collective meaning (Plakoyiannaki & Saren, 2006). Time is also a vital component of entrepreneurial processes, which is often based on a linear concept of time (Ruef, 2005), whereas learning processes in the educational understanding are often based more on a cyclic process (Kolb, 1984). How DBA students experience and deal with time, and if there are differences in their understanding and experience of time between professional and academic life may be illuminated in this study through looking at the lived experience as a whole based on van Manen's (1990) four existentials, where time is one of the primary dimensions.

3.3.2. Motivation

Another important aspect of doctoral study is motivation (e.g. Beck, 2016). It is not only the initial reason to start this endeavour, but also the maintenance of motivation and persistence to finish, even when experiencing some aspect of struggle (e.g. Beck, 2016; Devos et al., 2017; Santicola, 2011; Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2017; Zhou, 2014). Beck (2016) suggests that motivation is a strong predictor of completion (Beck, 2016 - self-determination theory approach).

Given the debate surrounding the definition of motivation as intrinsic and extrinsic (e.g. Locke & Schattke, 2019; Rheinberg & Engeser, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2019a, 2019b), there are several notions about how a researcher explains and differentiates the two (e.g. Bühler, 1921; Carver & Scheier, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Kruglanski et al., 2018; Woodworth, 1918 cited in Locke & Schattke, 2019). Locke and Schattke (2019) argue motivation always has both internal and external aspects; thus, the person is always interacting with the environment (Folkman and Lazarus, 1984). Doing a doctorate reflects, at first sight, the extrinsic motivation of "doing something in order to get some future value" (Locke & Schattke, 2019, p.14), to hold the title "Dr". As "a means to an end" (Locke & Schattke, 2019, p.1),

a doctoral title is also an entry ticket into the next level of proficiency (Knigge-Illner, 2015). On the other hand, the intrinsic interest in research is essential for development from 'dependent' to 'independent' researcher, and thus for success (Gardner, 2009; Lovitts, 2008).

The motives of doctoral students, as the origin of motivation, are explored in several studies. Leonard et al. (2005) for instance asked through an open-ended questionnaire graduated EdD, PhD, Mphil in Education students about their study motivation, the main reasons were qualification through intellectual and emotional growth as a benefit "to prove myself at the highest level" (p. 139). Depending on their career stage, business professional doctorate students in Gill and Hoppe's (2009) study mentioned motivations such as entry into academia, professional development, and advancement to enter a new career and also 'personal fulfilment' through self-enhancement. Brailsford (2010) also explored the motives of 11 history PhD students and confirms the outcomes of the existing literature. Additionally, students often call 'interest in the subject' a motive for study. Usually, candidates are motivated by several motives, not just one (Brailsford, 2010; Gill & Hoppe, 2009) and third parties often encouraged the decision process (Brailsford, 2010). However, motives developed, or changed, over time, which Woodworth (1918 in Rheinberg & Engeser, 2018) already postulated as being typical.

To maintain motivation during study, self-efficacy and goal commitment seem to be crucial (Bandura, 1997; Locke & Latham, 1990, 2013). Kerrigan and Hayes (2016) confirmed the relationship of success, self-efficacy and interest in PhD research. Self-efficacy is one's confidence to "execute a course of action to bring about a certain performance outcome" (Locke & Schattke, 2019, p.12). In particular, self-efficacy influences students' ability to justify their decisions in their research project (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000), which is central for a doctoral thesis. Individuals learn about their capabilities through four possible experiences: actual performance, vicarious experience, forms of social persuasion, and physiological indexes (Kerrigan & Hayes, 2016). Effects of self-efficacy include motivation, learning, self-regulation, and achievement (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Self-efficacy can be weakened by negative emotions, for example, caused through critical or unfavourable feedback (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Can & Walker, 2011; Carlino,

2012), but strengthened by the experience of positive learning outcomes (Kerrigan & Hayes, 2016). Students with low efficacy may need encouraging feedback (Can & Walker, 2011) and should be made aware that difficulties are inherent and that it does not mean personal failure (Carlino, 2012). This also illustrates that the sociocultural context, such as supervisor interaction, shapes motivation and how motivation is influenced depends on interpretation (Devos et al., 2017).

Further, another theory - the achievement motivation theory – helps to explain an individual's choice, persistence, efforts, and performance on a particular task (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), which are shaped by perceptions about the value and expectancy of the task (reason to engage and probability of success). The overall value of a task depends on four components – intrinsic value, utility value, attainment value, cost belief. In Zhou (2014) study, there is evidence that utility value and high social cost of quitting (embarrassment to self and family for non-achievement) motivated doctoral candidates to continue. However, motivation depends on several factors, not just these, such as study conditions and personal factors (Bair & Haworth, 1999; Gardner, 2009) and it cannot explain the experience of doctoral students alone. In the following discussion, further aspects of the doctoral experience illuminate the complexity of doctoral student experiences and the interplay of several components.

3.3.3 Emotions

Emotions, are another component and also help to form and create doctoral student experiences. Devonport and Lane (2014) identified continuous uncertainty as key doctoral emotion (Lovitts, 2002; Pychyl & Little, 1998), but only a few studies in doctoral education pay attention to the relevance of emotions (either positive or negative) experienced during such study (Byers et al., 2014; Cotteral, 2013; Devonport & Lane, 2014; Hopwood et al., 2011; Russell-Pinson & Harris, 2019). Cotteral (2013) reflects on the learning experience of non-traditional students, who have described undertaking study as a "rollercoaster of confidence and emotions" (Christie et al., 2008, p. 567).

In the literature, emotions are discussed as being complex (Evans, 2015) with different definitions and overlapping concepts (Hascher, 2010), where the

difference between emotion, interest, well-being and feelings remains unclear (Pekrun, 2005). Nevertheless, in contrast to mood and affective traits, emotions seem to be shorter in duration and are directed toward an object (Evans, 2015). Besides the biological and neurological explanations of emotions that describe emotions as a physiological response to a stimulus (Cotteral, 2013), Lupton (1998) explains emotions can be seen as learned behaviours that are socially constructed depending on the historical, social and political context. Schutz et al. (2006, p. 344) give the following definition:

> … socially constructed, personally enacted ways of being that emerge from conscious and/or unconscious judgements regarding perceived successes at attaining goals or maintaining standards or beliefs during transactions as part of social-historical contexts.

Cotteral (2013) states in response to this definition, emotions are relational, linked to appraisals and influenced by context, which confirms the role cognition plays and corresponds with the transactional model by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), where emotions arise through the appraisal of the context (situation and personal resources) and relate to an experienced stressor that a student needs to cope with.

Educational researchers see emotions as an "integral part of learning" (Eynde & Turner, 2006, p. 362) because they influence the effectiveness of information processing (Gläser-Zikuda et al., 2005) and knowledge acquisition (Pekrun, 2005). Whereas positive emotions can lead to the generation of ideas and strategies (Madrazo & Motz, 2005), negative emotions can also reduce working memory and academic performance (Hyun et al., 2006).

Hopwood et al. (2011) also emphasized the emotional investment in doctoral work that makes it a "highly emotional endeavour" (p. 223). They stated that the emotional aspect in doctoral study is hidden and reported the experience of negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, frustration, sadness, boredom and loneliness. Such emotions appear to occur for several reasons. Guilt and worry can occur through the failure to meet milestones or programme requirements (Devonport & Lane, 2014), which lead to stress (Byers et al., 2014). Also writing as an activity itself is a challenge and can produce anger, anxiety, frustration.

Disappointment can occur through the lack of support and interest of the departmental community (Cotteral, 2013).

Conversely, the occurrence of positive emotions like joy, pride and satisfaction have also been evidenced (Cotteral, 2013; Hopwood et al., 2011), particularly when a student has successfully finished their intended piece of writing or experienced recognition through participation as a researcher at a conference. The sense of achievement produces positive emotions and further maintain motivation to continue (McCormack, 2009). Paradoxically, the interaction with the supervisor can generate both, emotions in the form of happiness, motivation, but different expectations also lead to stress, confusion, anxiety and discouragement.

In addition, emotions also occur outside academia in relation to personal and professional issues, which can have an impact on the quality of students' writing (Cotteral, 2013). This, again, gives evidence about the relevance of the broader context and further legitimizes the need for more detailed and considered attention to those issues that lie outside the doctoral work itself but are, evidently, influential on those undertaking doctoral research.

As mentioned by Folkman (1997), emotions also play a vital role in the process of stress and coping, where positive emotions reinforce action and maintain motivation to continue in the process of doctoral study. Negative emotions, in comparison, can be a product of first or second appraisal, as described in Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model, wherein emotion-focused response coping takes place. If a coping mechanism does not work, stress and its associated emotions arise until new and effective coping mechanisms have been developed. Russell-Pinson and Harris (2019, p. 63) also stated, referring to the writing process in doctoral studies, "when these emotions go unacknowledged and unaddressed, they can result in deleterious outcomes for these writers". This evidences the need to develop effective coping mechanisms, which is also confirmed by Miller and Brimicombe (2004) . They also described the doctoral process as being "as much emotional as cognitive" (p. 409), in the form of being exhilarating and frightening and suggest offering practical training on how to manage emotional challenges.

Coping with negative emotions does not seem to be addressed clearly in most studies. Cotterall (2013), for instance, simply reported students' reactions in the form of suppression and referred to other studies (e.g. Devenish et al., 2009; Li & Vandermensbrugghe, 2011) to enhance the departmental environment through peer networks and establishment of writing groups. Herman (2010) and Manathunga (2005) also identified as typical coping strategies of doctoral students for unpleasant emotions, such as guilt, initially suppression. Hopwood et al. (2011) emphasized the need not to be alone. They determined that supervision is not often used as a space where emotional difficulties are addressed, and they suggest addressing this with friends and peers. The latest findings (Mochizuki, 2019) also reveal that a thesis writer group can help students to cope with emotions like doubt and frustration.

In the education literature, Fried (2011) stated, the timing of a regulation strategy for negative emotions impacts student learning outcomes. Evans (2015) differs here between 'response-focused strategy' where emotional regulation takes place after an emotional response, such as feeling angry, and in comparison, 'antecedent strategies' where emotion regulation is implemented at an earlier stage of emotional response e.g. suppression. The earlier form of regulation through suppression may lead to straightforward progression, whereas anger leads to an interruption of the learning progress and the student must first gain distance before they can continue. Which strategy is appropriate may depend on the situation and context.

Loneliness

Loneliness, as one specific form of emotion – primarily emerging from surveys about attrition rates - has received much attention in the literature that investigates doctoral work. The attrition rate is an extensively discussed topic in the literature and feelings of isolation and loneliness are often identified as key reasons for failure and non-completion (Ali & Kohun, 2006; Lovitts, 2002; Terrell et al., 2009). For example, international students often suffer feelings of isolation from peers and faculty due to language and culture differences (Le & Gardner, 2010). If students experience difficulties and emotional support through faculty and peers does not exist, discouragement to pursue the doctorate can increase and lead to attrition

(Onwuegbuzie et al., 2014). In contrast, discussion with peers can help to overcome crises and issues. Seeking emotional support against loneliness through online platforms was evident in the experiences of students in Janta et al.'s (2014) study. Online platforms, or the use of internet-based communication tools, may also help DBA students to overcome the distance to the university.

Several studies (e.g. Ali & Kohun, 2006; Byers et al., 2014; Deem & Brehony, 2000; Delamont et al., 1997; Janta et al., 2014) confirmed social interaction as a support mechanism when students experience isolation and loneliness or as a mechanism to avoid it. Social interaction can occur in multiple forms, e.g. actions for professional development such as taking part in seminars and conferences or strategies to escape from the doctorate. Janta et al. (2014) suggest developing institutional offers that also promote social interaction and communication among students and with faculty members, for example, shared study space, activities like welcome events or gatherings. They also argue that the experience of loneliness can depend on the departmental and disciplinary cultures. For example, in social science, doctoral students seem to more often experience isolation, whereas in natural science research, which often takes place within formal research teams where social structures are already established, is less likely (Deem & Brehony 2000; Delamont et al. 1997).

The opportunity for social interaction can also vary between study programmes. Doctoral students, taking part in a doctoral programme that contains structured taught elements, a cohort approach and residency weeks or weekends, confirmed, that the programme structure helped to minimise the feeling of isolation (Ali & Kohun, 2006, Byers et al., 2014). The authors also emphasized the importance of social support by the institution to reduce the feeling of isolation. The programme structure mentioned in those studies is similar to that of the DBA explored here, but it is unclear whether the students in the research already undertaken are part-time or not. The mode of study may also influence the level of isolation or loneliness felt by the student, just as the degree of structure and support may also be differently received by students on different modes of study. There appears to be scope for further investigation of part-time doctoral study to help elucidate the specifics in that mode of education.

Based on a theoretical discussion, Ali and Kohun (2007) developed a framework for dealing with feelings of social isolation. Based on Beeler's (1991) four stages, the authors describe strategies for each stage (preadmission to enrolment, first year, second year through candidacy, dissertation stage) to reduce social isolation. This comprises also the promotion of social events and collaboration, such as an orientation and induction week, a cohort approach, events where students meet and present their topics, support in selecting the advisor and a suggested structure for the dissertation phase. The study confirms the seriousness of the issues and possible structural mitigations that an institution can make to support students, but again it does not demonstrate possible differences in the experience of isolation due to study mode, further evidencing the need for more detailed consideration.

Coping with emotions, such as loneliness, evidence the significance of social support why the following section looks closer to the importance of social support and interaction in doctoral studies.

3.3.4 Social interactions, support and relationships

Socialization

A growing body of literature in doctoral education has focused on the examination of socialization as an essential part of doctoral learning and confirms the relevance of social networks as a support system.

In general, socialization is based on Merton (1957) and van Manen's ideas (1977, 1978) and adapted to graduate students by Lovitts (2002), Weidman et al. (2001) and Tinto (1993). van Manen described socialization as the learning of social knowledge and skills, especially formal and informal processes, traditions, relationships and rules in an organization. Golde (1998) describes it as the process of becoming a member of a community. This implies that action is required from the student to learn and to understand the rules, which happens in a learning process.

Tinto's (1993) theory of doctoral persistence is also based on a developmental process and implies that successful socialization results in persistence in students' studies. He described three phases where the transition happens initially through

entering the community and establishing membership in the form of social interactions. In the second phase, the student needs to acquire knowledge and develop competencies, whereas in the final phase, their own research project is central and interactions are more limited with the supervisor. This implies, on the one hand, the developmental component of doctoral study and, on the other hand, the learning process that focuses on external and internal conditions and standards. The process of socialization may also differ between study modes and the structure of the programme, which is not considered in Tinto's model.

Weidman et al. (2001) describe graduate students' experience of socialization through four developmental stages, with an emphasis on learning new roles and values, the difference of formal and informal learning and the development of identity: The anticipatory stage happens in the form of entering the programme and learning new roles and procedures. The student becomes aware of behaviour, attitudes and expectations. In the formal stage, the student learns about their new role through older students and is concerned about task issues through course material and regulations. In the informal stage, the student learns about the role's expectations through experience and interaction with others. The personal stage is the time when the new role is internalized, new values have been integrated and conflicts about role transformation have been overcome, and the student can develop their own identity in academia. This model further brings the potential surrounding role conflicts to light but lacks clarity on when and why they can occur and how students can overcome those conflicts and develop identity.

In addition, this concept of socialization is also based on normative assumptions and does not consider any individual differences (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Differences can exist through study mode and programme structure, which is why socialization may not be successful in every case. In the literature, specific student groups have been identified as being disadvantaged in the process of socialization (Deem & Brehony, 2000; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012). International students and part-time students are disadvantaged in accessing peer and academic culture whereas part-time students described a negative experience in social interactions with others and feelings of 'differentness' (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012). Usually, part-time students had more contact with faculty members and less time in terms of

contact with peers (Gardner, 2008, Gardner & Gopaul, 2012). This implies the specificness of part-time students and their limited available time for social interaction and network development, which can bring the potential of challenges and problems.

Gardner (2005) stated that socialization depends on the context and can vary between disciplines and departments. Due to the diversity of individuals, she defined support from faculty and peers as most important for success. In her study, students described their socialization process accompanied by ambiguity, priorities and balance, but also professional, personal and cognitive development. Gardner concluded that more research is necessary to understand the diversity of students as socialization occurs "on multiple levels and within distinct contexts" (Gardner, 2007, p. 737). Therefore, the current study seeks to explore business part-time students from Germany, which provides an explicit context from a specific student group perspective.

Pervan et al. (2016) specifically considered the socialization process of DBA students and describe the "contradictory requirements of … professional and academic lives" (p. 299), which can make it difficult for DBA students to acculturate to the university environment. They criticise the view that the task to shape norms and practice is mainly created by the university and emphasize the student's ability as an active agent to influence norms and attitudes (Hopwood, 2010a) and draw on resources within, and outside, the university. They present a conceptual framework about the DBA socialization process, but with the emphasis on knowledge creation – (the development of four knowledge modes - disciplinary, technical rationality, dispositional and transdisciplinary, critical knowledge), which is influenced by both, the cultural capital of the university and the cultural capital of the candidate. The framework is based on the authors' 40 years of collective experience but lacks empirical evidence. Case studies of DBA students could help to corroborate this framework.

Social support and interactions are part of the socialization process, and several studies confirmed the importance and benefits of peer groups as mentorship (Bircher, 2012) to promote self-reflection, self-assessment and self-care (Burleigh Lowe, 2012), also in informal learning settings (Devenish et al., 2009). Jairam and

Kahl (2012) recommended building joint forces with academic friends to be prepared for peer competition. Janson et al. (2004) suggest forming a club, where peers can help to reflect and mentor each other. Those studies confirm the relevance of social interaction mentioned in stress research and maintain, again, the argument that social aspects are an inherent part of doctoral study and learning.

Supervision

One further key factor of social interaction that has been mentioned as a stressor in doctoral study, specifically if problems occur, is supervision (e.g. Cotteral, 2013; Russell-Pinson & Harris, 2019). Supervision is identified as the most important element for success in doctoral education (Ali et al., 2016; Cornér et al., 2017) and a good relationship between student and supervisor is crucial (Bair & Haworth, 2005; Mohd Tahir et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2007; Shariff et al., 2014). The purpose of supervision is to guide and support students in the process of doctoral research (Sambrook et al., 2008) by giving technical and emotional support (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Problems that lead to stress can occur through ambiguous situations and different expectations (e.g. Hockey, 1996; Orellana et al., 2016). This is why a clear understanding of each role is essential to build and maintain a good relationship. In addition to communication problems, a lack of professional expertise and power can also generate conflicts between the supervisor and the doctoral student and harm the doctoral experience (Ismail et al., 2013), which then potentially leads to stress.

Furthermore, Frischer and Larsson (2000) confirmed that a lack of supervisors' timely direction, irregular meetings, lack of agreed research goals and general lack of direction can lead to failure in doctoral study and critical feedback can cause stress which is why a delicate balance of communication is sensible to prevent the student from demotivation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Erwee et al. (2011) claimed that regular, open and frank communication is necessary to prevent confusion, especially for students with low English language skills. They also emphasized consideration of the context of students and supervisors to determine the best approach for communication. Flora (2017) also postulates that supervision should be an act "with authenticity, facilitating growth or change, holding vision,

and acknowledging deficiency" (p. 219). Cotteral (2013) also described the mutual emotions caused by supervision. These positions underscore that supervision is perceived as an important support mechanism and key for success in doctoral studies but also has enormous potential to generate tensions and problems (for both parties). To gain a holistic understanding of that mechanism during doctoral study, the study also includes the supervisors' perspective, as well as the student perspective and that of their partner.

In addition, Selmer et al. (2011) describe the doctoral experience as a performance, which includes relationships with supervisors and emphasizes the active role students should take in the form of performance. This has been illustrated by the students in the study from Benjamin et al. (2017), who describe "managing relationships" as a relevant factor for physical and mental well-being during doctoral study and emphasize students' active role in supervision. This serves to foreground that doctoral study, as potentially with any learning, is suffused with social issues. Moreover, as previous studies about emotions show, relationships in the learning space – with supervisors, other faculty members and other doctoral researchers – are drawn out as both sources of stress and mechanisms to cope with it. As to which of these positions those relationships fulfil, there is a need to consider the nature of the relationships in more detail and, in particular, the ability of the doctoral student to affect some control. Therefore, the concept of agency plays a role in developing networks and establishing relationships.

The role of agency in developing networks

To add more theoretical work to the existing literature about social aspects, Hopwood (2010a,b) looked at the sociocultural view of doctoral students' relationships and agency. Relationships are seen in this study as a mediator of learning and experience. Based on Edwards' (2000) ideas, 'agency' is a way of being, seeing and responding to the world and implies intention in human activity, which means agency also plays a role in the context of seeking help and is, therefore, mutually relational to relationships. Hopwood (2010a) emphasized relationships as necessary to develop networks to secure confidence and trust that helps students to develop. In another study Hopwood (2010b) further explored the

different forms of agency and relationships between learning, practice and student intentions. Students actively shape their experience through participation in multiple activities based on specific intentions and as their response to challenges. As the doctoral journey has a final intended goal – submission of the thesis and gaining the award – an active role seems sensible in moving the project forward.

In Inouye and McAlpine's (2017) study of doctoral students, agency is described as the "effort to work towards personally chosen goals and deal with challenges" (p. 1) including self-assessing work, critical engagement with feedback from various sources. Students can differ in their agency in areas such as intellectual tasks, networking behaviour or institutional engagement (McAlpine et al., 2013). Furthermore, self-efficacy is an aspect of agency and influences students' ability to justify their decisions and to accept or reject supervisor feedback (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000).

Goller and Harteis (2014) describe how doctoral students shape their experience in employing agency in academic situations in the form of "proactive networking, negotiation of external demands and deliberate information and feedback" (p. 189 and p. 207). Woo et al. (2015) offer three forms of agency in their study about international doctoral students, which include personal agency - personal and professional self-directed strategies, proxy agency - support and care from mentors in their home country, and collective agency - networking among other international students. The social aspect is reflected by proxy and collective agency, where help and support from others are key. Also, personal agency can draw on social networks to help. In general, agency can be seen as a problem-solving coping strategy where action is taken (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984) to effect control. Effecting control in the sense of agency is also one way of taking responsibility, which appears to be a powerful mechanism for coping and taking responsibility for research is seen as essential for doctoral study success (Abiddin, 2007).

3.3.5 Active coping vs passive coping

Besides coping being seen as part of seeking help and using social interaction and networks as support, in general, Hopwood et al. (2011) and others concretize

active coping or strategic response in doctoral studies as action in the form of prioritising, planning, postponing and consulting (see also Ashikaga, 2010), setting goals, having a research plan, choosing a topic that you like (Abiddin, 2007), adjusting or adapting to changing circumstances and situations, encouragement in form of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Onwueguzie et al., 2014), improving time management, physical health behaviour and stress management in form of relaxation techniques (Batterson, 2004; Beck, 2003; Kapadia, 2013). Hopwood et al. (2011) also describe making sacrifices, not only in terms of the research itself but in terms of dealing with the circumstances around it and maintaining the physical and psychological balance that is necessary to deliver performance.

In contrast, passive coping is described as 'doing nothing and accepting the situation' as it is (Hopwood et al. 2011) or even suppressing experienced stress that can refer to emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This can be advisable in some situations when action is not possible, and emotion-focused coping is preferred. Nevertheless, studies (e.g. Goller & Harteis, 2014; Grover, 2007) about doctoral education confirm an active role as being more effective and successful and as usually being accompanied by positive emotions to promote and maintain motivation (Folkman, 2008).

Fries (2006) talks about the positive effect of cognitive coping strategies in the form of optimism, which can be assigned to a "meaning-focused" approach as mentioned by Folkman (1997), where the student motivate and sustain coping through positive emotions. DeRosier et al. (2013) also suggest optimistic and motivated thinking styles for well-being, which in turn can enhance academic performance and persistence through maintaining motivation and finding effective coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Grover (2007) also reflected on key ingredients for success in doctoral study. He developed a stage model that describes different challenges through several periods of exploration, consolidation, engagement and entry and gives suggestions on how to avoid mistakes. This implies the developmental aspect of doctoral experience over time where a student goes through distinct stages. Grover (2007) describes the stages as helpful benchmarks for the progress, while the pace can vary between students. The author also suggested that students

should take an active role in resource and network management (manage their programme) to improve their effectiveness and efficiency and "to prevent mistakes from undermining the positive force of motivation and competence" (p. 9). This supports the requirement of an active role as a doctoral student to keep control and maintain motivation. Grover (2007) describes the student's role as an effective manager and proactive participant. Most DBA students are successful managers in their business role, and this begins to raise questions surrounding if they can manage their doctoral programme as successfully as their professional life.

Another indicator of success is identified by Devos et al. (2017) when they interviewed PhD completers and non-completers. Completers and non-completers differ in the extent to which they feel moving forward in their research project. 'Moving forward' can be possibly connected with a sense of achievement, which leads to positive emotions and encouragement. This supports the importance of an active student role as suggested by Grover (2007) to take control and offer agency in bringing the research process toward the intended goal.

3.3.6 Learning – transformation, growth and identity development

The most important aspect of doctoral study is learning. It is a complex process (Inouye & McAlpine, 2019) influenced by several other aspects of student experience and interplays with transformation and identity development. Besides learning specific knowledge and skills, studies elucidated the role of identity development in the activity of learning (Barnacle & Mewburn, 2010).

A significant tool for learning in doctoral studies appear to be (critical) feedback given by the supervisor, especially on writing (Inouye & McAlpine, 2017). The feedback helps students to learn how to think and communicate as researchers and to detect issues in their writing. The use of questions to aid reflection can support changes in research thinking and scholarly development (Ghazal et al., 2014; Inouye & McAlpine, 2017), but students still vary in their response to supervisor feedback (Inouye & McAlpine, 2017).

Inouye and McAlpine (2019) looked at the relationship between writing, feedback and identity and described it as complex, particularly as the development of

scholarly identity depends on the degree of agency a student feels they have in engaging with critical feedback (Inouye & McAlpine, 2017). Hence the growth of scholarly identity lies in writing (Thomson & Kamler, 2016) but also means greater confidence and taking critical perspectives (Murakami-Ramalho et al., 2013), developing a technical vocabulary and being part of the community (Lieff et al., 2012), which then further promotes agency (Inouye & McAlpine, 2017). The degree of agency is also influenced by previous experience with feedback. Having little experience in receiving feedback (Can & Walker, 2011; Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Carlino 2012) can lead to negative emotions (Inouye & Alpine, 2017) and may even reduce motivation and self-confidence (Can & Walker, 2011) and further affect self-efficacy. But Inouye and McAlpine (2017) also claim "value challenging feedback as a mechanism to enhance one's thinking" (p. 4) is important in developing towards being an independent researcher. However, this should be enacted in a collaborative process from both sides (Li & Seale, 2007), where strategies such as foreshadowing, advice-giving, repair, humour and politeness can be helpful as a joint activity to support the effective management of criticism (Li & Seale, 2007).

Adding further evidence on the influence of social interaction on learning and the relationship to transformation and identity development, students described their socialization experience as a transition through professional, academic or personal shifts (Russell, 2015). This is caused through new knowledge, where a transition takes place from being a consumer of knowledge to the creator of knowledge through their own research (Gardner, 2008). Here learning plays a leading role and doctoral learning is described as core in transformation and identity development (Baker & Lattuca, 2010). Therefore, students' transition towards becoming independent researchers is also rooted in the socialization process (Gardner, 2008; Baker & Pifer, 2011), where relationships provide support and advice for further learning and help students to identity development through training, impression management, network and collaboration. It can be concluded that learning and identity development are inseparable, and identity development is promoted by social interaction. The current study considers the developmental aspect over time, in terms of its context and its social aspects. How part-time students, working full-time as managers, experience the socialization process and

develop their identity bring may further understanding of socialization mechanisms of this specific student group.

Hence, there is also a need to consider what Mezirow (2018) describes as the transformational aspect of doctoral learning, which is defined as "a metacognitive epistemology of evidential (instrumental) and dialogical (communicative) reasoning" (p.117). This means, advancing and assessing a belief to reform meaning structures - a process that transforms sets of assumptions and expectations as the basis for meaning-making. When such assumptions and expectations reject ideas that do not fit the existing schema, stagnation of learning results (Mezirow, 2018). Trafford and Leshem (2009) compare the stagnation of learning with the experience of 'blockage', which prevents progress in the doctoral process as a threshold concept that needs to be overcome. It is a learning process in which students need to understand what it is that examiners look for when judging their academic worth (Trafford & Leshem, 2009), while for learning and the generation of new thoughts what is particularly crucial is the transformation of self (Illeris, 2018). Mezirow (2018) states that the major elements of transformative learning conclude in critical reflection on assumptions and result in students participating in a "dialectical discourse to validate a best reflective judgement" (p. 118). Those elements have been implemented in the taught elements of the University of Gloucestershire DBA programme.

When considering issues from the perspective of stress research, identity development and learning can also take place through stress-related growth (Aldwin & Levenson, 2004, Carver & Scheier, 2003), which Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004, p. 1) describe as "positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances". Those circumstances can range from a traumatic experience to regular life events and daily stressors (Aldwin et al., 2007). The challenge of doctoral study evidence the stress experienced and these episodes can be seen as 'stressful life events' that corroborate the notion of this being a threshold experience (Trafford & Leshem, 2009). Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) have also identified, as a positive outcome, of those challenging life circumstances: stress inoculation, increases in mastery and competence (increase, self-confidence, or internal locus of control), changes in perspectives

and values, strengthening of social ties, and spiritual development. Gaining a doctoral degree means mastery and competence in scholarly thinking, while often accompanied through changing perspectives and values that also provide evidence of stress-related growth. But Aldwin et al. (2007) likewise state, growth is not necessarily transformational and can just simply increase competence.

In general, research on identity development in doctoral study refers mainly to academic identity development (e.g. Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Castello et al., 2015; Inouye & McAlpine, 2019; Sweitzer, 2009), where students pursue a future career in academia. The objective pursued – an academic career – promotes particular activities (e.g. a more intensive interaction with the research community) that, as a consequence, shapes identity (Baker & Lattuca; 2010; Castello et al., 2015). Insofar as that pursuing an academic career will promote different activities when compared to the intention to remain in business. In addition, Kerrigan and Hayes (2016) claim that most studies of identity development refer to full-time PhD students, which are not necessarily applicable to professional doctorates. This suggests that faculties need to adopt a practitioner-oriented conception of identity rather than a conventional researcher identity concept when mentoring practitioner-researchers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015). Also, students in such programmes are not looking for a new identity, but rather to further develop their *existing* identity as an 'experienced professional'. Further exploration of DBA part-time students in this regard can illuminate how professionals develop their identity while embarking on a doctorate.

Barnacle and Mewburn (2010) demonstrate, based on actor-network theory, that scholarly identity develops not only through traditional, but also the non-traditional sites of learning. This means the student is not a sole actor, they are embedded in a physical world with artefacts such as articles, books and databases and other actors who instrumentally serve the learning process. Learning takes place in a network of human and non-human actors and the student is usually part of multiple, and overlapping, actor-networks. This involves – for part-time DBA students – the university, their professional life, the home but also other networks. Learning and identity development can take place everywhere, for example when reading a research article in a plane on a business trip or meeting people for coffee, which

serves to offer novel ideas for their doctoral research. For part-time students, this may mean using their other life-worlds outside the university to a greater extent to learn and to develop their research. Mentoring relationships can also occur outside academia (Baker & Lattuca, 2010), which in this context could, for example, be a person at work for business students.

Also, previous experience (e.g. alpine skiing coach, successful manager) and new life roles (e.g. becoming a mother) can influence the learning process during a person's doctoral studies (Callary et al., 2012). In a positive form, previous experience constitutes self-confidence and helps negotiate the doctoral learning process but in a negative form, it can also lead to resistance to any transformational aspects (Petersen, 2014). In this case, students seem to understand doctoral education more as skills training rather than transformation of self, which is why identity development can stagnate. How problems occur through previous experience and the influence of other life roles and how students overcome those problems do not seem to have been fully considered in previous studies.

Watts (2008) claimed that for part-time students the main challenge is the necessary "psychological adjustment of constantly switching from one mindset to another" (p. 370). Part-time students' daily life is dominated by the culture of their full-time employment, which is often contrary to academic culture. Their identity as a professional can conflict with the mindset of a scholar and the development of scholarly identity can stagnate, or develop slowly, due to the limited time that is available to socialize with peers and faculty members. This reflects the complex experience of part-time doctoral students, where several life worlds overlap in a dynamic relationship and highlights the challenge DBA students can face. In contrast, they have the advantage of bringing with them skills and abilities that younger students may not possess. In addition, they can enrich academia through their connection of practice and theory. This emphasizes another value of exploring such a student population in more depth – one that is likely to be found in a professional doctorate in business and management.

Looking at literature about identity in organizational research, Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) explored senior manager identity in a large research and

development company. They described a process of identity work that is dynamic, involves facing struggle through the experience of fragmentation, but also integration. Identity is central in organizations for meaning and motivation, which lead to commitment and loyalty and influence logics of action and decision-making – this can also be assumed to refer to doctoral study. New trends in the literature tend to call identity processes 'becoming' instead of 'being' (Ashforth, 1998), which reflects the process and development of a doctoral researcher moving to become an independent researcher. Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) call for future research to focus on integration aspects of identity, where qualitative study can provide thick description that can help to understand identity construction.

Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) describe the concept of identity work, when people are engaged "in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions [of self] that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness" (p. 1165). Specific events or strains lead to an awareness of self-identity constructions and may, at a minimum, generate self-doubts or even "psychological-existential worry" (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 626). Performance pressure can also lead to differences in self-construction and presentation to others (Watson, 2009). Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) describe contemporary business life, and life in general, as turbulent where contradictions prevail. For that reason, there is a need for individuals to make sense of those conflicts and uncertain contexts in dealing with their identity in the form of 'identity work'. This can be extended to the doctoral student experience, especially for DBA part-time students, who have to deal with identities derived from their professional life and the challenge of developing a new identity as 'researching professionals' (Taylor, 2007).

Similarly, Snow and Anderson (1987) have described identity work as "activities individuals engage in to create, present and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept" (p. 1348). Further, Watson (2008) define managers' identity work as follows:

> Identity work involves the mutually constitutive processes whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity and struggle to come to terms with and, within limits, to influence

the various social identities which pertain to them in the various milieux in which they live their lives. (p. 129)

This implies that individuals have multiple identities (Delanty, 2007) depending on the social context they are in (Watson, 2008). Watson (2008) also differentiates between 'internal' self-identity aspects (individual creation of self) and 'external' or 'discursive' social-identity aspects (constructed by the social world) and notes that both influence each other through identity work in a dynamic fashion (p. 140). Identities are hence shaped, and reshaped, over lives where the identity of 'manager' will only be part of the outcome of organizational experience and is also influenced by the individual's whole life history (Watson, 2009). Therefore, Watson (2009) claims that, in organizational research, an individual's whole life history should be examined and the resulting identities that are formed and maintained should be considered, not solely their managerial identity. Therefore, considering DBA students' contexts – that of professional, private and study life – can generate further insight into how students manage identity work.

In terms of identity development in general, the difference between roles and identity has also to be considered (Baker & Lattuca, 2010) where, from the perspective of social psychology, roles are viewed as external to the individuum while identity "consists of internalized meanings and expectations associated with a role "(Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 289). Role interpretation depends on personal preferences and interests, which can lead to identification or resistance, and in turn, depend on the individual's identity construction and life stories. Therefore, again, a non-manager identity can influence managerial identities and vice versa (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). This assumes that part-time DBA students' identity is influenced by their manager identity. If such logic can also be extended to other professionals is explored in the next section.

3.4 Professional doctorates

Over the evolution and development of professional doctorates, the different construction of doctorates in this arena has led to different values (Heath, 2005) and confused the purpose and aim of professional doctorates (Scott et al., 2004).

Therefore, studies about professional doctorates have focused mainly on programme structure and organization in comparison to the PhD or on the perception of value, not on students' experience.

For example, Neumann (2005) compared in her empirical study, the experience of the PhD and professional doctorates in Australia. This also includes management students besides others, but most students were full-time. Results show differences in recruitment and selection habits, programme structure and organization and perception of status. The study lacks any specification of the experience of business students. Further, Lester (2004) discussed, in general, the development and conceptualization of professional doctorates and what kind of knowledge they produce in comparison to the PhD. He emphasized the value of a practitioner doctorate for universities' future knowledge development. Doncaster and Thorne (2000) described, in their consideration of the Doctorate in Professional Studies (DProf) at Middlesex University, reflection and planning as the two core elements of the learning approach. As a generic programme, it addresses many fields of study, and although business students are not explicitly mentioned here, they may well have been part of the programme.

Only a few studies (e.g. Collinson, 2005; Hockey & Collinson, 2005; Malfroy & Yates, 2003; Taylor, 2007; Thomson et al., 2012) indicate experience about learning, knowledge production, identity development and identity work. They emphasized the complexity of the learning process where professional doctorate students are in the middle of different learning cultures and may experience dissonance between theory and practice (Collinson, 2005; Hockey & Collinson, 2005; Malfroy & Yates, 2003). Senior professionals, with their expertise from the practice field, may find it difficult to be a novice in the academic world (Collinson, 2005; Hockey & Collinson, 2005). This can affect how students learn and form their professional identity as researching professionals (Taylor, 2007). Thomson et al. (2012) looked at the impact of reflection and doctoral study on practice and emphasized the value of attaining new knowledge and perspectives, which transcend the workplace and community of practice. Nevertheless, those studies refer to students in nursing, tourism, education, art and design. Business students

are not explicitly mentioned or investigated as a separate group. Nevertheless, those studies give insight into the challenge of combining theory and practice.

Collinson (2005) looked at the lived experience of students on a practice-based PhD in art and design. The focus was on identity development during the course. The study confirmed experiences of trouble and struggles, where problem-solving is identified as "a feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 55) in the form of applying the right strategy to make the right decision. Trouble and struggle include confusion and shock arising through the demands of academic research, of which practitioners from the creative arts were not aware before starting their doctorates and first needed a period of familiarization. This reflects the need for practitioners to become familiar with the academic culture. The need for social interaction, or socialization as indicated in other studies, as validation through peers and supervisors, has also been detected to finally make identity transformation possible (Collinson, 2005). Nevertheless, the additional component of practice seems to make the experience even more complicated. If differences may exist in the *mindset* of business managers in comparison to artists or students from the education area.

Hockey and Collinson (2005) also evidenced through students from a practice-based PhD in art and design the struggle of adapting to the process of combining practice and theory and the painful transformation from designer to designer-researcher. Students also described their position as a novice as being uncomfortable, and this was especially difficult for students with an established reputation in their artistic community. This also supports the experience of identity fragmentation as described by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) in managerial identity work. Hockey and Collinson (2005) emphasize the need for identity work to manage identity struggles (Howard, 2000) particularly when new forms of self, such as the practitioner-researcher, have to be constructed. In their study, central to this was a psychological adjustment to a new state of thinking and experiencing, where resolving threat was necessary to achieve the balance required to reinterpret the experience of writing. This was a difficult and long process, triggered through pressure and accompanied by anxiety. Students had to realise the benefit of combining practice and theory, which finally lead to a relaxed state, a sense of

empowerment and even greater creativity when they managed to acquire 'academic thinking'. This process again seems to reflect the threshold experience described by Trafford and Leshem (2009).

Taylor (2007) confirmed the complexity of different worlds in the learning process of professional doctorates and states "the process of professional doctorate learning is a complex intellectual and critical educational undertaking with unresolved tensions" (p. 164). He explains students' struggle in seeing themselves as separate from the learning context, which implies a distance to academic thinking and impedes identity development and hence learning to create the link between practice and theory. In Talyor's phenomenological study with EdD students, they too struggled with the principles and practice of research and described experiencing role conflict when treated as a novice but were experts in their workplace. When students learned to be critical and adopted an active role, they developed their personal identity, which also changed their professional practice. The following section looks at research on DBA students in particular and confirms a similar change of professional practice (Simpson & Sommer, 2016).

3.5 Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) students

Discussions that focus particularly on the DBA refer more to programmatic aspects, such as form and function (Anderson et al., 2015; Bourner et al., 2000; Perry & Cavaye, 2018; Wallace & Marchant, 2018), standards (Bourner et al., 2001), examination criteria (Anderson et al., 2015; Fink, 2006; Perry & Cavaye, 2018), programme delivery components (Anderson et al., 2015; Delmont, 2011), comparison to the PhD (Anderson et al., 2015; Fink, 2006; Huisman & Naidoo, 2006; MacLennan et al., 2016; Wallace & Marchant, 2018), research training and doctoral education and learning (McWilliam et al., 2002; Talbot, 2012) and its current state and future outlook (De Meyer, 2013; Maxwell & Shanahan, 2001), emergence and market development (Banerjeeb & Morley, 2013; Ehrenberg 1992; Gill & Hoppe, 2009; Maxwell & Shanahan, 2001), students motivation and career outlook (Grabowski & Miller, 2015; Wallace & Marchant, 2018), the perception of students and academics about the purpose and value of the DBA (Fink, 2006;

Poole, 2018; Stoten, 2016), reflection about the development of the DBA offer and suggestions on how to manage a DBA programme based on past experience (Pervan & Kortt, 2018; Wallace & Marchant, 2018).

Only a few studies have also considered student experience and they are detailed here. Grabowski and Miller (2015) explored motivation and career impact, whereas Stoten (2016) focused on the experience of being part of a doctoral community. Most studies looked at knowledge creation and learning with varied emphases: Pervan et al. (2016) considered DBA students' socialization process through different kinds of knowledge modes, and Hay and Samra-Fredericks (2019) investigated the learning outcome of collaborative inquiry. Knowledge creation and critical reflexivity were explored by Davies et al. (2019) and Farrell et al. (2018). Simpson and Sommer (2016) looked at the relationship between professional and academic identity and how the DBA impacts professional practice. Hay and Samra-Fredericks (2016) deployed the concept of liminality, which reflects the borderline between academia and professional work.

A table in appendix 1 provides an overview of current research surrounding DBA students in relation to experience and other issues relevant to this study.

Alongside the motives already mentioned about students' reasons for embarking on a doctorate in chapter 3.3.2, such as personal and professional development (e.g. Brailsford, 2010; Gill and Hoppe; 2009; Leonard et al., 2005) Grabowski and Miller (2015) asked business professional doctoral graduates about their career outcomes. 71% had a career change and they described the greatest contribution coming from the prestige of the degree and the research process they had experienced. As a response, Grabowski and Miller (2015) developed a process model of career outcomes based on Weidman et al.'s (2001) model. Starting with a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons, through the process students gained a positive personal outcome through the content of courses, the peer network and the cohort structure that served the creation of new ways of thinking and improvement of leadership skills. Those results confirm the understanding of the doctoral experience as a transformative process in which personal and professional development takes place. It also confirms the cohort experience as valuable for encouragement and a positive learning experience. However, what is

absent here is a detailed picture of students' challenges and their coping strategies. What is also unclear is the programme structure and content in which interviewees graduated, the authors simply mention graduates of various programmes worldwide, but 75% are from the US. The study provides a broad picture, or an overview, and preliminary insight into career outcomes, but it does not provide a perspective on long-term career outcomes, as interviews took place upon degree completion.

As other research on doctoral study confirms, social interaction and socialization play an essential part in doctoral education and learning. Stoten (2019) explored DBA and PhD students' experiences of being part of the doctoral community (Lee, 2008) in terms of the notion of belonging (Clark, 2007) based on social network theory (Granovetter, 1983). They revealed no common identity between DBA and PhD students, and DBA students felt less part of the community. This highlights that DBA students' experiences may well be different to those of studying a conventional PhD. However, Stoten's (2019) study explored doctoral candidates who are full-time lecturers and university staff members, not business managers, who may experience things differently. It is also unclear if a cohort approach is utilized and the number of DBA students in total. Nevertheless, Stoten's (2019) work contributes to the body of IPA studies as an in-depth method to explore experience and reveal meaning-making of the individual, and whilst the application of such an approach has grown in the education domain, it is still rare in the investigation of doctoral students. Stoten's (2019) findings suggest that an "integrative model of conditioning factors – operational, knowledge-related and social – may provide a more holistic understanding of the being a doctoral student" (p. 14), to which this study intends to contribute by considering the broader context in which part-time DBA researchers' study, but with a specific focus on stress and coping.

Pervan et al. (2016) looked at the socialization process of DBA students and developed a conceptual framework in form of a journey framed within four knowledge modes presented as a process of socialization. They emphasize that the different cultures of academia and practice generate great value (cultural and social capital) and the why supervision of DBA students is not that of a typical

novice-expert relationship, as in this context the DBA student contributes cultural and social capital, but is also as an expert, but from practice. This dissolves the hierarchical relationship between student and supervisor as usually applied. The study illuminates the value of combining theory and practice where students use resources within and outside the university, but also confirm the "contradictory requirements" (Pervan et al., 2016, p. 299) of professional and academic lives that lead to tensions in identity development. They argue that the reason for those tensions lies in academics' and practitioners' different ways of thinking. They criticize Weidman's socialization model for being overly focused on an academic career, where the student needs to adapt to the academic culture and see Gardner's (2008) socialization model as more appropriate, particularly through its consideration of the individual process in which the university also adapt "their behaviour in order to enable candidature success" (p. 302). Whilst the emphasis in Pervan et al.'s (2016) work is on different knowledge modes derived from different forms of cultural capital; it lacks empirical evidence of student experience. It illustrates the doctoral journey as a process but in rather a linear fashion, which ostensibly ignores the complexity of the doctoral student experience.

Hay and Samra-Fredericks (2019) also considered the impact of social interaction but in terms of its impact on knowledge creation and learning. They explored the outcome of what is termed 'collaborative inquiry' (Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006) in management education as a "supplementary form of knowing" (p. 59) to develop a form of empathy and restore connections to others through 'perspective taking', based on a social constructionist position. 'Collaborative inquiry' is where "academics and practitioners leverage their different perspectives and competencies to coproduce knowledge about a complex problem or phenomenon that exists under conditions of uncertainty found in the world" (Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006, p.803). Hay and Samra-Fredericks (2019) see this as an ideal learning approach for DBA programmes to develop researching professionals and encourage engagement with multiple perspectives of others to bring 'heart and soul' back to management practice. They also emphasize the equal importance of students' experience and faculty expertise as partners in a learning process, this

helps highlight the distinctiveness of DBA and PhD students mentioned by other studies e.g. Pervan et al (2016) or Stoten (2019).

Furthermore, Davies et al., (2019) highlighted the value of the integration of academic and professional knowledge and the importance of critical reflexivity. Using the researcher development framework (RDF), the authors tried to understand outcomes for self-reflexivity, management practice and scholarship and additionally asked students about experienced stress situations and their coping behaviour. Students described stress confirms previous research results, such as the challenge of part-time study (overload through the full-time job, unexpected illness – e.g. Thinnam, 2011), the tension in identity development (fragmented identities through academic and practice role, e.g. Pervan et al., 2016; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003) and intellectual challenge, self-doubt and lack of self-confidence, which leads to questioning practical work and the value of the DBA, but also tension in learning groups. Students also describe the experience of positive and negative emotions (see also Cotteral, 2013; McCormack, 2009; Hopwood et al., 2011) such as fear, despair, regret, disorientation, being daunted, demoralised and having lost confidence, but also exhilaration, enjoyment and revelation. Students responded to that by delegating work, managing study and work effectively, reflexive practice, using peer support and feedback, re-evaluating the adequacy of their judgments, enhancing research skills, integrating work-life and engaging in social interaction. Those coping strategies reflect active coping (Hopwood et al., 2011) where the student is presented as an active agent in dealing with unpleasant situations and also confirm the importance of social interaction and support (see also Hopwood, 2010a; Goller & Harteis, 2014), but equally reflection. However, stress and coping are not the focus in Davies et al.'s (2019) study and the authors highlight the value of reflexivity as an instrument for doctoral development and stated as a conclusion the importance of publishing DBA outcomes, which had been mostly ignored in DBA programmes. The student experience described in Davies et al.'s (2019) study evolved through a reflective paper that students had to submit and as such does not discuss in detail any contextual influences or other perspectives of the social environment.

Farrell et al. (2018) also see critical reflexivity as key in DBA studies to understand how theory informs practise and practise informs theory. In their study, students saw the integration of practitioner-researcher as beneficial but also reported tensions and challenges where cultural differences between business and academia are experienced as "clashes" (p. 376) with a fuzzy boundary and its dynamics only being revealed over time. The authors see reflexivity as the only way that helps to make sense of experienced challenges and to find a way through them. They emphasized the complexity of a DBA journey, where this struggle is part of the doctoral experience and is not straightforward but is rather a process. This makes the significance of a DBA clear where tensions through distinct cultures are largely inexorable. To consider the different perspectives of those cultures and life-worlds can help to offer a deeper understanding of the mechanisms at play.

Simpson and Sommer (2016) also took an educational perspective and emphasized the complex process of learning and becoming in exploring the evolving relationship between professional and academic identity. Based on activity theory and actor-network theory the authors provide a theoretical basis to understand students' experience in their context. Students appreciate new ways of critical thinking and reflection, which they also transfer to business, but also experienced difficulties in moving from one world to the other as 'border-crossing' (p.16), which reflects the tension between professional and academic lifeworlds. Social interactions have also been identified as helpful to progress with their studies. The study concludes that doctoral learning is more than the training of the professional and maintains the argument for a complex transformation in the form of a "metacognitive shift" and sees the DBA as 'practice' and 'border object' between theory and practice. As I contributed to this study, the student sample from Simpson and Sommer (2016) is selected from the same DBA programme that is explored in the current study, but with a different emphasis. The current research integrates consideration of stress and coping, context and different perspectives to offer a deeper insight into the lived experience of doctoral transformation.

Another study by Hay and Samra-Fredericks (2016) confirms the transformational experience by taking the concept of liminality as the space between academic and professional worlds. Practitioner-self travels from workplace to classroom context,

which causes struggle and leads to moments of being stuck. This reflects the threshold concept by Trafford and Leshem (2009) when stagnation of learning occurs in the learning process, in particular between theory and practice and evokes negative emotions such as fear, anxiety and doubts. Hay and Samra-Fredericks (2016) also refer to Meyer and Land's (2005) work as based on a threshold concept and suggest it revealed that students negotiate those experienced struggles by seeking "fixedness" (p. 407 and ff.) – to fix the self by applying three strategies. 'Scaffolding' – students turn to key others such as supervisors and fellow students for help, 'put the past-to-work' – past experience and beliefs help to explain now and the future, and hence to stabilize self to move forward, and as third strategy 'bracketing' – students sought to suspend identity work on certain aspects of the self that produce identity incoherence. Students were required to re-draw their understanding of previous learning to include notions of personal learning and understand learning as identity work. This confirms the importance of reflection and reflexivity in doctoral education (Farrell et al., 2018; Davies et al., 2019), the importance of social support in coping with stress (e.g. Bircher, 2012; Deem & Brehony, 2000; Janta et al., 2014; Gardner, 2005) and suppression as a possible coping strategy (e.g. Hopwood et al., 2011; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), as well as the requirement for identity work in the process of learning (Hockey & Collinson, 2005). Hay and Samra-Fredericks (2016) also describe DBA students as "being liminal" (p. 410), which requires intensive identity work and also refers to Sveningsson and Alvesson's (2003) definition of identity work. In particular, they not only point out the significance of DBA study in looking at stress and coping derived from practitioner-theory tensions but also the transformational aspect in identity development and becoming a researching professional. To gain even more insight, looking in addition at the private context (besides academic and professional life) and taking the perspectives of partner, supervisor and colleagues into account can add further understanding of the lived experience of DBA students.

Due to the transnational context of the current study, the next section, provides a short overview of research on the student experience in the transnational education context.

3.6 Experience in transnational education

There is a comprehensive body of TNE research addressing its development and demand in different countries (e.g. Bennell, 2019; Caniglia et al., 2017; Nhan & Nguyen, 2018; Wilkins & Juusola, 2018), also a variety of quality assurance and policy aspects (e.g. Bentley et al., 2017; Robert & Yu, 2018; Trifiro, 2018), its challenges and benefits referring to different TNE models (e.g. Caniglia et al., 2017; Wang, 2016; Wilkins & Juusola, 2018). Not much research on TNE student experience exists addressing more general issues such as student satisfaction (e.g. Ahmad, 2015; Bhuian, 2016; Pieper & Beall, 2014; Wilkins et al., 2012) and expectations (e.g. Rytivaara et al., 2019). Studies on challenges and benefits of TNE reveal insight into the learning aspect where cultural differences, as the main characteristic of TNE, were either learning opportunities but also learning obstacles such as the challenges of new teaching methods in a foreign language:

Several studies emphasize as possible learning opportunities the development of intercultural competencies, knowledge and core academic skills that also help to improve career prospects (Manning, 2021; Pieper & Beall, 2014), as well as the psychological and social benefits of intercultural engagement. Zhang et al. (2020) describe this as the opportunity for "expanding cultural and linguistic knowledge", which is also a transformative experience (Williamson & Heinz, 2021).

In contrast, Bilsland et al. (2020) showed evidence of tension between western curricular focus and an Asian environment, which can lead to cultural imbalance and identity conflict and, as a consequence, to transition uncertainty. They explored students' transfer to employability after their TNE as alumni of an Australian university campus in Vietnam and emphasized the importance of social, cultural and identity capitals (Tomlinson, 2017; Tran & Bui, 2019). Leung and Waters (2013) claim that institutional capital, which also includes cultural capital, cannot be fully transferred to another country, and cannot create the same 'exact' student experience. They showed evidence of student experience in British degree programmes offered in Hong Kong and emphasized educational experience need time and space to develop. Here, students described the virtual and physical places as significant for networking. Intercultural challenges, especially language obstacles, are also confirmed by Caniglia et al. (2017), who suggest as a solution

more organizational flexibility, the strengthening of communication and the cultural adaptation of the programme. Wang (2016) suggests understanding the learners' contexts and developing a culturally sensitive pedagogy. This means contextualizing the curriculum and creating a supportive learning environment.

There are just a few studies explicitly investigating the experience of doctoral students in TNE: Borg et al. (2009) confirm the role of relationships in the doctoral process – where informal relationships, such as postdoc students as informal mentors besides the supervisor and peers seem to be crucial.

Bendrups et al. (2021) explored the experience of PhD candidates of a transnational research training partnership between Australia and the Philippines in its first year and also conclude that the importance of interpersonal relationships is heightened when a real-life campus experience does not exist. Additionally, candidates appreciated the flexibility to study at home, but face-to-face workshops at the beginning as a cohort were important for candidates. They provide a basis for their subsequent social media network and the development of a cohort identity, which led to a sense of belonging. The face-to-face engagement with lecturers and supervisors during the workshops also created the awareness of cultural similarities and differences (either positive or negative) and contextual awareness of their supervisors. Students experienced the management of distance-based interaction and communication as a challenge sometimes but also benefited through flexibility. The benefits of programme flexibility and the cohort approach have also been confirmed by the students in Simpson and Sommer's (2016) study. Further exploration of doctoral students in the context of German and British culture may reveal if stress arises from any cultural differences that may be present.

Chapman (2013) explored research students' experiences of a professional doctorate (part-time EdD students) delivered in Hong Kong by an Australian university. The expectations of the programme, membership of a learning community and the relation between learning style and research supervision have been articulated as central themes. In particular, coursework helped to get access to the learning community as it required participation, collaboration and cooperation. Beyond the classroom community, students' identity was constructed

through "multi-layered" (p. 175) learning communities, such as the international community, and the professional community. Learning style developed in the research and thesis phase into a more self-regulated form, also forced by the challenge of isolation that is also compounded by the physical distance to the supervisor. Those student experiences also evidence time constraints, as part-time students who have the intention to "keep myself up-to-speed" (p. 177). How German DBA students' identity is shaped by different learning communities and the distance to university and supervisor are managed may answer this study.

Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2013) emphasize the diversity of student profiles in TNE and describe these as being often older and employed, which also reflects DBA students' profiles. In addition, the TNE field becomes more sophisticated and complex due to the variety of stakeholders in home and host countries, which can have conflicting and changing expectations. And even research identifies the challenges and obstacles of TNE, it highlights benefits and opportunities of the international context and provides a research field rich in insights into the student experience. Cultural differences are not the focus of this study, but may disclose issues of stress arising from cultural differences and can further provide recommendations for future research in the context of German and British culture.

The following section summarizes the previously described aspects of the doctoral student experience in the context of stress and coping to emphasize the intention of the current study.

3.7 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of several aspects of doctoral student experience explored in the research field and relevant to this study. It concludes that the experience of part-time students, and their challenges, are to balance multiple roles, maintain the motivation to embark on a doctorate throughout their study. The chapter illuminated the effect of emotions and emphasized social interaction and support as significant mechanisms to cope with the challenges present during a doctoral study, in which students should take an active role in managing relationships. Equally, it also highlights potential stressors that stem

from issues of social interaction e.g. supervision. Learning as a central task in the doctoral study reflects a need for growth, transformation and identity development, which are also accompanied by struggle. Studies on professional doctorates in general, and the DBA in particular, have highlighted the challenge of combining theory and practice, where different thinking is required beyond that which is present in the professional world.

Reflecting those aspects of the doctoral student experience against notions of stress and coping, it seems that stress arises through a variety of challenges, struggles, conflicts and problems in the course of doctoral study and emanates from environmental issues (Bair & Haworth, 2005; Gardner, 2009) or personal factors (Gardner, 2009) inside and outside the university and can even lead to health problems such as fatigue, burnout or mental disorders (e.g. Beall et al., 2015; Divaris et al., 2012; Levecque et al., 2007), and finally prevent successful completion. The previously examined aspects of the doctoral student experience illuminate those challenges but also give solutions and strategies to address stress or can reflect both – stressor and support (stress and coping):

Part-time, or mature, students must balance multiple roles, and therefore role conflict is a common stressor (Byers et al., 2014; Devonport & Lane, 2014; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Holm et al., 2015; Thinnam, 2011) accompanied by 'time' being perceived as scare resource (Araújo, 2005; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Hales, 1998; Leonard et al, 2005; McDermott, 2002; Thinnam, 2011), which can lead to experienced stress through the dissonance between an individual's subjective temporal experience and clock time (Araújo, 2005; Flaherty, 1999). Further components through which stress can arise for part-time students are the lack of closer relationships to faculty and peers and thus also less support (Bates & Goff, 2012; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012).

To deal with the challenges and stressors of being a part-time student, support from family and friends (Byers et al., 2014; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Thinnam, 2011), in addition to support from employers or colleagues (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Bircher, 2012), has proven to be helpful for students. Furthermore, to deal with time-related issues, the literature has indicated thoughtful time management (Kamler & Thomson, 2014; Phillips & Pugh, 2010; Thomas, 2016) such as

prioritizing time, scaling back, blocking out work or nonwork time and time-shifting (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Martinez et al., 2013; Moen et al., 2013; Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2017) whereas older students who are experienced professionals have the advantage of already possessing significant competence in time management (Bates & Goff, 2012), and the flexibility of part-time programmes may further facilitate this (Bates & Goff, 2012).

Emotion as one aspect of the doctoral student experience can be seen as a mediator, amplifier or reaction in the process of stress and coping, that occurs through a person's appraisal of an experienced stressor from the environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Experienced negative emotions as a result of a failed coping attempt can further negatively influence working memory and impact academic performance (Hyun et al., 2006). For example, the quality of students' writing may be damaged (Cotteral, 2013) or such negative emotions can even lead to dropout intentions through the feeling of loneliness or isolation.

Negative emotions can also weaken self-efficacy and motivation (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Can & Walker, 2011; Carlino, 2012), which is necessary for success in doctoral studies (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000). This further raises motivation as a key aspect of the doctoral student experience. Motivation whilst not a stressor itself, has a mediating or amplifying effect in the process of stress and coping and can be strengthened or weakened depending on coping success. Furthermore, motivation interacts with the notions of locus of control (Grover, 2007), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Locke & Schattke, 2019), self-regulation (Carver & Scheier, 2001), which are also important mechanisms in doctoral work.

In general, 'continuous uncertainty' can be suggested to be a key emotion in doctoral work (Devonport & Lane, 2014; Lovitts, 2002; Pychyl & Little, 1998) and it appears to be a latent form of emotion that accompanies students during their entire journey but has not further explored in-depth.

Based on classical stress research, applying coping strategies such as successful problem-focused coping can reduce negative emotions through the reduction of threat, whereas emotion-focused coping initially tries to control negative emotions

through positive thinking and replacement (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Newer forms of coping have also been identified - meaning-focused coping – through which positive emotions as response occur and influence further appraisal, and can motivate, and sustain further coping and well-being in difficult times (Aldwin et al., 2007; Folkman, 2008; Park & Folkman, 1997). The interaction of meaning-focused coping and positive emotions emphasizes the important role of emotions in the process of stress and coping in general, which is confirmed by several studies in doctoral research (Cotterall, 2013; Hopwood et al., 2011). Also, the sense of achievement in doctoral study produces positive emotions that are important to reinforce further action and maintain motivation to keep on going (McCormack, 2009).

Other studies indicate the potential use of social mechanisms to help cope with negative emotions by establishing peer networks or thesis writer groups (Mochizuki, 2019; Bircher, 2012; Burleigh Lowe, 2012), using online platforms (Janta et al, 2014) ensuring you are not alone (Hopwood et al., 2011) and taking the role of an active agent in developing networks and maintaining relationships (Hopwood, 2010a; Selmer et al., 2011; Benjamin et al., 2017; Grover, 2007) and applying agency (Hopwood, 2010a; Inouye & McAlpine, 2017; Goller & Harteis, 2014; Woo et al., 2015). This also reflects the general requirement that students should take an active role in managing their research process, including actively coping with challenges (Hopwood et al., 2011; Fries, 2006; DeRosier et al., 2013) thus enabling them to take responsibility for their doctoral endeavour.

Controversy, studies showed that social interaction can be also a source of stress and produce negative emotions through e.g., supervision (e.g. Cotteral, 2013; Hockey, 1996; Orellana et al., 2016; Russell-Pinson & Harris, 2019), critical feedback (e.g. Easterby-Smith et al., 2002), feelings of 'differentness' (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012) and difficulties in acculturating to the university environment (Pervan et al., 2016).

Furthermore, a central part of doctoral study is learning, in which stagnation of the learning process (Mezirow, 2018; Trafford & Leshem, 2009) can be seen as a main source of stress and can occur when resistance exists, as this then hampers the advancing of assumptions and expectations. Resistance can be created through

previous experience (Callary et al., 2012) based e.g. on a professional identity with contrary assumptions and expectations than those evident in academia. This, therefore, prevents the transformation of the self (Petersen, 2014) and identity development (Inouye & McAlpine, 2019), which are crucial for learning and generating new thoughts (Illeris, 2018). This also implies identity fragmentation as a source of stress through the activity of identity work to cope with struggles in the learning process (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003).

This refers also to students undertaking professional doctorates, including the DBA, where the experience of dissonance between theory and practice seems to be a main source of stress (Collinson, 2005; Hockey & Collinson, 2005; Malfroy & Yates, 200;) and leads to stagnation of the learning process that produces further stress. Additionally, identity conflicts can arise from being a 'doctoral' novice but a professional expert e (Collinson, 2005; Hockey & Collinson, 2005). Pervan et al. (2016) refer to DBA students, in particular, as having "contradictory requirements" (p. 299) between their professional and academic lives and the different way of thinking necessitated lead to tensions in identity development that can also produce further stress.

Nevertheless, stress can lead to further development and growth (Aldwin & Levenson, 2004; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Carver & Scheier, 2003) and psychological adjustment to a new way of thinking (Hockey & Collinson, 2005). As essential coping mechanisms to deal with struggle, studies on professional doctoral students particularly identify the need for identity work (Hay & Samra-Fredericks, 2015; Hockey & Collinson, 2005) and reflection and reflexivity (Davies et al., 2019; Farrell et al., 2018), which is also promoted by social interaction as a learning approach (Hay & Samra-Fredericks, 2019) to enable learning and identity development by overcoming barriers and stagnation.

Furthermore, referring to the transnational education context, cultural differences, and language barriers, also have the potential to become a source of stress (Bilsland et al., 2020; Leung & Waters, 2013; Caniglia et al., 2017). Therefore, it is important to consider the context of the learner (Wang, 2016) in developing such programmes. Doctoral studies in TNE also confirm the benefit and importance of social interaction (Bendrups et al., 2021; Borg et al., 2009; Chapman, 2013), where

cohort approaches with face-to-face workshops at the beginning evidence great contribution to supporting the development of social bonds (Bendrups et al., 2021; Chapman, 2013; Simpson and Sommer, 2016).

In general, the current literature has examined a variety of aspects in doctoral education and the student experience and considered students in professional doctorates to some degree. Nevertheless, a more holistic view on the lived experience and the dynamics of study, private and business life is absent. Particularly one that not only consider students' experienced stress but also how they cope. Models have been developed that focus on a single aspect e.g. Grabowski and Miller's (2015) work on the career outcome and Weidman et al.'s (2001), Gardner and Gopaul's (2012), Pervan et al.'s (2019) considerations of the socialization process. Pervan et al.'s (2019) work examined DBA students specifically and emphasized the value of considering different cultures from outside the university, but their emphasis lies on knowledge development, not the lived experience as a whole. Previous literature also emphasizes the challenge of learning and identity development as a core component in doctoral study, which is less considered in those models. Although Grover (2007) claims to have created a "maturity model of Ph.D. student growth" (p. 12), which considers maturation across four stages (exploration, engagement, consolidation, entry), his emphasis lies on mistakes students could prevent. And even though he suggests that "students go through a maturity cycle" (p. 10), the model developed offers the proposition of simple linear development. In addition, this model is neither empirical validated, nor does it draw on associated theoretical concepts such as identity development and identity work. Furthermore, the model considers PhD students and their intention to entry academia, this student group may not be analogous to part-time students working full-time outside education – such as the managers in this study.

In this research, I want to gain a holistic understanding of DBA students' lived experience and consider their contexts through deeper insight into the complex interaction of the different worlds and how these students manage those contrasts to succeed (or not) in their doctoral work. Also, I take the perspectives of the other life-worlds into account, based on interviews with partners, colleagues and

supervisors to gain a broader understanding. Stress and, as responses to it, applied as coping strategies are an important aspect of this research but are taken in a wider sense that includes challenges, problems and hurdles students must overcome. Based on this I will develop a conceptual framework that reflects the developmental aspect of DBA students' lived experience in their research processes.

4. Methodology and Research Methods

The previous chapter provided an overview of the relevant literature in this study. The following chapter outlines the methodological rationale for the choice of the method and provides an initial review of the historical development of qualitative approaches in psychology, given my background as a business psychologist.

I have chosen a qualitative approach to explore the lived experience of DBA part-time doctoral students in-depth, considering their situational contexts, while looking at stress and coping.

4.1 A qualitative approach – Phenomenology

From its inception, psychology was interested in the inner world of experience and consciousness. Over time, several methods had been applied within psychology, but the dominant orientation has been towards those drawn from physical sciences (Ashworth, 2008). For example, one of the first ideas in experimental psychology (Fechner, 1801-1887 cited in Ashworth, 2008) was to discover the relationship between the outer and the inner world with a focus on the "subjective" sensation of brightness. This had a component of "subjective" experience (commonly viewed in a qualitative approach), but in a controlled setting to limit outside influences. Other researchers such as Bretano (1874-1973 cited in Ashworth, 2008), who explored conscious experience as an intentional process, or James (1890 cited in Ashworth), who explored the totality of experience in a particular time, called for the future use of qualitative approaches but such suggestions remained unpopular in their time. With Wundt's approach "Physiologische Psychologie" (1874/1904) and the foundation of the first laboratory, a positivistic experiential paradigm came to dominate psychology and remained the core position until the twentieth century (Ashworth, 2008; Howitt, 2010). This persisted with the later developments of behaviourism and cognitivism, which are also based on the idea of an objective reality where individual experience can be measured in a controlled setting outside the "real world" through external, measurable and observable variables (Ashworth, 2008). Such an approach rejects the idea of a perceptual approach through

idiographic meaning related to a specific context (Kvale, 1996), which reflects the qualitative research paradigm. Only in the 1980s did qualitative approaches, often imported from other disciplines, emerge in various ways (dominant in the UK) and again gained some popularity (e.g. Gavey, 1989; Giorgi, 1986; Rist, 1980). One of those approaches was phenomenology, where the experience is central, and experience is seen as a system of interrelated meanings created through the individual and forms in its totality the individuals' "lifeworld" (Ashworth, 2008). How DBA students create meaning out of their doctoral experience through the influence of their different lifeworlds is the intention of this study.

Phenomenology can thus be termed "a philosophical approach to the study of experience" (Smith et al., 2009, p.11) and provides psychology with qualitative ideas on how to examine lived experience. Husserl (1859-1938 cited in Smith et al., 2009), as the founder of phenomenological philosophy, sought to develop a science of consciousness as pure and transcendental phenomenology that emphasized the importance of exploring experience in its own terms and identifying its essential qualities through depth and rigour. Husserl claimed to step back from taken-for-granted knowledge and to become conscious of the experience through intuitive seeing (Osborne, 1994). Pre-assumption had to be "bracketed" away to revisit our immediate experience (Crotty, 1998). Husserl aimed to describe the universal core structure or essence of human experience that lies underneath subjective perception. His focus was on description, not interpretation. As a philosopher, Husserl provided the conceptional basis for phenomenology but did not give a clear explanation about how to implement those thoughts into empirical research activity. Heidegger, one of Husserl's students, developed his work further and emphasized the notion of "person-in-context" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 17), which is comprised of human beings in the world of objects, relationships, and language. He stated that experience depends on the individual's perception and it is always related to something. The interpretation of peoples' meaning is central here. Interpretation in contrast to Husserl is unavoidable to reveal meaning (Osborne, 1994). This informs the intention of this study where the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experience of

part-time DBA students by interpretation of students' accounts to discover new meaning or enhance former meaning (Crotty, 1996).

Further leading figures such as Merleau-Ponty, emphasized the subjectivity and embodiment of experience. In his view, through our body, as a central element of experience, we perceive the world individually through practical activities, more than through theoretical and logical assumptions (cited in Anderson, 2003). Satre also described experience as "action-oriented, meaning-making, self-consciousness" (cited in Smith et al., 2009) and added a developmental aspect. He saw experience as a 'becoming' of ourselves rather than a pre-existing unity that reflects the doctoral endeavour as an action-oriented journey to an intended end goal, experienced through practical activities in the form of research development and the body as an instrument of creativity and creation of new knowledge. Heidegger's view of 'person-in-context' and the relation of experience to something give a reason for a phenomenological approach in the current study to explore the lived experience of doctoral part-time students. Considering that the context seems essential in exploring part-time students' experiences, other lifeworlds beyond the study environment that influence the students' experiences are considered. Also, Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on embodiment is reflected in the doctoral experience as the importance of cognitive ability in terms of research activities, such as reading, writing, presenting, conducting, exploring and more. The developmental aspect noted by Satre also reveals an important component of doctoral study, where students need to show several learning activities to move – to develop or progress – to an intended goal, that of thesis completion.

This research aims to explore the lived experience of part-time DBA students, particularly what stressors they face and how they cope with those stressors. The emphasis here is on the individual *experience* of this specific student group in their specific context, not an explanation of the causal effects of stress and coping, which is often measured in psychology. In contrast to the more common approaches to data generation in psychology by using quantitative data to develop predictions, generalisation or theory-testing, I use a phenomenological approach and analyse students' accounts to understand their meaning, in their particular context, through recognition of my subjectivity and the existence of multiple

realities. Most previous studies in stress research have been based on questionnaires and surveys in combination with interviews (e.g. Brown, 2008; Cleugh, 1972; Leger, 1996; Medhurst, 2008). There seems to be no extended and detailed narrative that considers DBA students' stress and coping behaviours within their environmental setting from an experiential perspective. Ashikaga (2010) suggests identifying coping strategies through narrative or ethnographic methods to develop a more detailed picture of the entire process, as coping depends on the situation and the person. This goes along with Aldwin and Werner's (2009) claim for a qualitative method as coping is complex depending on the context. This also reflects the phenomenological approaches of Heidegger, Satre and Merleau-Ponty who emphasized the relation of the person to the world (Smith et al., 2009).

I have also chosen a phenomenological approach because it reflects my epistemological position, how I understand the world and the nature of knowledge. As a business psychologist, I have been trained to quantify data to create a generalised outcome. I have always questioned the possibility to control multiple influencing factors that come from the research context. And, from an experiential perspective, I believe that there is not only one objective, single reality but multiple realities that depend on how a person interprets the situation based on their values and beliefs, linked closely to the context. This reflects the complexity of real life, especially in terms of coping (Aldwin & Werner, 2009). To gain insight and understand experience in its complexity, I see a phenomenological approach as appropriate to explore the experience of the doctoral students, including how *they* make meaning out of it through their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour.

4.2 Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)

4.2.1 Historical and philosophical basis

In particular, I use interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith et al., 2009) as a methodology in this study to explore managers' lived experiences as part-time doctoral students.

In the 1990s, IPA emerged as the first qualitative approach, then centred in Health Psychology (Smith, 1996), that aimed to focus on the experiential, in part, as a counterbalance to the experimental (Smith, 1996). Since then, it has been applied in other areas of psychology. As a business psychologist, I see the value in IPA as it provides a qualitative methodology to explore experience in-depth and allow the psychologist, through interpretation, to discover hidden meanings and patterns. As an "approach to qualitative, experiential and psychological research" (Smith et al., 2009), IPA is informed by the three key areas phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography.

Phenomenology is a wide field and has different developments and emphases. Based on Husserl as its founder, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre developed, as major phenomenological philosophers, offering positions and ideas that moved away from the descriptive to a more interpretative approach, where individual perspectives and meanings, through their connectivity to the world and others, are central. This means – in contrast to Husserl's ideas who aimed to describe the "essential and general structure of a phenomenon" (Finlay, 2009, p. 9) – that an experienced phenomenon can vary across personal circumstances as human beings are embedded in a particular context that informs how the meaning of a particular experience is constructed and described (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is based on this idea and serves as a "person-in-context" approach (Braun & Clarke, 2013) for the part-time aspect of this study, where students' doctoral experiences are also influenced by their other lifeworlds than this of their study. The influence of other lifeworlds requires balancing and negotiating those lifeworlds and roles associated with those lifeworlds (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012). The related efforts emphasize the relevance of the broader context in this study during which students make specific meaning out of their experience that has significance in their life (Smith et al., 2009). Undertaking a doctorate is a personal decision with a particular motivation behind the choice, it is not a stroke of fate, but even so, it is probably a challenging and formative life experience and therefore significant for the person who undertakes it. This study aims to understand the significant meaning, that DBA students attribute to their part-time doctoral experience in terms of their specific context, and this necessitates interpretation.

Therefore, *hermeneutics*, as the second cornerstone of IPA and as a theory of interpretation, tries to make sense of participants' perceptions (Smith et al., 2009). The process of interpretation is described as a hermeneutic circle and reflects the dynamic relationship between the part and the whole at different levels (Smith et al., 2009). The part is understood by looking at the whole, and the whole can only be understood by looking at its parts. This is a key aspect of IPA, as the process of analysis is iterative (Smith et al., 2009) and the researcher moves back and forth through different levels of thinking about the data, which provides different perspectives. This also reflects Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, which he describes as "circular movement" from "the point where it arises and to which it returns" (Crotty, 1998, p. 97) to unfold hidden meaning (Smith et al., 2009).

Ideography is the third key area of IPA and is, in contrast to most psychology as 'nomothetic' (making claims at the population level), concerned with the particular in the sense of detail that underscores the depth of the analysis (Smith et al., 2009). In addition, IPA also commits to the particular in the sense of analysing a "particular" experiential phenomenon in-depth to understand how "particular" people in a "particular" context make sense of it (Smith et al., 2009). Through the hermeneutic element, the researcher interprets the interpretation of the participant, as the researcher is seen as part of the research process.

To conclude, IPA aims to examine human lived experience in detail and seeks to express experience in its own terms, rather than "according to predefined category systems" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 32), which makes it phenomenological. Based on Heidegger, it is also an entirely interpretative process and reflects an idiographic perspective in starting with a detailed examination of a single case before moving to more general claims (Smith et al., 2009).

To contrast other qualitative approach streams to IPA, the following section discusses differences and similarities of other methodologies and gives arguments for the application of IPA.

4.2.2 Contrasting IPA to other approaches

IPA is not the only phenomenological approach to psychology, and there are some studies in the form of phenomenological psychology or phenomenological human science research (Ashworth, 2008; Dahlberg et al., 2008; Finlay, 2008; Giorgi, 1997; Halling, 2007; Todres, 2007; van Manen, 1990), which overlap in many ways (Smith et al., 2009). These approaches share the principles of phenomenology with IPA like the interest in experience but have developed specific viewpoints, especially in differential weight to description and interpretation.

Giorgi, in close orientation to Husserl, developed a descriptive approach to psychology and has been longest established. He was interested in the commonality within an experience to identify a general structure of the phenomenon (Smith, 2011). The outcome is delivered as a summarised statement as a third person narrative (Eatough & Smith, 2017). IPA, in contrast, wants to provide "a detailed analysis of divergence and convergence across cases" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 200). The outcome here is an "idiographic interpretative commentary" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 201) with extracts from the participants' accounts.

van Manen's (1990) approach is similar to IPA and connects hermeneutics and phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009). He is interested in the phenomenological investigation of everyday practice and applied this approach to pedagogy and parenting. His approach focuses on the consideration of the context of an individual's lifeworlds and emphasizes the centrality of writing in the research process. As the research also aims to consider the context of DBA students' lifeworlds, I will draw on van Manen's (1990) defined existentials as core theoretical elements of lived experience.

A primary alternative method to IPA is *grounded theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 2009), which is not typically concerned with the experiential or psychological but can be used in this way. Grounded theory aims to "generate a theoretical-level account of a particular phenomenon" (Smith et al., 2009, p 201), which requires a large sample size resulting in a theoretical claim to uncover social processes (Willig, 2013). It does not consider the role of the researcher. Like IPA it is an inductive

approach, but IPA offers a more detailed analysis of the lived experience of a small sample and looks at the convergence and divergence between the cases at the micro-level (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

IPA is also influenced by *Bruner's model of narrative* (1987), as the narrative is one way of meaning-making (Smith et al., 2009). IPA researchers like Eatough and Smith (2006a, 2006b), Shaw (2004) and Smith (1994) have been interested in the use of narratives as experiential accounts that have been used to discover change over time. Asking people to tell their stories is essentially what IPA does. A narrative approach focuses more on a specific event and how the structure of an individual's story influences their experience (Smith, et al., 2009). IPA is more interested in how individuals make sense of their experiences.

4.2.3 The researcher as part of the research process

In contrast to the descriptive approach in phenomenology, IPA sees the role of the researcher as part of the research process where the researcher is not neutral, but part of the creation process (Smith, 2011). Therefore, previously held cultural understandings can influence the interpretation, and this is why cultural understandings of the researcher have to be "bracketed away" to "get to the things themselves". As in Heidegger's approach, IPA does not support the assumption from Husserl that someone can entirely "bracket" their presumptions away. Nevertheless, the concept seeks to illuminate how researchers influence the knowledge produced (Sultana, 2014). Though, based on Heidegger, Smith et al. (2009) suggest to "re-evaluate the role of bracketing (from the origin of Husserl's approach) in the interpretative of qualitative data" (p. 25) in the act of interpretation by considering that previously held cultural understandings that come first in our consciousness. Therefore, "bracketing" can only be partially achieved in a cyclical process (Smith et al., 2009), compared with reflexive practice (Finlay & Gough, 2008). This emphasizes the need for the hermeneutic circle as one will not always be aware of all preconceptions in advance and therefore needs to reflect in a cyclical approach during the data analysis (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) also suggest that the researcher can make their presumptions clear by writing down their experience beforehand and continually reflecting on that experience

during the analysis. This gives transparency about the researcher's values and beliefs. The analysis and interpretation of the data are based on the researcher's knowledge and experience and displays a dyadic relationship between researcher and research participant, where the data are co-constructed (Smith et al., 2009).

I have used a diary to make notes about my experience during my doctoral journey, and while analysing the participant's stories, I have reflected if I had any similar experiences to those of my participants. In the following, I will describe my role situated in the research context and my motivation.

4.3 My role as researcher and ethical consideration

To provide transparency about my own story and myself as situated in the research context, in the following I describe my role and motivation as a researcher.

My experience of working with part-time DBA students led to my interest in understanding the mechanisms behind the doctoral experience. As a part-time PhD student, I probably faced some similar challenges, but I believe that the more structured approach of the DBA programme, the form of the programme itself and the professional status of most DBA students make a difference in their experience in comparison to mine. In addition, I had easy access to information as a staff member, which was a significant advantage. As a point of contact in Germany, I knew students' concerns and problems in terms of organizational matters, but the mechanisms that lie behind and take place in the other lifeworlds stayed mostly hidden for me. As a result, the desire to understand more about students' part-time doctoral experience as full-time managers surfaced.

I always wondered how managers can do a doctorate part-time alongside their challenging and demanding business life. How can they balance their different lifeworlds? I did all my previous studies full-time and found this stressful and demanding. I assumed a doctorate would be worse, undertaking it part-time would mean a high workload and a considerable effort in the evenings, on holiday and at weekends.

Based on this assumption, I chose the research topic in this study, as I was interested in students' coping mechanisms and how they organize their lifeworlds and make meaning out of this. The topic is connected to my job role, which I see as a benefit, and as a student administrator, I had access to this specific student group, which is an unwarranted opportunity. Gardner and Gopaul (2012) emphasized how difficult it is to reach part-time students, as this particular student group has a demanding schedule and are often not available to participate in extended research. Also, through further understanding of the students' situation, I could improve the support I offered as a student administrator and could also benefit my doctorate through an understanding of possible support mechanisms and solutions. I thus decided to undertake a phenomenological study because personal life stories always attracted me. The students' narratives help me to understand the complexity and diversity of their lives and give insight into their meaning-making.

The following outlines my assumptions and describes what I see as different from my experience as a part-time doctoral student to that of the participants' stories. This helps to separate my experience from those of the participants and to view their stories as separate from my own.

I believe:

- that conflicts with other lifeworlds occur as a part-time student
- a strong motivation is needed as a part-time student to finish a doctorate
- distance-based part-time students experience more difficulties than students who live close to the University
- part-time students need support from other lifeworlds to be able to finish
- experienced managers who pursue a part-time doctorate have an advantage as they are more experienced in time management
- their professional life is the main "threat" to their doctorate and has a great impact on time

My experience is different in:

- I am undertaking a PhD, not a professional doctorate
- I had a less guided programme structure in the initial phase

- I have done general taught elements, not those specific to business research
- I have not started within a cohort that met more than once
- I was never a member of a learning group
- I am not a manager and have limited responsibility for resources in a professional context
- My work relates to the university context, but only in organizational matters
- I have closer contact with university staff members given my job
- I have better access to university information given my job
- I have fewer years of work experience post my master's study
- In my private lifeworld, I have more time to study as I had no partner (in the first four years) or family responsibilities (only taking these on in the last year)
- I reduced my working hours (40-hour week) in the 6th study year down to 20 hours a week and in the 7th year, I stopped working.

Therefore, I am interested in how managers experience being a part-time DBA student, in particular, what stressors they face and what coping strategies they apply to progress their research. Working full-time in a senior position with significant responsibilities and conducting a doctoral research project must be a challenging endeavour and difficult to achieve in my opinion.

My role as a student administrator needs ethical consideration in terms of a power relationship. As a student administrator, I was part of the field that has an impact on the students. In addition to collecting applications and consulting applicants, I was responsible for collecting fees, organizing teaching events and supporting and advising students. While I supported and performed organizational actions, final academic and management decisions were not mine. I was also not involved in the marking processes or the supervision of students, which means I did not influence the content and outcomes of the students' work. Issues that could have an impact on my well-being were students' complaints about the programme and their expectations of a solution that could lead to feelings of guilt and responsibility for the students' problems. This was addressed in this study by maintaining a professional distance and trying not to be a part of organizational discussions

where students participating in this study were involved. The participants' issues were passed to other colleagues, ensuring the students', and my well-being, and facilitating our research relationship. From my perspective, students perceive me as a support. This is perhaps one of the reasons why students agreed to take part in this study, telling me their personal stories.

4.4 Research design

4.4.1 Sample

IPA, with its idiographic emphasis, wants to understand in-depth individuals' specific perceptions and meanings in a particular context (Smith et al., 2009), which is why I explore the experiences of a small sample size of four DBA students. IPA usually seeks to explore a homogeneous sample, and the size varies between three and six cases (Smith et al., 2009) and does not intend to (re)present a large, diverse population. The participants in the current study are homogeneous in their nationality, their mode of employment and their form of study. They are German managers who work full-time and who are enrolled as a part-time DBA student at the University of Gloucestershire, all in different stages within the research phase of their studies, just one had already submitted. I have chosen this specific group purposefully (Smith, 2003) as it is suitable to answer the research question, which is to explore the lived experience of part-time DBA students. This reflects the purposive sampling of IPA, which is as homogenous as possible concerning the topic of interest (Langdridge, 2007). I decided to include variation in terms of their demographic data in the form of age, gender, family status and specific point of their research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon itself depending on their circumstances and study progress, which reflects the complexity of part-time study and diversity of those students as phenomena of this inquiry (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Pearson et al., 2011; Aldwin et al., 2007). I have also included individuals from the students' other lifeworlds to "develop a more detailed and multifaceted account of the phenomenon" (Smith et al., 2009) by exploring different perspectives. I have identified three life worlds as primary influences on the part-time DBA experience. These are the academic, the private

and the professional (Bates & Gof, 2012; Bircher, 2012; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Martinez et al., 2013).

4.4.2 Selection process

150 enrolled German DBA part-time students at the University of Gloucestershire have been contacted via e-mail asking for their voluntary participation (see the e-mail in appendix 1, other staff members forwarded my e-mail to the students). I described the required research and participant characteristics. Through my professional role, I know most of the students in person or at least by e-mail. Students know me as the contact person in Munich. As a PhD student, some students have also recognized me as a peer. Through this double role, I have an important insider perspective on the experience of the part-time doctoral student. My experience as a part-time student helped me to understand what stressors other students experience.

Eighteen students replied, but five could not provide access to their social field, one did not want to take part, and one was still in the taught phase. I decided to focus on students in the research phase or near the end of their study as they can draw (reflect) on more experience than students who have just started. As I wanted to maintain homogeneity, I decided to focus on German students as other cultural backgrounds could bring further aspects into the experience. Given this, two further students were not suitable as they were of a different nationality. Of the remaining nine students, two were female, and seven were male. To attain a gender balance, I selected two male and two female students to explore possible variations in the phenomena as gender differences are stated in previous literature (e.g. Kizhakkeveettil et al., 2017; Miller, 2007; Stimpson & Filer, 2011).

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of a part-time student experience, I considered family status, children and age as aspects of variation that may influence the part-time DBA experience. Other research findings also show differences in perceptions of stress and coping behaviour between age, work experience and gender (Cotterill & Waterhouse, 1998; Forbus et al., 2011) and concerning different roles, especially family responsibility (Leger, 1996). I asked the nine students in a subsequent e-mail (in response to their first reply) for

further information about their family status, age and work (working hours). I identified one woman with children and one woman without and the same for the male students. Unfortunately, the woman with children withdrew from the DBA after the first interview. I found a female replacement but without children.

The following table gives an overview of the characteristics of the participants in this study. To keep the student participants anonymous, I used a pseudonym for each:

Table 1: Overview of participants' characteristics

Student	Study year	Age/family status	Gender	Job position and company size
Candidate 1 (Sugar)	Research phase (in the 5th year)	45, not married, but has a long-term partner, no children	female	No management title but high levels of responsibility in an international company
Candidate 2 (Book)	Research phase (in the 3rd year)	49, married, four children	male	Runs own company with two business partners
Candidate 3 (Dove)	Submitted and viva voce (in the 4th year)	30, married, a child was expected when research began	male	First management position in a large international company, became a freelancer in the research phase
Candidate 4 (Diamond)	Final stage (in the 4th year)	46, not married, but has a long-term partner	female	Senior management position in a large international company

4.4.3 Data generation

I conducted interviews as they help to investigate lived experience (van Manen, 1990) and give access to "…rich, detailed, first-person account of experience" (Smith et al., 2009, p.56). As the doctoral journey is temporally bound with different phases, I conducted several interviews throughout an eight to ten-month period to gain insight into development. First, I conducted a long and detailed interview with each student (four individuals) supplemented by three shorter follow up interviews, if possible, and a final interview to close the data generation process, all at intervals of two months. Besides the student, one person associated with each life world of each student was interviewed (three additional people for each student – in total twelve people participated including the student – each case consists of four participants – including the student). This was their partner, a colleague or a business partner and the first research supervisor. They have been interviewed at the end of the follow-up interviews after I have gained insight from the student's

perspective. The students have been interviewed first as the doctoral experience is central in this research. I concluded the data generation phase with the final student interview to follow up any issues raised by persons from students' other lifeworlds, but also to close with the students' perspective.

The following diagram shows the interview sequence of each participant:

Table 2: Interview sequence of each participant
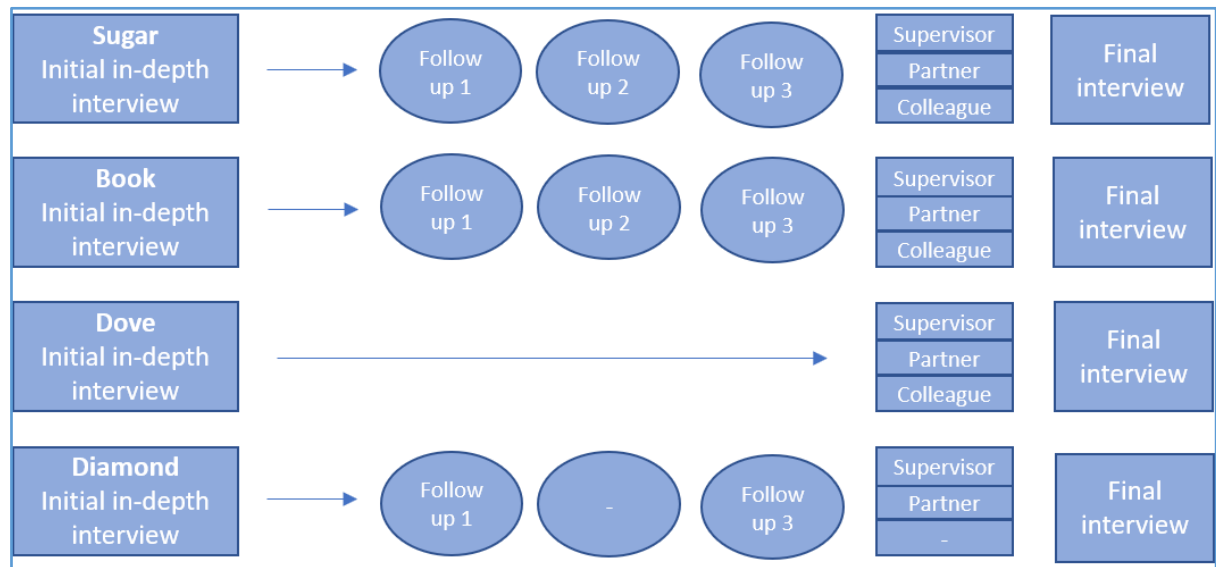
See a detailed timeline of the interviews in appendix 2.

The third candidate was already at the viva stage, which is why no follow-up interviews were conducted. He was attending to amendments and was no longer in the research development process. Nevertheless, this student case is valuable as his reflection draws on the entire doctoral journey process. Due to business travel, the fourth candidate could not provide any time for the second follow-up interview and could also not provide any interview partner from her professional life. This candidate had not disclosed in her company that she was undertaking a doctorate, which is why no colleague was available. As part-time business students usually have a busy life and no other female student had offered to participate, I included this fourth participant without the inclusion of a contact from her professional life. This participant provided a valuable female perspective as a manager in a very senior position.

After each interview, within 24 hours, I wrote a reflection and made notes about my first perception of the interview. I created a summary of every interview, which I sent to the participants as a member check. For most participants, the summary was appropriate, some added explanation or corrected details. The interviews were also recorded and transcribed and entered into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software package.

Following the application of multiple forms of data making (Flick, 2007) I sought to gain additional insight through the analysis of a further document. This was a written essay (7500 words) from students' reflections about their personal development during the taught phase based on a diary. The written essay gave an insight into the doctoral experience at the initial stage. It was used as preparation for the interviews and served as a first understanding of motivation and reason for undertaking a doctorate. Later in the analysis, the document was treated as text, in the same fashion as the interview transcripts, and as a source of data about the doctoral experience.

4.4.4 Interview setting

van Manen (1990) describes the purpose of interviews as to explore and gather experiential narrative material to develop a richer and deeper understanding of the phenomena. It is a conversation with purpose (Smith et al., 2009), which is guided by the research question. It facilitates an interaction in which the interviewee can tell about their experience.

All interviews have been face-to-face (Novick, 2008) except the follow-up interviews (because of practical reasons). I wanted to meet every participant in person to develop a personal relationship (van Manen, 1990) and to earn their trust, so participants felt comfortable enough to speak about their personal thoughts and feelings (Smith et al., 2009). The interviews were conducted in German as it is easier to speak about personal experience in the students' mother tongue (see also Marcos et al., 1973). Only interviews with the supervisors were conducted in English because most of them were English and supervision took place in English. An interview guide was used to provide orientation (Smith et al., 2009). The interviews were conducted in settings that the participants found non-

threatening to ensure a relaxed and quiet atmosphere – e.g., the students' offices or a room at the University. The participants were invited to choose the place of their preference. At the beginning of each initial interview, I provided a brief description of the study and asked participants for their permission to record the interview for transcription. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality. I also informed the participants that they have the right to stop the interview at any time they feel uncomfortable and do not want to continue.

4.4.5 Developing interview guidelines

Detailed interview questions were derived from the research questions to address the lived experience of the participants. Also, I have expanded questions derived from the literature with those informed through my own experience. I piloted the question developed and refined the questions further (see next section and appendix 3). I further used van Manen's (1990) four existentials to inform the probed research question from the pilot to cover all aspects of the lived experience – lived time, lived space, lived relation and lived body. I have categorized the interview questions into three thematic areas related to van Manen's existentials, which are appropriate to address the doctoral experience, and often refer to more than one of the existentials. The final interview guideline questions are categorised into the following three thematic areas (and the mapping of the existentials is indicated in the brackets):

- **Structure/time/location** (temporality, spatiality)
- **Relationship/support/location/inspiration** (relationality, spatiality)
- **Leisure time/ physical and mental fitness** (corporality)

The interview guidelines provided a thematic orientation point during the interview with examples of follow up questions the intent was never to follow every single question strictly.

4.4.6 Pilot

From the remaining students who were willing to attend my research and share their stories (but whom I did not select), a male participant agreed to participate as

a pilot. In addition, one of my female peers agreed to be the second pilot. I also interviewed members of their other lifeworlds (though these were not always in the same role relationships as used in the final study). This gave a total of eight interviews. The primary purpose of the pilot was to assess the interview questions developed. This also gave me space to practice my skills as an interviewer and to rethink and redevelop my interview questions. For example, I re-structured the order of the questions, added new questions and changed the formulation of some questions (see appendix 4). In one pilot, I interviewed the candidate's parents and here I realized some questions were not fully understood by the mother. Therefore, I rethought the formulation of the specific question but also decided to focus on the student's partner, not their parents. During the interview with the supervisor, I asked if the supervisor thought her advice is helpful. I realised through the supervisor's reaction (worrying and doubting) that the question is negative and can implicitly give the supervisor the impression that the student had told me that supervision is not helpful, which can create uncertainly and defensiveness. I immediately clarified the situation. It was a salutary lesson to be alert and more thoughtful about how to frame questions. In addition, the form of the question did not address the "how", which is typical in a phenomenological inquiry (Smith et al., 2009). I changed the question into several open-ended queries: Please describe your working relationship with X. Have you found anything particularly challenging in your relationship with X? Whom do you think are the most important support mechanisms for X in her/his doctorate beside you?

The data from the pilot are not included in the analysis of this current research as the participants do not fully meet the sample criteria. I have recorded and transcribed the interviews and did a general analysis of emerging themes, but this served more as practice and to gain an initial sense of meanings and how the methodological processes work.

4.4.7 Interviews

A phenomenological interview is an in-depth interview with usually open-ended questions. It facilitates the discussion of the relevant topic where the focus lies on the participant's lifeworld and deviations from the guidelines can happen (Smith et

al., 2009). An introduction helps to start and assure common understanding and creates rapport and trust which helps to manage the further conversation (Smith et al., 2009). Details of the interviews are presented in the order they were conducted.

First interview

In the first student interview, I started by asking demographic information, work conditions and personal background. These referred to the candidate's current personal (family status), professional (position) and academic (experience from previous studies) circumstances, which reflect the identified lifeworlds. The aim was to create a warm-up and gain an overview of the student's current situation to better understand their context. For example, questions about their professional life were "How many hours do you work during the week?", "Do you have business trips?" Afterwards, I asked participants to draw their doctoral journey on a timeline in terms of their other lifeworlds and mark significant events and if they experienced phases of "ups and downs" (Barton, 2015). Not all students found this easy. The visualization exercise sought to help students to think and reflect about their doctoral journey and to stimulate memories about the phases they went through, also in the context of their other lifeworlds. The drawing provided a platform for candidates to tell their stories, it was not an exercise in visual skills. I continued asking questions during their drawing depending on what students told me (see also Bodzin & Gehringer, 2001; Nyquist et al., 1999; Quita, 2003).

I followed this activity with questions based on van Manen's (1990) existentials. The following questions display the three thematic areas:

Table 3: Main thematic areas of interview questions

> **Structure/time/location** (temporality, spatiality)
> - Tell me how you manage your time in terms of working on your doctoral studies?
> - Could you explain how you approach your doctorate and the other areas of your life in terms of having time for each?
>
> **Relationship/support/location/inspiration** (relationality, spatiality)
> - Please describe which relationships are relevant in terms of your doctorate?
> - How do they influence the doctorate?
> - Who/what gives you support and help?
>
> **Leisure time/ physical and mental fitness** (corporality)
> - Please describe how you spend your leisure time.
> - How is your physical and mental fitness?

Those sections contained further sub-question as prompts depending on how much and what the participant disclosed (see appendix 5). The questions sought to gain an understanding of the students' contextual situation and what stressors they experience during their doctoral journey and what coping strategies they apply.

Through the natural course of the conversation, the order may have changed if participants answered questions before they were asked. Keeping the natural course of conversation ensured an atmosphere where the participants felt free to tell their stories and were not interrupted by rigid adherence to the guidelines. The aim was to probe students' experiences to attain a deeper understanding (Smith et al., 2009). The first interview took 60 to 90 minutes.

Within two days I summarized the interviews for member checking. It allowed the participants to check for accuracy and to verify the content and it remained as a basis for discussion in the follow-up interviews. I tried to transcribe the interview as soon as possible and made notes about missed questions or where ambiguity remained.

Follow-up interviews

Shorter follow-up interviews with each student happened over the phone given the practicalities and varied between 20 and 45 minutes. The aim was to investigate students' development and changes in their doctoral experience over time.

The follow-up interviews contained the following questions:

Table 4: Questions for follow-up interviews

- How are you doing?
- Is there anything that has worked against your intended aims?
- What is it?
- What put you in that position?
- How do you feel about this situation?
- What do you intend to do?

Interviews with persons from other lifeworlds

I interviewed each students' partner, a colleague (except in one instance), and the first research supervisor. The student arranged the appointment. The interviews took up to 45 minutes. These interviews were conducted after the follow-up interviews with the student. The aim was first to gain insight into the student's experience and derive from those initial narratives further questions for those in the students' lifeworlds. The interview guidelines for the interview with the partner, supervisor, and colleague were similar but varied in their emphasis based on the specific lifeworld (see appendix 5). The following summarizes and describes the content of these interviews.

1. *Interview with a colleague or business partner*

After a brief introduction and explanation of my research, I first asked for a description of their relationship with the student to understand their connectivity. Furthermore, I asked what the colleague know about the student's doctorate and the student's motivation and how they perceived the student during the student's time on the doctoral programme and if they know of any ups and downs. I also asked if the colleague recognized any specific coping mechanisms that the student

employed. Also, I asked if the colleague perceived any impact or connection to the student's professional life or their personal collaboration. Lastly, I asked what a part-time doctorate means for the colleague and if they can imagine pursuing a doctorate (see also appendix 5.2).

2. Interview with the supervisor

After a brief introduction and explanation of my research, I asked the supervisor about the student's motivation and their working relationship. Emphasis was placed on questions about the student's time management, challenges and support mechanisms, as well as highpoints or key situations and if the supervisor is aware of any impact from other lifeworlds. In addition, I asked the supervisor about their perceptions of any changes or developments in the student. Depending on what, and if, the student mentioned as critical phases I asked the supervisor how they have perceived the student at that time. Lastly, I asked what a part-time doctorate means for the supervisor and if they see differences between full-time to part-time students (see appendix 5.3).

3. Interview with the student's partner

After a brief introduction and explanation about my research, I asked the partner about the student's motivation and what they know about the doctorate and if they know what the "best" working conditions are for the student. In addition, I asked if the partner knows any high points or critical phases and how the student dealt with these. Questions focusing on their private life referred to strategies of balance and how the doctorate has an impact on their private life and if the behaviour of the student has changed since they started the doctorate and how the partner feels about this. Depending on what, and if, the student mentioned as critical phases I asked the partner how they have perceived the student at that time. Lastly, I asked the partner what a part-time doctorate means for them and if they would consider pursuing a doctorate. (see appendix 5.4)

Final interview

Before I conducted the final interview, I transcribed and summarized all previous interviews and identified the initial main themes. Based on those findings, I identified for each student the most stressful situations.

The final interview consisted of three sections (see appendix 6). At the beginning of the final interview, I asked about the student's current state and the development of what happened since the last interview. In addition, based on the previous interviews in the second section, I asked follow-up questions regarding clarity and further explanation of developing narratives. In the last section I asked students to describe the identified stress situations in more detail with the following description:

Table 5: Questions about stress situation

• Describe your emotions (emotional)
• Describe what you thought (cognitive)
• Describe what you did (behavioural)
• Which person played a role here? In which way?
• What is significant for your relationship with others?

4.5 Data analysis

When I transcribed the interviews for all participants, I followed the steps of the IPA based on Smith et al. (2009) with the first student case. The first step was reading and re-reading the data and listening to the audio recording to get a sense of the overall interview structure and an understanding of the participant's story through the interview. I noted down emerging ideas and thoughts to put them aside and bracket them for a while (Smith et al., 2009).

In the second step, the initial noting, I copied the transcript into a table in Word and used the right-hand margin for the initial notes. I went through each line of the transcript and noted anything I found interesting "to produce a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments on the data" (Smith et al., 2009). I made

descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments (Smith et al., 2009). These notes contain descriptions of the participant's experience that matter to them and refer to stress situations and coping strategies and contain comments about how and why the experience has a specific meaning for the participant through the way they talk. By considering the context, I made notes about patterns of meaning and possible concepts referring to stress and coping. I tried to differentiate between the meaning of the participant and the meaning for me (Smith et al., 2009). The minimal unit of analysis was at least a sentence.

When I had gone through the entire transcript making notes, I converted the Word document into a pdf and loaded it into NVivo. For the next step, developing emergent themes, I used the "node" function to create codes (emergent themes) in NVivo to reduce the volume of detail. I went through the transcript and developed from my initial notes emergent themes in the form of codes. I tried to develop a precise phrase or statement that summarized, or captured, the importance of the initial note or what is crucial (Smith et al., 2009). I also used the memo function in NVivo to note ideas and analytical thoughts in the coding process to conduct a systematic review of the thematic framework developed from the primary data (see a sample in appendix 7).

Going to the next interview transcript within the case, I repeated the procedure and added new codes if new meaning and themes occurred, but I also add text to the existing codes from the first transcript. Considering the hermeneutic circle, I interpreted the part in terms of the whole and the whole in terms of the part. This process can also be described with constant comparison in a grounded theory analysis at three different levels: Incidents are compared to other incidents to establish new concepts. Emerging concepts are compared to further incidents to develop further dimensions of the concept, and finally, concepts are compared to other concepts to find relationships and connections to develop a rationale (Holton, 2007).

Themes reflect not only the participant's original words, but also my interpretation, but I tried to stay at this stage close to the student's phrases and meaning.

The following table shows an excerpt of the emergent themes (first codes) and initial noting from Dove's initial student interview:

Table 6: excerpt of the emergent themes and initial noting

Initial comments		
Emergent themes	Original Transcript translated	Initial noting
New experience Effort Structure as support	Because I was not used… to completely organize my study by myself …, I just was glad because… that is! That is an additional effort, if you have to set your own deadlines and organize everything… and naturally, if this is given and you have your plan what has to be done next, this is really helpful!	Was not used to organize himself after the module phase (additional effort; given plan would be helpful!) – but as a manager doesn't he have to organize himself as well?? Why does it seem to be difficult in this context? Is a Transfer not possible?? – due to a lack of time, or underestimation?

After the steps above were enacted with every interview transcript from the first student case, which includes all interviews with the student, as well as the interviews with the persons from other lifeworlds and the analysis of the document, I had a list of themes developed from the first case (see appendix 8 – Phase 1 - overview about initial codes from Dove). I printed them, cut them out and put them on the floor and re-ordered and mapped them in the way I thought they fitted together or formed connections. I incorporated all the themes at this point – so none were removed nor did further themes emerge. I transferred this structure back into NVivo, and I then further clustered related themes and formed further categories of subordinate themes. I tried to find a structure that points out the significant meaning of the part-time doctoral experience of the participant (Smith et al., 2009). I translated those subordinate themes from German into English (see appendix 9 – Phase 2 – Developing subordinate themes). I continued to develop superordinate themes by applying abstraction or subsumption to use an emergent theme as a superordinate theme and attribute other themes to it. Through polarization, I identified oppositional relationships between themes. Contextualization, numeration and function also helped to identify connections

between emergent themes and to explore patterns of the data (Smith et al., 2009) until final superordinate themes emerged for the case (See appendix 10 – Phase 3 – Developing superordinate themes).

I tried to "bracket" the ideas from the first case and followed the steps accurately when I moved to the second (and subsequent) case to allow new themes to emerge. I did this process with each case. When I had a list of translated final themes from each case (superordinate themes), I looked, in the last step, for patterns and similarities across cases, but also for individual significance and developed cross-case themes (see appendix 11 – Phase 4 – Developing cross-case superordinate themes). I followed the hermeneutic circle to develop ideas and deeper interpretation to develop cross-case themes which refer to all participants. Final themes were **not identified** based on their frequency in the data (even if their frequency is, in some cases, an indicator of significance), but in terms of their insightfulness and their ability to offer an illuminating account and their explanatory power about student's meaning. I identified those final themes in the form of categorization of context, events, strategies, which allowed comparison, contrast and links to find an underlying logic and different dimensions. I tried to integrate the developed final themes around a narrative that promotes the evolution of ideas and that conceptualizes key analytic features of the phenomena. The narrative was experiential as my focus is the experience of managers being part-time DBA students (Dey, 2007).

See appendix 11 as an example of the use of flow from codes to core categories to superordinate themes.

The following table shows an overview of the steps of analysis based on the procedure of Smith et al. (2009):

Table 7: Procedure of data analysis

Step	Description of the Process	Purpose of the Process
1.	Summary of the interview	Member check for completeness
2.	Transcription, re-reading and listening	Check transcription and get a general sense of data
3.	Reading and Re-Reading	Get a sense of the overall structure of the interview connected by the participant's story
4.	Initial noting	Growing familiarity with the transcript, identify specific ways participants talk, produce a comprehensive and detailed set of notes through descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments
5.	Developing emergent themes (initial codes)	Develop a precise phrase or statement which summarizes or names the importance of the initial note or what is crucial
6.	Searching for connections across emergent themes (subordinate themes)	Re-ordering and mapping themes, clustering related themes
7.	Translation	Transfer themes and German phrases into English, develop statements in English
8.	Developing superordinate themes	Forming superordinate themes in applying abstraction, subsumption, polarization, contextualization, numeration and identifying functions
9.	Moving to the next case	Repeat all steps for the next case bracketing ideas from the previous cases aside
10.	Looking for patterns across cases (developing cross-case superordinate themes)	Identify similarities across cases, but also the individual significance and developed cross-case themes

4.6 Validity and Quality

I have addressed validity and quality in this study based on the four principles of Yardley (2000) as suggested by Smith et al (2009). They describe it as a more "sophisticated and pluralistic stance" (p.179) in comparison to other guidelines for assessing quality in qualitative research that tend to become simplistic and prescriptive (Smith et al., 2009): The four principles of Yardley (2000) are

sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, impact and importance.

Sensitivity to context:

Sensitivity to context has been considered through exploring the personal circumstances of the student and taking the context in the form of other lifeworlds than the study lifeworld into account. The detailed narrative of the student displays their doctoral experience embedded in the context of their daily life. Showing empathy during the interview, I listened appreciatively to what the participant said. Through the interviews, verbatim extracts from the student were produced and thoroughly analyzed. To ensure sensitivity to context and to enhance the theoretical considerations of the research, I also took new literature into account that became relevant through emerging themes in the analysis.

Commitment and rigour:

One of the most important aims was that the participant feels comfortable during the interview and willing to share their experience with me. I tried to establish a trusting atmosphere, and I conducted the interview where the participant has suggested and feels comfortable without effort on their part, which means travel time for me. My commitment is reflected in that I met every participant in person to show attentiveness to their narratives. I have also conducted two full pilot cases, which means I have interviewed two students and persons from their lifeworlds, in total eight interviews which I also transcribed. This helped to develop my skills as an interviewer and lead to sensitivity to the student's other lifeworlds. I aimed to conduct high-quality research where every step is carefully planned.

I have selected the sample thoroughly according to the principles of homogeneity to answer the research questions. I tried to balance closeness and separateness in the interview and did my best to conduct a rigorous analysis, which took considerable time. I tried to show sufficient interpretation of what the participants' experience means. The findings in this study show the unique particularity of the experience of the single students, as well as the commonality which can be recognized in overarching themes.

Transparency and coherence:

To show transparency I have tried to clearly describe every step of this research from the description of how participants have been selected and their characteristics to how the analysis has been conducted. A codebook clearly shows the developed codes and how I have structured and accumulated those. The tables that are included give an overview of every step. The audit trail and samples of excerpts demonstrate transparency in each step. I tried my best to create coherence in the form of clear, logical arguments, being consistent and presenting a logical order of the themes with a clear rationale. I achieved this by re-drafting the chapters several times and by building on the underlying principles of IPA.

Impact and importance:

The current study seeks to gain insight into the specific group of doctoral students who are managers undertaking a part-time professional doctorate at a distance, in a foreign language. It sheds light on the disadvantages and challenges that this student group face in form of stressors. It also points out possible advantages like professional experience, knowledge and background and better opportunities to access data in business, as well as coping strategies that managers apply to overcome the stressors experienced. Furthermore, understanding those students' experiences can help to give implications for business faculties and their supervisors to adapt and re-develop programme structures to the needs of this specific student group. It can also advise future students on how to prepare and consider their own doctoral journeys.

5. Findings

In the last chapter, I outlined the methodological rationale and described the research design including sample, selection process, data generation and analysis concluding with considerations of validity and quality.

This chapter starts with an overview of the superordinate themes of each case. These themes emerged from the analysis of the student interviews, the interviews with persons of their lifeworlds and students' reflective essay. This is followed by an overview of the superordinate cross-case themes that developed and a subsequent detailed description and discussion. Answering the research question will point out, in particular, experienced stress and the coping strategies students applied. Bringing aspects together, the chapter concludes with the conceptual framework developed, which reflects a holistic understanding of the DBA students' lived experience.

5.1 Superordinate themes and discussion

By following the approach of Smith et al. (2009), each interview was analysed using IPA. Table 8 details the superordinate themes for each student case that emerged:

Table 8 Superordinate themes for each student case

Sugar	Book	Dove	Diamond
• Critical phase – lost one year • Distractive factor – job • Being on campus – socialization • Sparring partner and social interaction • Goal setting: panic and breakthrough	• Continuity and discipline • Frustration – reality shock • Supervisor communication • Forced into a corset • Goal setting – optimism and adaption	• Losing time or finding process • Motivation to continue • Working alone – intensive times • Energy level – pressure at the end • Private life – safe heaven	• Countless loops – the crucial question • Organizational changes – drenched in sweat • Partner – as solid as a rock • Persistent- effort at the end – dragging on • Switch worlds

Those themes display the prevailing and most meaningful aspects in the doctoral experience of each student. To gain a holistic understanding of the doctoral experience, whilst considering the context of the other lifeworlds, the individual case superordinate themes were compared and considered against the background of the doctoral journey to identify the superordinate cross-case themes. Through a hermeneutic circle, those themes were repeatedly connected to the whole and back to the part until the overall superordinate themes emerged at a more interpretative and theoretical level (Smith et al., 2009). Table 9 presents the superordinate cross-case themes. Often, more than one superordinate student case theme informs a cross-case superordinate theme and a student theme informs mostly more than one cross-case superordinate theme, as themes overlap and influence each other (see appendix 12 – overview student themes informing cross-case themes).

Superordinate cross-case themes:

Table 9: Superordinate cross-case themes

1. Learning and challenging identity
2. Balancing: negation and adaption
3. Managing emotional fluctuations
4. Relying on significant others
5. Motivating and persisting
6. Moving forward

The emerging themes that describe students' most meaningful aspects of their doctoral experience answer the first overarching research question: The lived experience of part-time DBA students is a cyclic development that requires constant learning and identity work, which also involves struggle. Core strategies in their coping behaviour are balancing all lifeworlds by negotiation and adaption, managing emotional fluctuations and relying on significant others' support. This helps to maintain motivation and keep persistent while students are driven by the intention of 'moving forward'. The following section describes and discusses the themes in detail.

5.1.1 Superordinate theme one: Learning and challenging identity

Studies in education (e.g. Pifer & Baker, 2014; Taylor, 2007) claim the link between learning and identity development, where identity conflicts can occur when new identities are based on different values and demands to former identities (Baker & Lattuca, 2010) and as a result can lead to resistance of further development and stagnation of the learning process.

It was evident that all students experienced significant moments of stagnation throughout their doctoral journey described as very painful, though leading to learning and development. A manager-, or practitioner-identity is contrary to a student-identity and based on distinct experience and values. This suggests students' experienced pain probably arose from challenges to their consolidated identity as 'manager', which leads to stagnation, or even blockage, of their research process.

When blockages prevent progress, students face a "portal whose threshold has to be passed over for real development to take place" (Trafford & Leshem, 2009, p. 305). Also, Taylor (2007) stated that challenges can generate learning, but conflicts can at first fragment learning and lead to stagnation and stress. Whereas experienced stress can lead to further growth (Stanton et al., 2006) which is called in the literature as 'stress-related-growth' (Aldwin & Levenson, 2004). The students in this study experienced "critical events and barriers" (Inouye & McAlpine, 2019, p. 10) during their doctoral journey as stressful, which created painful moments. Besides the central challenge of developing high-quality scholarly research, situational factors from outside reinforced blockages or compounded stagnation and challenged their consolidated identity evolved from their professional life.

This seems to be especially evident in Diamond's and Book's case where the dominance of their manager identity and its resulted tension is demonstrated in several ways.

Diamond's narrative first does not indicate any experience of blockage from her perception. She seemed to be confident in her abilities. Her self-confidence as a manager reflects in her behaviour when starting to gather data without consulting her supervisors:

"...she was one of those who just steamrolled ahead and didn't consult, so... and started with the empirical phase without having really talked to us about it, ... which created a few issues, but we managed to retrieve it and since then we did have regular contact..."

Only the response from her supervisor, as stimuli from outside, challenged her professional competence and destabilized her self-confidence, and she experienced several moments of pain until she has reached a point of great self-doubt where she considered stopping:

Diamond initial
"...when was it, last year? It was in January... I really thought ... 'You're quitting now' because I have... with Brenda for the fifth time, or maybe I felt it was more, ... that chapters four and three, went in a circle again and again..."

As an experienced manager, she was probably not used to receiving such critique, which probably challenged and questioned her successful manager identity (Taylor, 2007). She evaluated her performance by the number of comments from her supervisor. Her supervisor confirmed Diamond's sensitivity to her feedback:

Diamond's supervisor (Brenda)
"Yes! she was always so sensitive, she always...I also have that feeling... that got better, but it always knocked her out at first, while other students either say 'Brenda's crazy' or say 'Yes, why didn't I see that right away', yes? Some of them say 'yes, of course, it annoys me that I didn't see it myself', while Diamond was always... so taken aback!"

Her partner described Diamond's reaction to feedback as a process of learning.

Diamond's partner
"...she received feedback and she got angry like 'ah!'... but then she read it and worked through it and the longer the process lasted, the more likely she was to accept what Brenda said, and say 'Hey, it's not so stupid after all! If I read it... I have to change a lot...' Sure! You had to reorganize the text, pulling parts up to here and move others from there to there, to make it all well connected, it was a learning process, where you had to work off the frustration again! Sure, when the feedback comes in again, she first said 'do they just want to make fun of me? Now I have done as they wanted and it is still not right!'..."

Besides sensitivity to feedback Diamond experienced a great challenge in the learning process, where she tended to rely on her business thinking, from which she needed to move away to scholarly thinking. This is evident in Diamond's supervisor's comment.

Diamond's supervisor (Brenda)
"I mean, it was a challenge to keep her, to encourage her to work at that meta-level, at that theoretical level, that was so ... encouraging her to do that and go there and stop her

from her business thinking, that was a bit of a challenge, but you know that with part-time business students, that that is the case."

Her supervisor illustrates the different working approaches in business in comparison to academia, which leads Diamond to struggle.

Diamond's supervisor (Brenda)
"Yes! I think ... because people are used to working to deadlines where they have to deliver regardless of the quality of what they deliver in a business context, you just don't have the option to say 'well I need to think about this'. And they obviously take, or the majority of students take, that approach to the doctorate. Which means that as a supervisor you have to stop them and say 'well, actually, this is not a conveyer belt', I always say to them 'it's a piece of art and art takes its time, you need to step back and digest!'. And you know... and let's see what happens and Diamond will swallow those and still steam roll a head and I will say, I can't remember how many times I said to her: 'Diamond, just sit back, just leave it! Leave it for a few days'!"

"...and they're not used to being challenged at the core because it's not just challenging the outcome, it's challenging their thinking and, and for some that is really difficult..."

Her supervisor confirmed Diamond's development, but admitted to having concerns during the course:

Diamond's supervisor (Brenda)
"Well, early on, you know, the RD1, so where is the contribution to knowledge, we do not just want it to Be about management, we want to know about the academic contribution so what was the (theme?) right at the end? But I think she got, she turned the corner, she got it!! Yeah. So, some people, right from the beginning, they know it and they work at that level. And Diamond really needed to struggle uphill to get there. And sometimes I said 'Oh gosh, hope she, hope she manages it!' and with the other supervisor I said 'Do you think she'll get it?'

"...she started with a very much business mind and it was very hard for her to work, to get away from this, but, but she did and submitted something that, both the supervisors felt is worth a doctorate, so how much has she developed. I think she never really accepted our challenge to her basic premise, ... that's her prerogative...."

Diamond admitted the challenges surrounding academic working, which is different from her business thinking.

Diamond final
"All right, I'll say yes, in business you are, or as I always formulated at the beginning my work, that you simply... *see* the problem and you write and you have a solution. But this scientific style, at some point, you have to be very precise in your choice of words and this kind of weighing up! When you say, one person sees it like this, the other person sees it like that and the third person sees it like this, and that is mixed together and results in that and then you say - I see it like that, ... it was sometimes, always too ..., well how should I say it now, I am certainly also a very result-oriented person, and it was just always too much going around in circles... and then this methodology [...] ... the biggest hurdle perhaps to think differently and to reflect [...] I have a problem here; I want to answer the

question and how do I get it answered? Well, there I have learned that I have always been classified as a pragmatist, sure it is exciting to look at different points of view afterwards, but in professional life, or in many businesses, it is all about getting your results and not how you get there?"

Like Diamond, Book had no problems delivering writing or seemed to experience a blockage. He also appeared to be confident about his knowledge and ability. Only the response of both supervisors challenged him in his thinking and reflected possible difficulties in switching from business thinking to scholarly thinking. The confidence in his knowledge and his indignation about rewriting and that he still sees things differently is evident in the following statement.

> Book follow up 1
> "...of course, I did not plan that I would start again from scratch, no! I had not planned that... I was already relatively far along...! I have already written 80,000 words, methodology of course, and the analysis of the interviews, well, when Bryan wrote back 'that's just too rough, there's no focus in it' in relation to the research question and so on, whereas I saw it differently and see it differently today, but... I mean, they have the experience, haven't they? ...well let's say, I did not expect that, that is obvious! Nobody would expect this!"

> Book follow up 3
> "...sure, it's frustrating of course! Yes, because I mean, I do have a certain background, I don't write things out of theory but out of practice, and in my opinion, the topic was already (...) taken up the way I thought it should have been, from this perspective of critical realism, to work out the analytical mechanisms ... but apparently ... yes, that's just too much describing... too little critical reflection..."

His self-confidence is also apparent in his approach to data gathering. Like Diamond, Book had already gathered data in advance, without consulting with his supervisors. His supervisor commented.

> Book's first supervisor
> "Well that's the problem, he'd finished before he began it, he was gonna simply use data he got from previous..., he runs workshops on strength leadership ... and so he was gonna use data he has gained from those workshops and I said: 'hm, you know, we can't really do that, because we don't, we didn't have a question we were asking them'..."

Book's first reaction to critical feedback is the assumption that others do not understand his thinking, which also implies a strong manager identity that he protects in a defensive stance. This is evident in several statements.

He wrote in his reflective essay:

> Book essay
> "I received critical feedback on my summative assignment. The tutor pointed out that I

was wandering around my theme and there was no clear discussion of the methodology and methods. In his opinion, I did not provide understandable arguments for my planned way of research. The tutor stated that my description of the research objectives appeared to be a hypothesis and therefore it would be better to use a quantitative approach to test this hypothesis. After receiving this feedback, I was upset and disappointed. My first thought was that the tutor simply did not appreciate my paper due to the possibility that his preferred research methodology was qualitative and he did not understand my approach."

His critique of science shows his clinging to his manager identity.

Book final
"... ethical goals are always being set out in academia, but even there you can find many aspects, meaning that you either please the mainstream by choosing the right articles, then everything is fine, or you do not please the mainstream because it's critical, then you will be examined critically, all right? Such things...., up to writing also, freedom of thought, it just means, you have to write it as it is demanded, otherwise, it won't work! Such things! there are also very strict rules ... on which paper will be published and why, now I see both sides through discussion with another doctoral student, if he wants to publish something and so on, it always has to be exactly like that..., otherwise the paper won't be accepted and the peer review and the whole topic ... well, let's say, I am now disillusioned?"

Outlining the differentiation of academia and business by describing scholarly thinking as "not normal", where Book demonstrates he does not think in this way, reflects his distance from scholarly thinking. Here Book also describes his learning process as a 'reality shock'.

Book initial
"Yes,... the content is the reality shock... the theory, all this very strict formulations and this permanent ... questioning of these contexts... that's not 'normal' thinking. you don't think in those terms in business, there you look much more for workable solutions and... there are other difficulties, but this scientific stuff... it's much more, the very delicate stuff, the strictness which exists in theory and all its aspects... I think that's what it is"

His experienced struggle and stress is evident in his comparison of the requirements of a doctorate to a "worst-case" scenario.

Book initial
"I have to say yes, I am a realist, yes! I look at things... I do calculate things, don't I? But, what I mean is, I probably have a strategy, when I think over scenarios, I have a best case, a normal case and a worse case compartment, but then I probably orientate myself on what I usually do, on the normal case... and I say yes, reality is now below worse case, so... worst case doesn't really express what I mean... but what it does require from you makes you think in this direction..."

Book's experienced anger and frustration about the need to revise his writing was a recurring experience in his learning development.

> Book final
> "I had already written Methodology, and… in the data part, I had already written something, and I sent it to Bryan [first supervisor], and then he said, his thing (feedback) came back to me saying 'oh, that's much too rough and does not refer to the research question at all!' Well, that was the first time where I thought 'Gosh! Such a shit!' (…) so that really made me nearly vomit! Yes!? And then of course there was the next aspect 'now write it again!'…"

This gives the impression that Book rewrites, or starts a new chapter, with the assumption his supervisor ought to know how to write a thesis but is not fully convinced about his need to rework material nor understanding why it is suggested that he does so.

Nevertheless, development in his thinking is evident in his comments that it is a process, and things must be developed.

> Book final
> "Yes, well I was annoyed… 4 weeks, 5 weeks ago when I had written this part, then I sent it to Liz [second supervisor), and then she in a very elegant but direct way said 'good basis, but still a lot of work to do!' That's when I already knew that it won't work (laugh)! … in the end, it's a kind of maturing process, you have to approach as a spiral, for me all the other things had been good too, but she said 'yes, but that's not it'… I tend to write more like this, I have a very analytical way of writing, I write things down step by step, but the story is missing,…so that it's easy to read, I always said 'a doctoral thesis doesn't have to be a novel' but she said 'yes, but you have to tell a story and someone who doesn't understand, and by reading through, they have to understand, the pros and cons,' that reflection, it's critical. Well, I think I've found a way now, that this converges…"

In comparison to Book and Diamond, Sugar experienced a challenge to her identity not because of critical feedback from outside, but through her uncertainty and self-doubts. She experienced several turning points that can be described as blockage or stagnation, accompanied by feelings of panic and helplessness until things developed and progressed. Social support was essential for her to deal with such emotions and to find solutions. It can be assumed that the doctoral journey leads her to an identity she desires. Even if her experience can be described as a constant fight, a sense of achievement during the course brought her closer to her desired identity in the form of development and self-confirmation. Her partner confirms her development.

"In any case, self-confidence has been added. And another way of seeing and looking at things, just…, much more analytically and structured, according to the motto: 'No relevant population, on what basis do they say that?' So, just a different way of looking at things, just more of a … structured, more scientific view, like 'It's not at all evident what they're saying', and I personally like it, because it fits with my way of thinking, which is what I find very cool about it."

Her doubts and blockage are also evident in her comments.

Sugar final
"…so one night I said to Frank 'I can't do it, I can't do it, I'm blocked, I can't do it!'…"

Sugar follow up 2
"…and,… yeah, it's going pretty good now, so like I said, I've just been lost way too long and,… it just never occurred to me…"

Sugar follow up 3
"…but like I said, I should have known all this beforehand… I just panicked. I read a lot of papers and couldn't figure it out…"

This also reflects her partner's comment.

Sugar's partner
"…and a lot of the time she's afraid that she doesn't do enough…"

Her metaphor reflects the effort that she perceives is needed in a doctorate.

Sugar initial
"…you don't realize what kind of bathtub you're getting into! That you have to get out of it somehow, but I'm not giving up!"

"I had more or less a feeling what was coming up, but I did not expect the extent… I think that if you weren't so naive, you wouldn't do it."

Her supervisor's comments make evident that business thinking, or its different working approach, could be a reason for her experienced struggle and what prevented Sugar from progressing in her research.

Sugar's supervisor (first supervisor)

Supervisor: "I think she works too hard! I think she works too hard!"

Interviewer: "in her job?"

Supervisor: "no."

Interviewer: "in her doctorate?"

Supervisor: "Yeah, because it's difficult to say 'oh you are working too hard on your studies' 'cause with most of my students I have to say the opposite, you know you've to... come on! put more effort into it... (...) She wants to finish it, she doesn't like jobs half done, okay? And I can cope with jobs half done... (...) I think that's what Sugar is like, that, she wants to finish it doing it properly, which is probably part of her job because they have to finish this thing and get this annual report out by the deadlines, so it's always a deadline, it's always getting it finished, so she's got this huge database of newspaper thousands of thousands of ... so, she came over in the summer and she told me that, I can't remember the figures, but she told us and we were there with Jim [second supervisor], 'I analysed 10,000 newspaper articles but I've got 40,000 left to go' or something like that, it's a lot more to do! Well, I said to her 'well, if you got enough just leave it, this 10,000 sounds good enough to me, hey!' 'No I have to do this, folks, I have to do it...I have to do them' ....' Look, you're just making life difficult for yourself because if you manage to find something that's interesting out of 10,000 just...' (...) I can see her sitting at home at the weekends, doing all this text analysis and although it'll (...) complete a huge database of stuff, so I think, I think she works in that way, and that's what I'm trying to say, in that way she just likes to do it all"

In comparison to Diamond and Book, it seems that the pressure Sugar takes on herself to move forward and progress and to speed up prevents her from taking time for deeper thinking, as well as influencing her extreme emotional fluctuations.

Nevertheless, Sugar's sleepless nights and panic about the amount of data she thought she needed to analyse brought several discussions with her partner and finally led to a solution and progress through the discussion with her supervisors:

Sugar follow up 2
"...they both looked at each other and said, 'reduce the scope, you don't have to look at all the newspapers', well I sat there and had a laughing fit, and said, that's what my partner said too! They said ... you take these and these three, those were others I or we would have chosen (...) then they said (...) 'do "sampling" with the political point of view'. So plainly speaking, I have now got three newspapers and have to analyse 230 articles, that's something completely different, isn't it?"

"Since then I'm sleeping well at night and don't need any... yes, this is what I'm doing at the moment, but as I said, it nearly drove me crazy, I can only recommend, be sure of what you want to do, although, it's not sure now and then, but now... as Harry [first supervisor] says 'I'm getting enthusiastic with this research'... so now I'm excited, because it's, even if nothing comes out of it, it's a contribution..."

Like Sugar, Dove may have experienced a challenge to his identity more from inner conflicts and tensions rather than from outside. One turning point was during his critical phase, which was first caused by circumstances outside the thesis but lead

to inner conflicts about what decisions to make. Due to his willingness to make fundamental decisions, he actively promoted his identity development. This may have prevented him from a more painful learning experience later in his research development. One could argue that as a young manager in his first management position, he was not as immersed in business thinking and showed more flexibility and openness to scholarly reasoning. On the other hand, he needed the pressure of the critical phase to change his situational conditions. Dealing with such pressure is not an easy task. He has admitted that things were not easy, and he experienced several phases of self-doubt and uncertainty, but that he was able to overcome these. He described the attendant doubts as follows.

> Dove initial
> "...and that is just something that accompanies you throughout the whole process, for example, before I published the article, I was very insecure because I thought, that as a nobody, can you tell someone who has already published 75 articles and who is certain, that his point of view, [that this] is not quite right or whatever, are you allowed to ... ? and there maybe you should throw this thought overboard at some point. That just worked, because I thought 'well, the others stumble just like me, or maybe they also started like that' (...), but this uncertainty came every now and then, also uncertainty at the beginning when approaching methodology, methods ... am I doing this right now, how should I build the case study...?"

His partner confirmed his experience of self-doubts.

> Dove's partner
> "...there were also phases where he doubted a lot and always said 'I don't know if I can do this and whether I'm doing so well'..."

His supervisor commented on this.

> Dove's supervisor
> "My only challenge was to convince him that his work was good enough; yeah it was weird... because usually, it's the other way around..."

Dove himself emphasized how the critical phase was important for his development.

> Dove initial
> "I am glad that this 'gap' was there because it was important for my personal development..."

His wife also described how Dove had phases in which he had difficulties in motivating himself and instead was moaning, which was a burden for her. She

also admitted that she was concerned that he might consider stopping. In addition, there were several points when Dove became embroiled in methodological questions and had sleepless nights. This is evident in Dove's wife's narrative.

> Dove's partner
> "No, in terms of content, he always came back to points where he really thought, he doesn't know how to do it methodically, he doesn't know how to prepare it, how to approach it. And then with him… he lays awake for nights because he was brooding about it, or he woke up at night and sat down again, so I remember he had, what was the expression ahm. …the expression was always … it must have been three or four times, I woke up at night and he was somewhere and then I found him at his desk and he told me he had 'a breakthrough' and a few days later the breakthrough was gone again and then at some point in the night the next breakthrough came and I always thought… ahm, yes, but maybe also because I know so little about the subject, I always thought, well he must now somehow take a method and apply it and the results will come out but it is probably not that simple, but I always thought now he thinks he has *the* breakthrough and then he has not had it, and what does he want now (the next breakthrough?). Well, he is always so very solution-oriented, so ahm yes … but it doesn't matter in which situation in life, so he always tries to bring about the solution… I think maybe one of his strategies was also, … to think through as many things or scenarios as possible to get to the final result, so I think he has a lot of ideas, … thought about it and then discarded it and then thought about it and discarded it again and then developed it further and then came to the point where 'ah', where he finally got a result."

Dove also described his challenge to work in an academic manner, as he sees himself as a praxis-oriented person, which reflects his manager or practitioner identity. The term 'subordinate' emphasizes the seriousness of the effort or reflects a kind of sacrifice.

> Dove final
> "…so actually, the biggest challenge for me at the beginning was….to work scientifically as a practice-oriented person with theory and methodology, to submit and to say yes, I accept the challenge and I try to make it! In the beginning, when I read scientific articles and especially ones in English, I thought, I'll never get something like that done! And in the end, it was not a super great article or something like that, but in the end, I was really satisfied with it and when I compare what I wrote at the beginning and what I wrote at the end, the development can be seen! But that was the hardest thing for me because you have to follow certain rules to make a reasonable scientific statement! And you have to work very precisely, and I am mostly satisfied with 98%, but in this case, I had to deliver 100%! And had to subordinate to it!"

In comparison to Diamond and Book, he had no problems accepting or trying to understand different views. He also described how he dealt with feedback with which he did not agree.

> Dove final
> "When I did not agree with something, I just tried again to think about it why this impression was created there with the person and on the one hand Sally [second supervisor] is also a native speaker and I'm not and certain expressions, for example, you might have to revise (…) the feedback was valuable even if it didn't always suit me, sometimes, but at least I tried to accept it! And that was easy because she was always very friendly!"

Taking the perspective of the examiner at the end, Dove was able to accept and understand the required amendments after viva, even if he had a different opinion and was very disappointed at first:

> Dove final
> "…from their perspective, I have another! (laugh) but from their perspective, it was obvious and accordingly I just responded and it was probably better in terms of the readability and understanding of the work! But it was not a step backwards."

Discussion

Previous literature has illuminated the relationship between learning and identity (e.g. Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Pifer & Baker, 2014; Taylor, 2007), especially the link between scholarly writing and identity development (e.g. Inouye & McAlpine, 2019; Kamler & Thomson, 2014) where feedback on writing particularly facilitates identity development (e.g. Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Inouye & McAlpine, 2019).

This becomes apparent in the task of writing when doctoral students need to demonstrate a contribution to knowledge in taking their position with substantiate arguments (Inouye & McAlpine, 2019). Diamond and Book seem to struggle with this task, and therefore feedback on their writing is not as they expected and as a result, negative emotion is aroused (Inouye & Alpine, 2017). The origins of these emotions can be seen as two-sided – on the one hand, is the learning process, which requires time and practice and new thinking – on the other hand, is the consolidated identity as a manager that is challenged by receiving critical feedback and may inhibit the learning process. Nevertheless, to negotiate criticism in productive ways is significant to development (Li & Seale, 2007) in particular, "learning to value challenging feedback as a mechanism to enhance one's thinking" (p. 4) is part of that development from student to an independent researcher (Inouye & McAlpine, 2017, p. 4).

This seems to be especially difficult when managers see themselves as being successful experts in their professional field (Watts, 2009). Consequently, this can produce a "dilemma of inequality and role conflict" (Taylor, 2007, p.160) where they are thrown back to a novice role in academia but are conducting research in their professional field – where they are 'expert'. Contrary to their manager identity, a student identity goes along with new thinking and learning where failure is also part of the development and other values and rules matter more than in business. Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2005) reported similar from students of a practice-based research degree in arts and design where students felt their identity as artists threatened by the requirement to analyse their artwork in an academic manner. Even if the role of business manager and artist seem to be very contrary, it illustrates the different values and rules amongst a practitioner and a researcher and "highlights the tension between practitioner relevance and academic rigour in a professional research degree" (Taylor, 2007, p. 163). Practitioners must learn different thinking and working methods (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2005). This is not easy when their daily life is that of a practitioner as Diamond's supervisor has described. The narrative of the students illustrates their difficulty to learn and understand methodological requirements in research and the precise working method that is different from their business thinking which as a result challenge their manager identity. This challenge requires constant engagement in "forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising" one's identity which can be also understood as 'identity work' (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003, p. 1165). Given the active role that DBA students have, 'identity work' reflects the ongoing development process students go through by the need to deal with occurring challenges. Hockey and Collinson (2005) argue identity work is required to overcome 'identity struggles'. Students' development and learning give evidence that they managed to overcome that struggle.

Furthermore, investigating a research topic within the student's business context reflects the characteristics of the DBA as a professional doctorate that seeks to combine practice and theory and where students contribute their experience as a practitioner. Whilst this can be seen as a possible advantage of this form of doctorate, it can also bring the risk that students are 'stuck' in their habitual thinking

patterns and struggle to find distance and to critically reflect on their research topic from another perspective – here that of scholar. This experience is illustrated by Diamond's 'struggling uphill', as her supervisor termed it, but which she successfully managed in time. However, she could finally not accept her supervisors' challenge to her basic premise, which reflects the dominance of her manager identity. Therefore, it appears that if students intend to remain in business, the identity of a manager is likely to be dominant and stable, and the question becomes what, and how much, identity change or transformation is required to complete a doctorate. It could be assumed that students maintain their manager identity (which may change or develop little) and additionally develop a researcher identity as two separate forms as identities can occur as multiple constructs (Delanty, 2007).

In comparison to a role, identity compromises internalized meaning, which refers to a role (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Diamond and Book show acceptance of the student role as they do what their supervisor suggests and they acknowledge their supervisors' expertise, but emotions of anger show that they have not fully internalized the meaning of the student role as a learner. This is supported by the designation of the thesis by Diamond as "the thing" or by Book as "the stupid work", which imply that they see themselves outside their research rather than within a developmental process. This phenomenon seems to be common in other studies with non-traditional students from practice-based programmes (Petersen, 2014; Taylor, 2007). If students see themselves as outside their research, how is their identity affected in their learning process?

Particular activities such as interaction with the research community shape identity (Baker & Lattuca, 2010; Castello et al., 2015), but the intention to remain in business will probably promote different activities and lead to a different identity. All students in the current study emphasized their interest in combining practice and theory, but they see themselves primarily as a practitioner. Diamond and Book's careers were already established, Dove and Sugar need the doctorate for recognition, but not as a researcher. A stronger focus on professional life promotes the development of an identity as an expert rather than as a researcher (Castello et al., 2015). This focus is further reflected by students' behaviour of not pursuing

many activities to engage with the broader research community in the form of publications and conference papers. Diamond engaged in none, Book attended just one large conference in the United States, also in part out of interest for his company. Dove published one article that helped him to find the means to continue his doctorate, but during the course, it was clear to him not following an academic career at this time. Only Sugar attended the doctoral colloquium several times to maintain contact with the community. Additionally, in terms of a different career intention, the restricted time available to part-time students plays a role in the limited activities that can be accessed in the research community.

Taylor (2007) states, instead of developing an academic identity, students from professional doctorates become 'researching professionals' where their learning experience also has an impact on their professional life. This is evident in Book's implementation of reflection meetings in his company and Sugar's development in terms of her thinking and approaches to knowledge creation. Applying critical thinking and reflection is also evident in their professional life by DBA students from Simpson and Sommer's (2014) study. This implies a notion of transformation or development of the manager identity must at least happen. Baker and Lattuca (2010) suggest future research should consider if, and when, professional identity changes during the course, as almost no previous research exists about the students' identity development as the result of pursuing a professional doctorate (Inouye & McAlpine, 2019).

Another aspect of learning is social interaction, where learning is the outcome of social structures and interaction (Inouye & McAlpine, 2019). This seems to be evident for all students in this study, where their engagement with peers in the taught phase and their cooperation with their supervisor, and, in Sugar's case, further contact with peers and academics, lead to learning and development. In addition, social support is essential to stay persistent (Sweitzer, 2009) and to negotiate and integrate different identities (Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2017), which is evident through the support of the students' partners. But as Inouye and McAlpine (2019) argue, a sociocultural approach alone does not present a complete understanding of identity development.

Inouye and McAlpine (2019) also draw attention to a socio-cognitive perspective where the connection to cognitive processes and learning emphasizes a subsequent change in identity within communities. The complex learning process required of part-time DBA students to move from the knowledge of "current good professional practice to working up a scholarly articulation of their applied knowledge at a deeper and broader level" (Malfroy & Yates, 2003, p. 127), also reflects the relevance of cognitive processes and learning.

This supports Watts' (2008) claim of the challenge students face in constantly switching from the mindset of a manager to the mindset of a scholar, but it should also be noted that there is first the prerequisite to create or develop such a scholar's mindset. Similarly, Simpson and Sommer (2016) call this "border-crossing" (p. 16). Border-crossing may imply 'travelling' from one world to the other – the person here does not change. Both Watts (2008) and Simpson and Sommer's (2016) terms correspond to the students' experiences in their initial study phase. It should also be noted, however, that the more the learning process advances, it can be assumed the more development of identity takes place, and this emphasizes the transformational component of a thesis in creating something new, moving beyond - not simply across. This accords more with the student experience described by Simpson and Sommer (2014) as "some form of metacognitive shift from problem-solving mindset to a more critical appreciation of different ways of knowing" (p.4). This kind of 'shift' reflects a developmental, or transformational aspect of thinking and gives evidence for transformative learning (Mezirow, 2018), where the manager identity will change or transform. Hay and Samra-Fredericks's (2016) concept of liminality reflect the transformational aspect as the practitioner-self does not only 'travel' from workplace to classroom context, but rather need to 'fix' the self during or after that travel through several strategies, which implies the requirement of transformation – of a damaged or threatened self. Hay and Samra-Fredericks' (2016) emphasise the need for identity work that is promoted by reflection and reflexivity when undertaking doctoral study (Davies et al., 2019; Farrell et al., 2018).

Students were encouraged to engage in reflective practice and discussion in action learning sets in this DBA programme. Nevertheless, those early formal elements

do not always seem to take root in every student's case. The reasons for this are multi-layered and could lie in the cohort dynamics, language issues, the way and manner of teaching, intrapersonal requirements of the student such as skills, understanding, presumptions, expectation, and culture. For example, Dove was the only one who did his master's study part-time in the UK and, in comparison to his fellow students, described already knowing British academic culture as a great benefit. In addition, 'critical reflection' does not seem to be a major element of students' previous studies in Germany. Engaging with such a new form of learning may require time (which managers often do not seem to have), especially when undertaken in a different language. A good balance of planning and structure (which managers usually are good at) could be a solution, especially when teamed with creative phases, where time does seem to not matter as much and thus allows space for deeper thinking and development.

Mezirow (2018) also claims that central to the initiation of a transformative process is the imagination of how things could be otherwise, which also emphasizes the importance of the ability to consider other possibilities or realities, which also takes time. Dove applied this strategy during his research development. His wife described this as follows, 'he usually thinks through several solutions and approaches until he identifies the most appropriate one'. Also, Dove's strategy to take the perspective of the examiner to understand their view to meet their requirements reflects this approach. This could explain why Dove was able to progress faster.

In terms of stress-related-growth (Aldwin & Levenson, 2004), Aldwin et al. (2007) stated that growth or development is not always transformational and can just increase competence. This implies that not every doctoral student will have a transformational experience, but increased competence can in turn change identity again (Aldwin et al., 2007). Nevertheless, identity development seems likely to happen in doctoral studies as scholarly writing and subsequent feedback provide the potential and opportunity to enhance thinking and development when students can value challenging and critical feedback. And even though role and identity conflicts involve struggle and can inhibit the learning and development process,

development and growth take place when those stressful experiences had been overcome (Aldwin et al., 2007) which students' stories show in this study.

To summarize, part-time DBA students must be considered as a non-traditional student group, where the social context (Inouye & McAlpine, 2019) and their different career intention influences the learning process and their identity development (Baker & Lattuca; 2010) which also requires identity work (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2005). Besides socialization, prior experience and the personal and professional context and career intentions, different knowledge and values influence the learning and development process of DBA students (Watts, 2009) - where critical events and barriers (Inouye & McAlpine, 2019) should be viewed as an opportunity for development. Critical reflection (Mezirow, 2018) on practitioner practice, which is central in the taught modules of the DBA of the University of Gloucestershire, provides practitioners and managers with an important opportunity to overcome role and identity conflicts and extend their previous knowledge and practitioner horizon in the form of scholarly thinking and writing.

As the results in the current study show that students still struggle, institutions and educators should set an even stronger focus to prepare for, and make students and supervisors aware of, the risk of role and identity conflicts. Perhaps an open and regular discussion about the "border crossing" experience (Simpson & Sommer, 2016) of business and academia could offer additional transparency in terms of the specific challenge of part-time DBA students.

5.1.2 Superordinate theme two: Balancing, negotiation and adaption

During the data analysis, it became apparent that the lived experience of part-time DBA students happens in a cyclic process, which is pervaded by recurring mechanisms. Learning and identity work is accompanied by several coping mechanisms. Students need to keep their balance by negotiating challenges and adapting to changes in their research, but also conditions outside their academic lifeworld.

A doctorate is a challenging endeavour (e.g. Bates & Goff, 2012; Byers, et al., 2014; Katz, 2016; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009; Pyhältö et al., 2012), where the

outcome is unclear (Devonport & Lane, 2014). Learning is the action that navigates through this unknown field. Besides the challenging task of learning itself, part-time students are faced with the challenge of balancing their multiple lifeworlds (e.g. Byers et al., 2014; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Thinnam, 2011), which, in turn, serves to assure research development. To move forward and to complete their doctorate, maintaining a degree of balance seems to be essential for the students in this study, which means demonstrating good functioning and well-being in their professional, private and study lives (Martinez et al., 2013) with a minimum of role conflicts (Clark, 2000).

The students' narrative in this study revealed a need to manage 'balance' in the form of negotiating challenges and adapting to changes. This evidences the existence of unexpected difficulties and changes in circumstances. Primarily, to keep or retain balance, the object of negotiation and adaption was 'available time for the doctorate' and 'support from significant others'. When students failed in their effort to find balance, pressure and stress arouse and students experienced imbalance that was reflected in the form of negative emotions, self-doubts and even physical stress reactions, which students' quotes below evidence.

In general, Sugar had difficulties in keeping a balance, which is most evident in her experience of her critical phase, her demanding work schedule in her professional life in general and her uncertainty. Her main coping mechanism to keep or retain balance is negotiation in all areas – in her professional life, her private life and academic life. She not only had to negotiate the allocation of a new supervisor as support at the very beginning, but she also negotiated unpaid leave with her boss to provide more time for the doctorate, she also had to agree on a schedule at weekends for her doctorate with her partner and the development of her approach to her research with her supervisors.

For the discussion about the change of supervisor with other university staff, she prepared herself and brought e-mails about communication history as evidence:

> Sugar final
> "I sat down in an armchair with her [staff member, programme leader] and gave her... showed her my memory protocol, I had meticulously prepared myself, I had a file folder under my arm! And then she immediately said 'yes!' according to the motto 'yes, it is ok!' She was very defensive and asked Harry [first supervisor] to join, somehow concerning the

finding of a topic, I also showed her what I have done, for which I had never received any comments..."

Her work schedule was a perennial obstacle during the entire doctoral journey. Her job was subject to peak times that necessitated a high workload with overtime. During these times, it was almost impossible for Sugar to work on her thesis. Sugar realized that she had to change things if she wanted to continue with her thesis. She negotiated with her boss to take unpaid time off outside peak times:

> Sugar initial
> "Then the decision matured within me, I must now somehow make progress and then I asked my boss if I can go part-time in summer..."

> Sugar follow up 1
> "I'm lucky with him [her manager], the predecessor would never have done it, but he does it! (...) in relation to that, he's relaxed and says... 'It is actually quite good, I also have an advantage, I'm saving for my department, so to speak a win-win situation... "

Sugar stated that her work-life balance is poor even without the doctorate:

> Sugar final
> "...basically, my work-life balance is not good even without a dissertation! I simply work too much for too little money!"

She experienced physical stress reactions, but attributed this to her stressful job, not the doctorate:

> Sugar initial
> "...and then I really sat there until late at night, (...) the result was that I had severe arthritis in my jaw because I just rattled my jaw when I'm stressed. I will now demonstratively wear a splint in the office (...) I said to the boss that's just... I have this hole in my cheek... where the ... cartilage was just bitten out', but for him..., he doesn't give a shit, just do the work..."

Confirmation and encouragement from her supervisors were essential for Sugar to deal with uncertainty. This produced contradictory emotions and made her balance fragile. On the one hand, she appreciated effective cooperation with her supervisors, on the other, she was afraid of their feedback on new ideas and decisions about changes in her approach and tended to panic easily.

> Sugar follow up 2
> "... I communicated this to Harry and Jim [supervisors], who were on holiday, of course, I sweated blood, how should I continue now, and then Harry wrote the sentence 'I will mull over that', I just thought 'don't think about it, I just want to do it'! I was a little anxious!"

She negotiated with her partner a timetable for the thesis at the weekends:

> Sugar follow up 2
> "...as I said..., I have also negotiated here at home that I will go on the weekend..., so at least Saturday, to the German library, I also said, do not punish me ... if I am not at home on Saturday, but we have to finish this thesis now! Yes, it's going quite well now..."

To keep the balance Book's focus was on the adaption of his schedule. His statement around being an 'optimist and realist' illustrates an inner conflict where it appears that his balance is compromised. This is underpinned by his wife's statement that he also always works during their holidays. Book did not need to negotiate much in the sense that he had to convince someone, but as the owner of a company, he has significant responsibility and needs to keep a balance. His approach is to plan efficiently.

> Book initial
> "... but the normal job runs...that's more like... (...) you look, where can you make something more efficient, delegate..."

To maintain his balance, he had to adapt his time goals several times until he discarded any aim for submission. The following extracts show this development and it is evident in the first interview that he had a time goal for submission. The adaption of time goals helped him to release, or avoid, pressure and to maintain mental and physical balance.

> Book initial
> "I'd like to hand it in next April so that it goes to... in a year... I want to be finished by then, well around June, July, August...depending on how it turns out now..."

Three months later, he emphasized the need for weighing up and to focus just on one lifeworld, but it is evident that his business has priority.

> Book follow up 1
> "...this is justifiable for me now, I always have to weigh up between... that's why it means part-time, I have to weigh up between business and between, let's say this 'pleasure', and sometimes you need to concentrate just on one thing..."
>
> "...I'm not building up any pressure right now, because I can't do that... because we've got some big projects coming up and, well, that's all good! But they bind my time, I can't pull myself out of it and say yes, now it's something else ..."

To release pressure, his time goal becomes increasingly irrelevant.

Book follow up 3

"...no, actually not (laugh), (...) whether that is finished in March or in April, that is honestly said... in the meantime... that has lost some of its significance, I have time anyway... because I don't have any pressure [to submit], at the moment I have a lot of business, we have a lot to do..."

Book final

"...temporally, ... I have now said goodbye to any temporal end, I will just see how it goes, and whether it will be next year in March or in June when I will submit, that's... I don't know!"

In his private lifeworld Book's thesis did not cause any conflicts and he did not need to negotiate, but rather had an arrangement with his wife:

Book initial

"...my wife also studied until six months ago, she comes from Poland, from Warsaw, and studied Spanish philology, she has now finished her bachelor's degree as well! Would say part-time, ... so we have. ...it's a kind of arrangement, where we say, ok, you do your stuff and I do mine, so I must say, it's all coming together well, it's not like... 'yes, you don't have time now'... I've never heard that... directly."

Book's wife even liked the idea that he is doing a doctorate:

Book's partner

"...that was somehow always clear, because, I have also finished my studies ... so somehow it was clear, no big deal that had to be discussed... he said he wanted to do it and I liked that idea, I wanted him to do it!"

In addition, his general working rhythm fits that of his family, where he can keep a balance in his private life.

Book follow up 1

"It does not hinder my actual daily routine, because my family are all late risers, I am an early riser..."

In terms of balance, his statements seemed contradictory in that he emphasizes that he can balance his work-study-life:

Book final

"...but I think that I ... especially when I'm at home now, I set it up that I have all the important aspects, you know, in balance, I also go for a walk with my daughter for half an hour, because... you get your head clear, it is something different... I think I have that relatively well under control..."

Whilst, on the other hand, the comparison of optimist and realist show an inner conflict where strain may exist.

> Book follow up 2
> "…the optimist says, get it done, just keep on going, that's the optimistic view… and the realist says, actually… you need some time off! but… the optimism outweighs… [laugh…]"

He plans to take time out or a holiday. Though, his wife commented that he is always working, even during their holiday:

> Book's partner
> "…he always says that he needs a vacation but then he does not do it, he kind of buys a book, he says, now I want something… some normal book for fun and just before holiday he always has to do so many things [laugh…] in the end, he does his doctorate or his work even on vacation…"

Dove had difficulties in keeping a balance, as his working habits in his doctorate tend to be extreme. He mentioned several times having experienced an "intensive time". He showed a reaction to imbalance. Nevertheless, in the end, this reaction leads to fundamental decisions about his professional life and, therefore, a straightforward submission after 3.5 years. His solution was the adaption of his professional life to his doctorate. Like Book, Dove did not have to negotiate with others. Most negotiation took place rather within himself. One could say – until the pain threshold was reached – when Dove actively tried to find a balance and adapt to, or change, the situation. He described it as a 'liberation stroke'.

> Dove final
> "…the DBA had just suffered and in the end, I was unhappy about it, because the quality was not as I imagined, … given that the job, again and again, continued to be very stressful and also the frustratingly long RD1 process… yes! It was like… that I recognized things cannot go on like this, I have to change something fundamentally! As a result, I did a kind of 'liberation stroke' and said okay, I'll take the initiative again, I won't let myself be pushed into a corner by anything but I will start acting again and one action was to reconsider the RD1 and to say I'm going to do it all over again and at the same time to say ok, and if I'm already starting it and doing it in a right way, then I'm also going to do what is important for me in my job and that's not stagnation, but further development, I was then back in the active role and I like that much better than any passive one…"

His wife described his working phases as extreme.

> Dove's partner:
> "…he always has such extreme phases, he does nothing for months, then he realises he has not done anything and then he does nothing else for weeks and is working in every free second to compensate for that again…"

He was not able to maintain physical compensation via sport and exercise and experienced back trouble.

> Dove initial
> "…what I really did very little of is sports, I never had back problems in my life I must say, but now I have it due to sitting so much, therefore, I really must do something again, but at that time… I just went running… and running is actually not what I like…. but for me, it was just easy …
>
> "So even when we lived in K. it was just one street away on foot…. really two minutes to the gym to work out or take part in any courses or something, but even to do that I was often too… too tired and there was no drive…"

Diamond is a senior manager, experienced in time management and had left nothing to chance. Even though unexpected circumstances occurred, she negotiated and adapted to keep her balance. She had most negotiations with her supervisors, which challenged her self-confidence and lead to despair. She tried to keep a balance with her husband during her writing breaks at the weekend or during holidays. She also experienced physical imbalance in the form of gastritis at the very end and needed to adapt her planned submission date.

Diamond's comments reflect her fights and discussions with her first supervisor commencing with the submission of the final research plan (RD1) and lasting throughout the entire writing process:

> Diamond initial
> "…in the beginning, we had a fight about the title in the RD1 because 13, how was it…? 13 words! That's when we argued if ECR (efficient consumer response) is one word or does it count as three? "
>
> "Exactly! we are now, Brenda [first supervisor] and I are now (…) [in agreement] about chapter 6 and only haggling over the last 18 pages! So now we have worked together through all the other chapters with much struggle (…) in a thousand circles!"
>
> "…or the other day, I was almost desperate, in the summer we were on Sylt, she suddenly came with a very grandiose (…) she [Brenda, first supervisor] said. 'Well, I've drawn it out again: Relationship, Manufacture, Wholesaler'… blah blah blah blah 'just to think about it…' and I looked at it … she suddenly came up with a completely different path! Where I thought: 'Brenda, I'll have to rewrite my entire thesis if I agree to this!… You must be out of your mind!' So I wrote back to her, commenting on why I see the world differently, that for me now it's not quite true. She really sat down and drew something! But then she gave in and said: 'Yes, no, okay, good. Sure, it was just a 'thought game' you could start like that.' I said, 'No! I'm not going to start at Chapter 1 again'!"
>
> Diamond final
> "…after we had our debates, she [Brenda, first supervisor] has also changed in the sense

that if you gave her a good argument why you did it this way, she accepted it, so she didn't insist on her points, but also said 'yes, okay good, if you see it that way... 'in that sense, we actually got into a very good mode afterwards, that we have certainly discussed things we saw differently, but looked to see how we can come to a common understanding because it was important to me that she would also check that off and say 'yes, I can also support that now'. That was especially important for me when we submitted the thesis, that both she and Judy [second supervisor] say, 'yes, ok, we can fully endorse that'."

In the very end, Diamond had to deal with the pressure of new compliance regulations in her company that restricted the use of company data for her thesis and required her to keep her research confidential and finish as soon as possible. She had to negotiate this with a colleague. Her supervisor confirmed this situation.

Diamond's supervisor
"...an added problem for the thesis itself was, that she couldn't use direct quotes, so all the data is in a safe with a legal department so she couldn't, you know what you would expect of a qualitative piece of work, she couldn't do, so she always had to agree with us as supervisors how much... and we said well, you know you have to work within what the company allows you to do, and she had to balance that and had to chat to her legal guy every now and again..."

Besides her time management, Diamond had in the last year of her doctorate to deal with an extremely high workload.

Diamond final
"...we also had entrepreneurial change here in the last year ... the requirement in the job has become extremely high again due to new topics here, with a lot of effort, also the whole America journeys [travelling back and forth]..., and to create balance in such a way..., (...) thus I would say now ... in the last year, of course, the double load [work and doctorate] was again extremely high..."

In general, she had almost no leisure time because she needed the weekends and holidays for the doctorate.

Diamond initial
"In this respect, my main focus is actually Saturday and Sunday and I almost have exclusively invested my vacations in the last two years for it [her research]! So, we only once took a holiday apartment on Sylt, where we said, well, 3 hours cycling and afterwards I sit down again, ah, that was the only solution there!"

Her compensation from work was cooking and running.

Diamond initial
"Yes, well, cooking is certainly my balance. I'm not a chef, but that's relaxation for me on weekends ... just cooking and thinking about something completely different!"

"So, I try ... in the evening I go for a run when I am here [second flat where she works], that for me is a way to put down the rest of day... actually for me, it's the best method because I can just think things through again..."

Discussion

"Balancing" multiple roles and demands are described in the previous literature as a common challenge for doctoral students, especially those who are part-time (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012). It appears that Book and Diamond are used to balancing multiple roles where their professional life is central, and the doctorate must be adapted to the time available outside their work. They see their doctorate as a hobby for which they forgo personal time. In general, hardly any role conflict seems to exist as their lifeworlds are clearly defined and organized and social support is provided.

Role conflict exists when meeting one demand can make it difficult to meet the demands of other roles (Kahn et al., 1964). Book avoided any role conflict when he adapted the time goals of his thesis. Diamond appears only to encounter role conflict when her professional life required her to finish quickly, but she needed time to develop her dissertation to fulfil doctoral-level expectations. One could also argue that deciding to undertake a part-time doctorate as a full-time manager requires full consideration of the compatibility of work and study in advance to ensure the demands of both can be fulfilled. On the other hand, students' narratives show that most students underestimate the amount of work that goes along with a doctorate. Even if Diamond and Book had, in general, their lifeworlds thoughtfully aligned with each other, unexpected changes like Book's increased workload or Diamond's pressure at the end of her doctoral research could not be avoided. However, both students showed the ability to manage the situation and regain balance.

Dove, in comparison, adapted his professional life to his doctorate to resolve an experienced role conflict, which illustrates how the doctoral journey can influence decisions surrounding personal life (Mason et al., 2009). As the youngest participant, he seemed less experienced in time management and at some points appeared to struggle to balance his lifeworlds and focused just on one.

Nevertheless, he showed the ability to find a solution by taking fundamental decisions. It can be argued that being "younger" he was more open to the possibility of fundamental life changes, as he was at the beginning of his career, in his first management position and his life was less settled. Equally, he may have also been more open to new ways of thinking, especially academic thinking, as he had completed his masters relatively recently in the UK. In comparison to Book and Diamond, he seemed to have no difficulties in swiftly acquiring and developing scholarly thinking commensurate with doctoral-level study. His submission after 3.5 years evidences this. His "intensive" working phases may also favour this. Book and Diamond did not report any such intensive working phases. Even if they had continuity in their schedule to maintain the process, short working units could perhaps fragment mental creativity. Consequently, this could lead to difficulties and a greater challenge in switching from one mindset to another (Watts, 2008), even though in Book's and Diamond's case this was not mentioned explicitly.

Sugar experienced several fundamental changes of circumstances that conflicted with the doctorate. Principally she experienced the burden of a demanding work life where she had little control, which lead to role conflict between her professional life and doctorate. This was not foreseeable as Sugar started her doctorate in a job role where it was possible to effectively combine part-time study. Through organizational changes, she was forced to apply for another job. Issues then persisted until she realized she needed to effect change. By taking unpaid leave, Sugar created space to move forward, though she sacrificed 2-3 months' earnings to do so. Sugar seemed to experience the greatest challenge in balancing her lifeworlds during her doctorate and where negotiation seems to be central to gaining control (Medhurst, 2008).

As research on work-life balance states, keeping or retaining control is essential to maintaining balance (Adkins & Premeaux, 2019; Karkoulian et al., 2016; Michel et al., 2011) to move forward with the doctorate (Grover, 2007). One can assume that the students would not have started a doctorate if they were not convinced that they have the ability (internal locus of control or self-efficacy) to do a doctorate (Bandura, 1997). Even if they occasionally lost control, they showed their internal locus of control in the form of appropriate coping behaviour (even if changes of

circumstances were precipitated externally).

Maintaining Martinez et al.'s (2013) results, students apply coping behaviour such as managing their time by receiving social support (Bates & Gof, 2012; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Martinez et al., 2013), making trade-offs (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012) and maintaining their well-being. Managing time and receiving social support seems central in the lived experience of the student in this study which is further discussed in the sections that address themes four and six. Trade-offs are mentioned casually and appear of little concern and to be a matter of course when deciding to undertake a part-time doctorate. Trade-offs are reported by Diamond, Dove and Sugar in reduced social contacts and activities outside job and doctorate. Book in comparison reported no trade-offs as most of his social contact happens in his professional life. As the owner of a company, his professional life seems to be central and accepted by his family. Only his partner reported that his new born daughter might suffer from less time with her father.

Maintaining well-being by taking personal time and maintaining mental and physical health was not a major concern or topic during the interviews in this study. But when asking about leisure time and compensation Book discussed undertaking exercise at home or going for a walk with his wife and daughter, Sugar emphasized feeling healthier during her UK visits when walking from the hotel to the university and having a holiday in Spain at Christmas. Diamond mentioned running during the week and at weekends and making a weekend trip with her husband, Dove also went walking with his wife and watched television series as a common compensation ritual.

One can assume that a certain level of well-being must be present to complete a doctorate. If this is out of balance, students show several coping mechanisms to retain, or regain, their well-being (Adkins & Premeaux, 2019). Nevertheless, balancing their well-being seems to be an accepted concern for the students in this study and not a focus of an active coping effort. It can be seen as an underlying component that is part of life in general, independent of their doctorate. In addition, even if the experience of strain and burden has occurred, all students showed

satisfaction and pleasure in doing a doctorate, which also contributes to their well-being.

In conclusion, several components are important for balance. The most important factor to maintain balance in the lived experience of the doctoral students in this study seems to be social support (Bates & Gof, 2012; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012; Lowe & Gayle, 2007; Medhurst, 2008), especially when balancing intense emotions. It is debatable if successful completion is possible without such social support. Dove's, Sugar's and Diamond's partners and the entire family in Book's case, seem to give them the required stability and strength to persist.

Literature that reports significant conflicts in balancing multiple roles often refers to women with family commitments (Stimpson & Filer, 2011; Thinnam, 2011). Those students report internal battles where they are often forced to choose one role over the other (Stimpson & Filer, 2011). The experience of the students in this study seems to be different, which may be because three of the students have no children. Also, Book reported no internal battles and described time with his family as compensation for work. This can be explained because three of his children are older and need less care, and there is a clear division of roles where his new born daughter is mainly taken care of by his wife.

5.1.3 Superordinate theme three: Managing emotional fluctuations

Experienced stress can affect emotional well-being and, therefore, can impair academic performance (Hyun et al., 2006). This statement identifies the significance of emotions and that these need to be effectively considered. The narratives in this study evidence how the doctoral experience is pervaded by emotional fluctuations and the need to deal with such emotions. All students experienced significant negative emotions at some point, which can be described as a "rollercoaster of confidence and emotions" (Christie et al., 2008, p. 567).

Sugar's doctoral experience is accompanied by strong emotions of uncertainty, anxiety and panic, where significant others help her to calm down. In her critical phase, she was angry with her supervisor and afterwards angry with herself. She describes the situation in her 'critical phase' when she had problems with her first

supervisor. Emotions developed from uncertainty, anxiety and panic about her rejected research plan until anger that her supervisor had not taken action to help her surfaced.

> Sugar final
> "In retrospect, I feel uncanny rage, at that time I have again, yes, this typical German shitty fear of authorities! Somehow according to the motto 'oh no, I mustn't upset her [supervisor], I have to manage it, it's up to me', the one who gave the impulse for the change that was Walter [peer]!"

Sugar also describes her feelings when her demanding work schedule in her professional life prevented her from working on the doctorate. In response to the question when she had realized this was the situation, she replied:

> Sugar final
>
> Student: "Hm, you notice that relatively quickly! But you suppress it! I thought, well it's going to work somehow!? But I noticed (...) oh again, I haven't done anything, but anyway, but things will sort out somehow, that's just... man is master of suppression, isn't he!"
>
> Interviewer: "And how would you describe that feeling?"
>
> Student: "Stupid, so stupid! You have always a bad conscience, always pangs of conscience but you keep on going anyway! That is again such helplessness! These phases were completely marked by total helplessness!"

In the later stage, Sugar had to develop her methodological approach and struggled to do so. This happened through a longer process where she experienced panic and sleepless nights. She consulted her partner.

> Sugar follow up 2
> ".... at that time I had been overoptimistic, I wanted to analyse all newspapers qualitatively with Thematic Analysis... I started and have .... the tip gave me Frank [her partner], he said, look how many articles you can do in an hour, then you can calculate how far you will get, exactly! (...) I got panicked! I panicked. Of course, it took ages.!"
>
> "...but as I said, to get back to it, I considered my average time and panicked, I said I couldn't do it! I noticed, I was still too broadly based, thematically because a) my database is too big and b) what do I do with it? ... the famous time of sleepless nights started again..."

Sugar then again became angry at herself:

> Sugar follow up 2
> "I had to come through it first! ... but you shouldn't look back and say, 'ahh it was so bad' and sit there with a 'crooked back' [German idiom]... you just have to say 'it's good, I

needed the time'... but it is very difficult to control your anger towards yourself!"

"So, as I said, the fear was... it was already ugly! I have had many sleepless nights..."

"...including the worry, I had about the supervisors... not anxiety, but somehow like 'oh, now I'm going to mess it up, again', and like I said, they were so nice and also said now it looks really coherent, and for the first time 'ok, off you go'!"

Sugar's partner confirmed that she tends to uncertainty and worries.

Sugar's partner
"...it often leads to insecurity or a kind of fear reflex where I say: 'Here come on, it's nonsense, what's that for? It's okay'."

In comparison when reaching milestones, feelings of success or finding a solution led to enlightening moments and optimism.

Sugar follow up 3
"...I continued to work on it and I have to say, I really have created a data analysis model, I'm quite proud of it, I really have made a diagram of how the data primarily looks, I will continue to sort it a bit more..."

Sugar final
"...I opened the email, that was on 14th or 13th of March, there it said 'we are pleased to inform you that your RD1 has passed!' I stood there 'now nothing can shake me anymore! nothing!' I was kind of high at that moment! I said, 'yes! Now you can continue'..."

Book's main experienced emotion is anger about his first supervisor's feedback.

Book initial
"...at the first point... it teases me... it annoys me because I always think 'did he even read it'."

Book follow up 3
"Yes, I was annoyed! I mean, I'm also annoyed now! Because I mean, I have produced 250,000 words in a different form, but that doesn't help at all!"

His colleague confirmed this.

Book's colleague
"...when he says 'Boah, my supervisor has again ... I get handwritten comments back, I can't see it anymore'!"

Book's partner
"(laugh), yes! ...sometimes he gets angry when he hears he has to write something more... and other times ... he should write a little bit less or something like that...(laugh) but otherwise he never said that any supervisor is bad or something like that, it was not like that..."

Dove mainly experienced emotions of dissatisfaction and guilt during his doctoral journey and at the very end of disappointment.

> Dove initial
> "...the problem is just ... even though you do nothing you always have it in mind, you feel bad, you actually have a kind of pressure, that's like ... you know, you expect visitors or something, but the apartment looks like a bunch of [crap]... ah...and you just have this bad conscience...that's what I have carried around with me all the time, but I didn't really have a solution..."
>
> "...it was probably a certain form of disappointment... at that time I thought... how much do I have to invest, it was not so much in the end, but after this *viva* it seems like this..., where you have really put everything on the table but have spoken not about the professional issues, but only about the methodology! I had to take a step back for a while!"

Like Book, Diamond also experienced strong emotions such as anger and frustration when receiving feedback from her first supervisor. Panic arose in the end through the confidentiality issue raised by her company and the challenge to provide transparency about her data in her thesis given these demands.

> Diamond final
> "... 'Confidentiality' that [issue] was really stressful for me, because you really had to look at it, here the panic arouses and I thought 'oh my God! If you have to lay the cards on the table, how will the company react given the new board?' That, I think I could have saved me some trouble by showing up right at the beginning [when the new board was appointed], I could have said, listen, that's the way it is..."
>
> "...there was certainly already a bit of panic or desperation 'oh God! How do you put it all together without being dishonest with the examiner', to submit something and say 'hurray, that's the original document'..."
>
> Diamond follow up 1
> "Well, my better half used to hear me swearing at home when that 'thing' came up with Brenda's [first supervisor] comments..."
>
> Diamond's partner
> "Yes, well, it was always frustrating when she talked to Brenda [first supervisor] or gets the comments back, yes, there are 150 comments on it, or 200 comments,... of course, that's always a point, when I see something like that I look at the bottom - 200! But of the 200 maybe only 50 or less were relevant because with the others she just had to use a different word, or something else, but first came this frustration!"

Discussion

The students' experiences in this study reflect emotions based on the historical and social context (Lupton, 1998). The influence of students' successful experiences of being a manager (historical context) and their daily experience of their professional life, alongside commitments to a partner or a family (social context), seem to influence the emotions in the students' learning experience, especially when unexpected situations and stagnation in their learning progress occur. In addition, Cotteral (2013) points out that emotions are linked to appraisals, which correspond with the transactional model by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), where emotions arise through the appraisal of the context (situation and personal resources) and relate to an experienced stressor that a student needs to cope with.

The highly negative emotions experienced by all students arose mainly through the appraisal of an outcome that was perceived as unsatisfactory and related to an intended goal during their doctorate, e.g. Sugar and Dove's rejected research plans or supervisor feedback for Diamond and Book. Book and Diamond's supervisor feedback may have triggered the appraisal of diminution and failure and questioning their ability, which then leads first to anger as a defensive attitude (Aldwin et al., 2007; Freud, 1966) to reduce anxiety. Presumably, such appraisal is benchmarked by Diamond and Book against their previous experience as successful managers (historical context) and their business (context), even though the feedback was received in the educational sphere.

As in the previous section, here, the students do not seem to have internalized an educational perspective, which sees learning as a process where doctoral students at some points inhabit the role of a novice who first needs to develop expertise, which takes time. This emphasizes the complexity of emotions that strongly relates to appraisal in a specific context. A student in another context would develop distinct kinds of emotions as a response to feedback. Sugar for example, who has a different personality, career background and has no significant personnel responsibility, would probably be increasingly angry with herself, and display the desire to work even harder to create better quality in her work. Nevertheless, Cotteral (2013) has confirmed that writing practice and supervision are typical sources of tension, which lead to negative emotions.

Social contacts play a significant role in coping with negative emotions (Devonport & Lane, 2014; Hopwood et al., 2011). This is evident in the coping behaviour of all students when talking to their partner or others, especially in Diamond's and Book's experiences of anger. Book and Diamond regulate their emotional (physiological) response of anger by talking to their partner (Evans, 2015) who calms them down and tries to help them see the feedback more rationally. Evans (2015) calls this a 'response-focused strategy'. In comparison, 'antecedent strategies' in emotion regulation are most often applied in the early stage of emotional response, such as suppression (Evans, 2015), which is confirmed in other studies (Herman, 2010; Manathunga, 2005) as a typical coping strategy of doctoral students for unpleasant emotions, such as guilt. This was also evident in Dove's and Sugar's experience about their inactivity. Guilt can be interpreted as a more unconscious, or latent, emotion that does not lead to, or requires, the application of a prompt active strategy, whereas anger seems to be a more acute emotion that necessitates action. In addition, Sugar responded to emotions such as uncertainty and anxiety with suppression. The initial salience of Sugar's emotions about the failure of supervisor communication reflects suppression. It also illustrates a further contextual component – the power relationship between student and supervisor. Sugar admitted that respect towards her supervisor prevented her from talking to someone at an earlier stage, which also reflects Cotteral's (2013) findings and the relevance of context.

Sugar's entire doctoral experience also reflects continuous uncertainty that is identified by Devonport and Lane (2014) as a key doctoral emotion and stressor and is confirmed through other research (Lovitts, 2002; Pychyl & Little, 1998). Also, Book described lasting uncertainty about the quality of his work until supervisor feedback was received. Diamond experienced uncertainty about her ability due to the supervisor's feedback and Dove reported great uncertainty at the beginning until he published his first article.

To deal with such emotions, besides the sense of achievement that produces positive emotions and maintains motivation to continue (McCormack, 2009), Russell-Pinson and Harris (2019) found that coping strategies – such as social connectedness, positive thinking, physical health behaviours, and adaptive life

skills – also contributed to emotional well-being, which in turn maintains persistence in doctoral studies. This is also evident in Sugar's networking activities, in the optimistic view and goal adaption of Book, in Diamond's running practice and in Dove's fundamental life decisions.

In conclusion, doctoral study is accompanied by several emotions where guilt about inactivity and uncertainty in the research process are identified as typical in the literature (e.g. Devonport & Lane, 2014; Herman, 2010; Lovitts, 2002; Manathunga, 2005) and are also evident in the experience of the students in this study. Negative emotions often produced by supervision (Cotteral, 2013) were experienced by Sugar in the initial stage through uncertainty and anxiety and as anger by Diamond and Book in the writing process. Dove, in comparison, experienced inspiration and motivation from his supervisors' responses. Those experienced differences reflect the complexity of emotions depending on the individual's context, historical and social setting. Emotions are part of lived experience and it is hard to avoid those in some negative form.

That also foregrounds the importance of coping mechanisms to deal with negative emotions and to enable research progress. All students show this ability where social support seems to play a vital role (Devonport & Lane, 2014; Hopwood et al., 2011). As an "integral part of learning" emotions can have a negative but also a positive effect, in the form of effective information processing (Gläser-Zikuda et al., 2005), knowledge acquisition (Pekrun, 2005) and generation of ideas and strategies (Madrazo & Motz, 2005). This emphasizes the potential of coping that promotes and creates positive emotions, for example through social support from family and study groups, discussion with others, physical exercise, mental training, and other strategies that support well-being.

5.1.4 Superordinate theme four: Relying on significant others

Previous literature emphasizes the importance of social support in doctoral education (e.g. Ali & Kohun, 2006; Byers et al., 2014; Deem & Brehony 2000; Delamont et al. 1997; Janta et al., 2014) where socialization (e.g. Gardner, 2008; Pervan et al., 2016; Weidman et al., 2001) also contributes in the form of important social contacts. While social support can also come from outside the university,

such as from professional colleagues or a partner in their private life, socialization equally happens within the university or academic context and can additionally provide significant others in the context of the students' doctoral study. The students in this study experienced significant others as crucial for the success of their doctoral experience. Those significant others provide emotional and organizational support, e.g. through family and friends or scholarly expertise from supervisors, and some had subject-related discussions with colleagues from their professional life. Students differ however in their social networking behaviour. They also experience contradictory practices when problems in their relationship with those significant others arise or change. The most significant others in this study are identified as the partner and the supervisor.

The partner

Previous studies confirm the support partners provide (e.g. Medhurst, 2008; Schuller et al., 1999) and all partners in this study offered both practical support and emotional support in particular.

Even though Sugar's partner was against the doctorate at the very beginning, a development could be recognised. In the later stage, he became increasingly involved in the research project through discussions about time management. As a project manager, he could contribute his experience and knowledge from his job. Through this involvement, Sugar's doctorate developed into a "we-project" where her partner saw himself in the role of a coach and trainer, cheering Sugar to write a specific number of pages in a predetermined time.

> Sugar final
> "Frank [partner] said, ... we're going to do it like in those American films in the seventies, I'm a coach now, I'm going to get my clipboard, but I don't have a whistle and we'll write down how much you can do every day! You are now experiencing another monitoring process, your frustration is taking over, and so is mine by the way! So Frank took over the task, which Kerstin [peer] should have done, he triggered me, and how! It worked out so well that I wrote 26 pages in the last six days (...) Yes! And we keep on doing that, he always comes in with the pen (...) and grins, I mean you know him, he is really nice and says 'well, well, and how are you? How much...?' It was a lot of work, I know that all this needs to be revised, but it worked now, at least! And then he says, 'Keep going! So now you have... in spring you'll make it, then you'll have the literature review ready, just write two pages every night, you can do that'!"

As a significant person in Book's doctoral experience, Book's wife gives emotional support and specifically helps Book to deal with his anger:

Book final
"…I think that my wife plays an important role here! Because she is,… the one who is confronted with it first (laugh) and she does it very well! She has a very empathic way of directing it, in a good way, let's say, that's the one, the aspect … a supporting function, as far as the emotional side is concerned … but otherwise I wouldn't have anyone where I say 'I need to talk to now'…"

Dove's wife was his place of retreat. She gave not only emotional support but also encouraged him to work on the thesis and supported him in organizational matters. In his critical phase, Dove's wife also challenged him to act and to decide if to continue or not.

Dove initial
"…it was actually the phase between the last module and until the RD1 has been approved, so until actually January and almost the entire year before when my wife noticed I don't do anything about it (…), she also used to tell me that 'either you finish it now or you leave it, because it has no purpose ….' and yes the problem is just … although you do not do anything you always have it in mind, you feel (…) yes, you feel bad, you actually have the pressure…"

Diamond's partner was critical for her success. He was of great support not only emotionally but also in organizational issues. He managed their private life, calmed her down in frustrating moments and even helped her with formatting or creating diagrams.

Diamond final
"Yes, I'd say it was certainly a great challenge, but on the other hand, of course, this also creates an even stronger bond!… I would not have been able to do this if I had not had his [partner] support…"

Diamond initial
"…by simply taking a lot of the day-to-day life completely off my hands!! … because just to say… if you live in two worlds and must also organize everything privately [she has a second flat in another city where she works], bank issues or something like that, he did it all! He's the main coordinator from home, who takes care that everything is organized, and even in the meantime himself gives a hand with the research…"

"Yes, he compensates well of course! He was always the one who, when I scolded or really threw the things into the corner, who actually brought me down again and again and he always said 'do you really want to be shown up by such… ' How did he always say it nicely? '…by such an aunt?' He also said 'Okay, this is also their systematic way of thinking

and working, it just doesn't fit into your business world! That was always good, he actually always led me back there again…"

"Well, I am actually not the sort who gives up in any way, but it's still always quite good…, so he really did so much on it [the research]! …He picked up books, all the copies I made from the books…, he always went dutifully to the copy centre with the books and did it well, so that I had time for other things again. So, in that respect, it was a really good backup service!"

The supervisor

The students' narratives in this study illustrate the significant role of the supervisor (as does other research e.g. Ali et al., 2016; Cornér et al., 2017), but also reflect different experiences in this relationship, both positive and negative. Ambiguous situations, different expectations (e.g. Hockey, 1996; Orellana et al., 2016), but also critical feedback, can cause stress (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002), which is evident in Diamond's and Book's experiences.

Sugar also experienced this at the beginning. After Sugar's 'lost year' and the allocation of a new supervisory team, the cooperation and relationship with her new team went well and Sugar felt supported and assured:

> Sugar initial
> "…I virtually fell around the neck of my supervisors, Harry [first supervisor] also said to me when he will be in Germany the next time (…) there, he gave me the first hint, how I could approach the data, but at that time I was still undecided, we just went out for a nice dinner, I had the feeling, they take care of me and somehow I'm not completely alone with my questions… he has a reaction time of 1 hour! That's top! That's great, that's business level, but not just 'business clown', but yes, great!"

> "…we really established clusters yesterday…yesterday was a milestone! But like I said, thanks also to those two! to those super supervisors!… (…) it stands and falls with supervision and time! (…) I can tell you!"

The most significant person for the progress of Book's thesis was his second supervisor, given the communication problems with his first supervisor. He described received feedback and the communication with his first supervisor as often being vague and not clear.

> Book final
> "Bryan [first supervisor] just gives feedback more, more like this, more on the meta-level (…) as an example, he reads a sentence and says 'yes, but if you connect it again with the learning approach…' or something like that, then somehow…, it's always very big and

flowery, ... if you look at it from a distance, it's really valuable, if you only have 5000 sentences and every third one contains such an aspect ... where I say 'now I have to think about it for the next three years'. ... how do you get it all in, that's just hard! Yes, from the pragmatic side!"

Here time again comes into play. Book's description suggests his impatience and that things would take too long if he reflected on all the issues his supervisor wants him to address. Book instead wishes for clear pragmatic statements that detail what his supervisor wants him to do, which perhaps accords more with approaches typical in business and implies his desire to speed up. That becomes clear again in the following:

> Book follow up 3
> "Yeah, it is just... I probably can't cope with the way he [first supervisor] is, I just can't cope with it, because I just need, I need... he has to tell me clearly what is and what is not... Such veiled criticism I can't have that. That's... yeah 'you have to reflect about it and who says and who doesn't say that...' well he might have meant it positively but he always criticizes everything, so I can write whatever I want, I always got a note on it 'who says and who says not' where I say, yeah well, but... if I write you an email, I don't add a reference list because... I explain a few things to him, and ... I have also the feeling that he just..., I don't know if he reads my stuff, but he does, he just gives the impression that he doesn't understand it..."

He, evidently, recognizes and describes the communication as going in circles, which lead to self-doubt and insecurity. Again, he emphasizes the need for clarity and tries to find an explanation for the behaviour of his first supervisor – but also shows doubts about his supervisor's engagement and subject expertise. His first supervisor also seems to note elements of reservation about their relationship and describes it as follows:

> Book's first supervisor
> "I would describe our relationship as professional but quite remote. Because he's not really interested in hearing what other people might be saying, he *absolutely* knows what this is about; he has already got the answer."
>
> "...the whole point of being a researcher is, that there is no answer, you'll never know it, that's not Book! That is not Book! There is gonna be an answer and he already knows it."

An emotional subtone can be recognized that also reflects anger from the supervisor.

In comparison, the cooperation with his second supervisor went well, and Book feels the feedback is the kind that he needs, but there are gaps in their

communication that also lead to insecurity.

Book describes the cooperation as purposeful, which reflects the end goal and the intention of moving forward. Still, conversely, he describes his positive feeling as being linked to the 'moment', which reflects a level of fragility and suggests an earlier absence of this positive state and development.

Even if ideas also seem to differ between Book and his second supervisor, and Book had to write his literature review chapter for the third time, he can accept the feedback and trust in the expertise of the second supervisor to know the requirements and what is expected from him. He has found clarity in the communication with the second supervisor, which he misses in exchanges with his first supervisor. The experience of 'moving forward' may also serve to assure the expertise of the second supervisor.

Book's experience reflects how strongly he depends on the judgement of his supervisors as a point of orientation and when he experiences uncertainty.

benchmark…"

Dove maintained almost no contact with peers or staff members besides his supervisors. He never met his supervisors face-to-face and stayed in touch via e-mail and Skype. Nevertheless, he described the relationship and cooperation as working 'very well'. Especially with his first supervisor – which he saw as significant to his doctoral experience, as the supervisor communicated in the way Dove needed. Dove cited his wife and his first supervisor as the most important people, especially in his critical phase:

> Dove final
> "Yes, many, of course, my wife in front away, but also Tom [first supervisor] who just has… in this situation, where I have written this article, I think we have met every three or four days over Skype, he devoted a lot of time to me during that time although he probably wouldn't have had to do it so in the intensity or something like that, but he was also happy about the activity and about the fact that I wanted to do it again and he supported me a lot, yes, as I said, my wife who was also very positive about it and those were the important people."

He described his relationship and cooperation with his first supervisor as positive and that the supervisor displayed the mentality that Dove needed:

> Dove final
> "Tom [first supervisor] is, has a mentality, such an easy mentality, it was always incredibly nice and good to talk to him, I was looking forward to it! So, it was just always a positive atmosphere and he tried little to tell me what was right or wrong! Because, it's just difficult in terms of content, but he helped me a lot to think about things, to sharpen my statements, and simply to encourage me, to make things even better! And he didn't do that in a dogmatic way but I would almost say as a 'buddy',… he definitely did a very, very good job! For my personality, I think that was exactly the right way!"

In contrast, the relationship with Diamond's first supervisor was challenging and led to contradictory emotions. Nevertheless, her first supervisor was critical for her successful completion. Although Diamond experienced a critical point where she considered ceasing her studies because of her first supervisor's feedback and the request to rework her writing.

> Diamond initial
> "… I really asked her [Brenda, first supervisor] the most important question, and then I said 'ok, what do you want to tell me with your emails and your comments?' Judy [second supervisor] says 'fine', and you're putting in hundreds of comments, let's have an open

discussion and if you say 'hey, she can't do that', I had better stop now! We both don't have to put ourselves through this stress!'"

Nevertheless, over time, Diamond appreciated the value of her first supervisor. As with Book and Dove, Diamond never met her supervisor face-to-face, but created mutual understanding via phone conversations and email to support productive cooperation:

> Diamond follow up 1
> "…what's good with her [first supervisor]… is really, … I found a mode with her, even if we really only - which is a challenge - only work with each other online or make phone calls. And I think at first, that's extremely difficult if you don't know each other personally at all! But I really have to say that I found a great way of working with her, I can implement her comments well, she says that herself, she is always very enthusiastic that I can implement what she means, she has a way of telling you what she would like to have changed, ok, sometimes she also changes her opinion, which makes it a bit more complicated, because you do it 5 times, but that's another story. … but she's really… if she takes up the points that need to be changed, she is excellent at communicating what needs to be changed, she really has a good way of doing that!

Occasionally significant others

Sugar, in particular, demonstrated an effort to socially network and seek social support. She not only showed significant endeavour in maintaining the relationship between faculty members and her supervisors but also between peers from her and other cohorts. Several significant others made an important contribution during Sugar's doctoral experience. Depending on the phase, the help of one person or another was more significant. For example, a student from an advanced cohort was a significant help in supporting occasional reflection and motivation during the entire course. Also, the help of staff members was significant in specific situations, such as the allocation of a new supervisor. Sugar repeated her gratitude for the support of those significant others:

> Sugar initial
> "…at that time I came to you in Munich, where two very valuable contacts developed, one to Christian and one to Kerstin [both peers]…"
>
> "…there is Kerstin [peer]! As a former fellow student who has already finished… let's say, as a motivator but also as a reflector! (…) so that you really find someone who is on the same trip as I am. I am also very good friends with Walter, [peer] but we have a) too different topics, he is also a man who simply functions differently (…) we meet regularly,

also quite good to encourage each other, but Kerstin is really as good as gold, on a personal level and more, and she also said that she would make contact people [potential interview partners], she is really supportive, she is a Godsend!"

Sugar was also grateful for the support she received from other staff members, for example, the librarian:

> Sugar follow up 2
> "I also spend a day or 2 hours with Hannah [librarian] and, yes that was again also so illustrative, as I said before, I was well prepared in advance. I told her what I wanted to do, and she had already sent me things and we sat there and she said, I think your main theory topic is corporate governance, and the scales fell from my eyes, that's it! and I didn't get it and I searched and searched, and searched... Yes, she's also an angel in human form. She does everything and... so you can only recommend everyone, to go to England!"

Even though Book started the DBA together with his two business partners, later he was the only one left and maintained no further contact with other peers or staff members, besides his supervisors. Only one of his business partners and a cooperation partner from his company were occasionally seen as valuable discussion partners outside those from the University, but more in a general sense.

> Book initial
> "I work together with Prof. Maier from the University of Mainz., he has a chair in HR and leadership, his PhD student is doing his doctorate here (in our company) ... just started... I am also in exchange with him... as psychologists, they are quantitatively oriented, you can also get ideas there..."

Discussions with one of his business partners happened sporadically to support reflection about his first supervisor's feedback, but these conversations were more related to themes relevant for the company.

> Book initial
> "I'm already discussing this, yes... also with Georg or with Herbert [colleagues], with Herbert may be less now, he is further away [from the topic], but Georg is relatively close to it because ... [for example] I got another email [from my supervisor]and that was again [difficult]... I do not engage with Georg socially like 'today I really feel bad', but simply to support the reflective element, because he can say, 'yes, he's right', or 'better look again at what he means by that', or... 'yes, I can understand'... that can be helpful..."

For Dove a former boss was also occasionally a valuable discussion partner in relation to the subject of his thesis:

> Dove initial
> "...however, in the professional context there... a former boss of mine, with whom I still in

contact with, with whom I have also exchanged ideas from time to time..."

Nevertheless, Dove's wife said that he mentioned several times that he had nobody to talk to about his subject, suggesting some variability in perspective:

> Dove's partner
> "...because he often had said that, he actually had no one to whom he could talk to in terms of content..."

In the very beginning, during the taught phase, Diamond maintained intensive contact with several cohort peers to support discussion, information exchange and technical support. Those peers were significant for Diamond at that time. Due to her demanding professional life, those contacts decreased in the later stage to just one peer, until even that contact was slowly lost. That one peer was seen as a sparring partner for motivation.

> Diamond final
> "...but actually, I have to say, it was actually quite intense until the RD1 [contact with one peer] and even after that in the first phases where you always motivated each other a little bit and just had a good feeling 'my God, you are not alone as an idiot'...."

Discussion

The relation between significant others

As the student narratives above show, a good support system and in particular significant others as part of it, are important success factors in doctoral studies and help students to cope with, or prevent, stress (e.g. Cornér et al., 2017; Peltonen et al., 2017). It appears that for the students in this study, the supervisor and their partner are the most important 'significant others' throughout the entire doctoral journey, where their support seems to be complementary, or they depend mutually on each other. Dove's experience reflects a complementary relationship where he received scholarly advice from his supervisor and emotional and organizational support from his wife. Sugar's experience of her supervisor and her partner's support can be interpreted as both complementary and mutual as her partner not only gave organizational advice but also helped to deal with emotions caused by the supervisor's feedback. The experiences of Diamond and Book clearly show

the mutual relationship between their partners' and supervisors' support, as both experienced challenging times through their supervisor's feedback, which consequently lead to highly emotional reactions. This was buffered and balanced through their partners. This support shows that all partners played a significant role by buffering extreme emotions and giving stability to the students' emotional experiences, or helped them to reflect and stay motivated, and even took on organizational tasks to their private spheres and the doctorate. This shows partners helped to remove stressors in the form of organizational tasks, but also served as relief from the emotional stress caused by others. This corresponds with the findings by Medhurst (2008) who identified the family as the main support mechanism and the partner as being especially critically for success, offering practical, financial, academic or emotional support. These points are also raised in stress research studies (e.g. Cornér et al.; 2017; Peltonen et al., 2017), which emphasizes that a good support system is essential to cope with stress. The experience of the students in the current study makes it particularly explicit that emotional support by the partner helps to cope with stress caused by supervisor feedback, especially in Book's and Diamond's cases.

The experience and view of the partner

Devonpart and Lane (2014) also described how a partner helps a student to cope with stress by providing practical help by taking responsibility for day-to-day tasks, or organizational support for the thesis but did not specifically highlight the importance of such emotional support. Their concept of dyadic coping describes how dissertation stress can also negatively affect the relationship and the partner's help, or their expectations, can produce more stress. The narratives in the current study cannot support such findings. Perhaps Sugar initially experienced a more challenging time as she felt there was a lack of support from her partner, but she did not mention any tension in their relationship that caused her further stress. All other students emphasized how grateful they were for their partners' support and did not mention any serious problems or strains on their relationships.

In comparison, in the interviews with the partners, one could recognize emotions between the lines of what Sugar and Diamond's partners said, where it can be assumed that they occasionally found the doctoral studies distressing or annoying

and longed for them to end. Dove's partner even admitted that she was jealous of the doctorate. In addition, she found it a burden as she could not help her husband in terms of his technical questions. Book's partner denied any worry and mentioned that she does not know her husband as being any different – in that he is always working – either for his doctoral thesis or the company. So even if some of the partners occasionally found it a burden, they did not show it to the student nor did they openly complain about it, which could have put additional stress onto the student. The following quotations show the experience from the perspective of the partners.

The comment here from Sugar's partner illustrates that he is looking forward to the end and it also implies a form of impatience that it should happen 'now':

> Sugar's partner
> "...I mean she surely also wants to have a nice holiday again and to relax, so now I think the point has arrived where the child must be born somehow."

He admitted to experiencing a restriction in terms of their quality of life, but also showed understanding:

> "For me, it is certainly a restriction of our quality of life, in so far as a lot of time and energy is tied up and you can't use energy for leisure time or to travel or other things, which she sees and says: 'This thing has to be finished now'. And she needs space to be able to concentrate on that, but well ... A partnership is part of it, that's important to her and because ... in this respect, it's also important to me and it's an integral part for her, for her personal development and therefore ... I respect that and say: Yes, well... you take the person as a whole, that's part of her life and ... our leisure time would certainly be more colourful if she wouldn't do a doctorate, but one day it will be over, then we'll catch up ..."

Book's partner seemed to have no problem at all but was also short in her replies.

> Book's partner
> Partner: "No, it does not have [a negative influence on me]... we are a patchwork family... yes, I need his support because the boys are living with us now... at the moment, but it is fun, we all get along great!"
> Interviewer: "And how would you say it affects your relationship?"
>
> Partner: "Good!"
>
> Interviewer: "Had you ever had any conflicts or arguments about it?"
>
> Partner: "No! "

Dove's partner admitted that it was not an easy time, retrospectively, however, she was glad that the doctorate was undertaken:

> Dove's partner
> "...and that also burdened me a lot, partly, ...because I couldn't help him at all except to listen to it, but I couldn't say anything about it. And yes, it was not that easy..."
>
> "...well, I must say that sometimes I was quite jealous of the doctorate, that has always been the thread running through ... Yes, it was definitely an additional challenge together with all the other stuff that was going on during that time, but in the end, I think it wasn't that bad because it just binds together..."

Diamond's partner saw the doctorate as a 'we-project' that they decided to embark on together, even if he had disappointing moments when Diamond had no time to do things together. He assumes that he will retrospectively see it as fun:

> Diamond's partner
> "Conflicts? No, of course, there's been a bit of a fight. When she was angry because nothing went forward. Well, once we said 'Let's do something' like going to a concert somewhere, or anything else, or 'Let's go there on the weekend!' 'Yes okay, that should work', and when I was ready it didn't work out after all! Sure, then I was pissed! But I always say, 'make a fist in your pocket! She doesn't do it to piss you off, we decided this together, that's her goal and that's what we're trying to achieve together!' Yes, she was certainly just as angry with herself because she couldn't get it right."
>
> "...it was negative of course, that she spent so many beautiful ... sunny days at her desk."
>
> "I'm longing forward for it to be over! Of course, I'll be happy when it's over, but in retrospect one will think about it and say 'Yes, that was a nice time, that was fun'."

In retrospect, Dove's and Diamond's partners can generally see aspects that relate to the doctorate. The interview with Dove's partner happened after he had finished, the interview with Diamond's partner happened just before submission. In comparison, the interviews with Book's and Sugar's partners happened in the middle of the research phase. Of course, one can also assume that if tension or concerns were present, they were suppressed by the students and their partners and not openly discussed during the interview. Sugar's partner said in the interview that he had the impression that Sugar worries she would not live up to his expectations, but Sugar did not mention any concern about this matter during her interviews. Diamond mentioned that if she had thought her relationship was in

danger, she would have questioned whether or not to continue with her doctorate. Nevertheless, all partners seem to be supportive and understanding, even if they found their partner's doctoral studies at times burdening.

Occasionally significant others

Besides the partner and supervisor, it seems that other social contacts become significant occasionally for specific tasks and concerns but are not permanent features throughout the journey. This reflects the characteristics of a part-time student where time for social contacts is limited (Gardner, 2008). Even though professional life or the other lifeworlds outside the university have been identified as another valuable source of support (e.g. Bircher, 2012; Gardner & Gopaul, 2012), other people do not seem to make a significant difference in Dove's, Book's and Diamond's experiences, and hence to their success, in comparison to the importance of the supervisor and their partners. However, the many small occasions that give inspiration for the research may represent an invisible network (Barnacle & Mewburn, 2010).

This network pushes the student forward on their doctoral journey 'at the right moment' in the form of motivation, professional inspiration, or encouragement without the student being able to identify a specific person. This may be a feature for part-time students as learning as part of a doctoral thesis can also happen through 'non-traditional sites' (Barnacle & Mewburn, 2010), such as the students' other lifeworlds. This reflects Sugar's, Book's and Dove's 'discussion partners' from their professional lives, also Dove's inspiration and ideas during a restaurant visit, Sugar's reflection during a walk, the help in formatting from Diamond's partner's colleagues, Book's ideas and motivation about his business through a conference outside the University.

Nevertheless, the prerequisite of doctoral learning is the initial socialization of the student in, or through, university culture. The socialization process as another point for success in doctoral research has been investigated in several studies (e.g. Gardner 2005, 2007, 2008; Gardner et al., 2012) and relationships with peers and supervisors, as part of it, are identified as the most salient factors (Gardner, 2005),

which also maintains the importance of significant others, particularly the role of the supervisor as identified in this study.

Significant others as part of socialization

Tinto (1993) describes socialization in three stages, which echoes the experiences of the students in this study. In the first stage, they entered the community and established their membership during the 4-8 weekends of taught module delivery – meeting their cohort peers and the University lecturers who deliver the modules. Students acquired knowledge and developed competencies through writing the assignments and receiving feedback in the second stage. After completion of the taught phase, in the last stage, students started to conduct their research projects (in terms of data generation), where contacts with the supervisor may be more limited, which also reflects the experience of the students in this study.

All students confirmed that the initial taught phase was helpful to establish contact with others and be introduced to the University regulations and the academic world. The structured timetable and cohort approach were perceived as a particularly helpful orientation and guidance on the next steps or tasks was provided. Such initial socialization processes through the taught phase may also reflect the importance of the cohort and University lecturers as temporally-bound significant others – even if only initially – and if the taught phase represents just the minimum of possible socialization. The theoretical framework by Weidman et al. (2001) describes further underlying aspects in the socialization process that are important. These include informal learning and learning new roles and values that underscore identity development as part of the learning process (Petersen, 2014).

One could wonder to what extent the students are socialized and if identity development takes place as the taught phase is in Germany, not at the University in the UK, and all the students work full-time as professionals. Diamond, Dove and Book never went to the University campus more than once. They also maintained almost no contact with peers after the taught phase. According to Gardner (2008) and Baker and Pifer (2011), socialization is a pre-condition to becoming an independent researcher, which in turn is a prerequisite to completing a doctoral

degree. One can conclude that an insufficient degree of socialization can lead to problems and stagnation in the research process.

It can also be assumed that the socialization of part-time DBA students does not always fully occur in the manner Weidman et al. (2001) describe. It depends on the active engagement of the student – as Sugar's network behaviour shows. Given the taught modules took place in Germany, the opportunity to meet students who are more progressed in their research is restricted to one or two official events in Germany or UK, which Diamond, Dove and Book did not take up. Anything additional needs to be organized by the student individually, as Sugar did, which is often difficult for part-time students because of their limited time (Gardner, 2008).

Social support from outside the University can be emotional and organizational in nature but probably cannot contribute to the socialization process. If interaction with advanced peers and other academics is limited, informal role expectations and values can be difficult to recognize. Contact with the study cohort helps to maintain motivation and support each other (Clark et al., 2009) but cannot replace the broader University context with other staff members and other students at an advanced stage.

The characteristics of the DBA cohorts in Germany are homogeneous in that almost all students are German managers living in Germany and who come from the business context. Providing information about informal roles and values of academia is difficult within such a cohort. In addition, DBA students who do not follow an academic career have neither the time nor interest, in becoming immersed in academia. Those students are very unlikely to become part of academic life and, therefore, they will not be socialized to the degree that may necessary. If there is almost no contact beyond their own study cohort to other academics and researchers, supervisors then become the only benchmark, students have for academic orientation.

Le and Gardner (2010) also confirm the strong dependency of international students on their supervisors, as evident in Dove's, Book's and Diamond's experience. In other words, in the case of part-time students, the supervisor needs to contribute to a higher degree to the socialization process to enable the student

to complete the thesis. As a single reference point, this can lead to over-reliance and increased dependence and to a position where disruption of the relationship is experienced acutely and it is, therefore, susceptible to tensions.

Possible cause of tension in supervisor relationship

Lack of socialization

One could argue that Diamond's and Book's supervisor problems originate in the lack of sufficient academic socialization. Book seems to have difficulties taking the 'big and flowery' suggestions of his first supervisor as inspiration to develop scholarly thinking, which may not always involve goal-oriented action from his perspective but illustrates his supervisor's intention to promote independence by not telling him exactly what to do (Gardner, 2008). Lack of clarity about role allocation, which is part of the socialization process, may also contribute to different expectations about how feedback should be articulated and delivered (e.g. Hockey 1996; Orellana et al., 2016). Diamond's and Book's anger about re-writing their chapters several times may also evidence a lack of processual understanding about the circular nature of learning rather than seeing it as merely linear (Kolb, 1984). This could indicate that students have not been socialized to the degree that is necessary to be aware of the academic requirements that a doctorate entails and to understand the approach to thinking and communication their supervisors' display.

There seems to be no explicit consideration or investigation in the literature of how a lack of socialization can affect the supervisory relationship or what role supervisors play in the socialization process, especially for part-time students. This suggests further research around this aspect is needed as well as considering this in terms of how supervisors, students and institutions can effectively face such a challenge in part-time study.

The literature, in general, rather deals with the supervisor relationship and discusses or investigates themes such as different approaches/styles of supervision and challenging students and situations (Erwee et al., 2011; Le & Gardner, 2010), perception and expectations of roles and student needs(Ali et al., 2016; Orellana et al., 2016), reasons for attrition in combination with burnout

(Cornér et al., 2017), supervision as leadership and its role in the learning process (Flora, 2017). Orellana et al. (2016) specifically looked at part-time students supervised at distance and emphasized differences in perceptions between supervisors' roles and students' needs. This suggests the importance of clarifying roles, needs and expectations at the very beginning to avoid misunderstandings that are more difficult to clarify from a distance. Watts (2008) also outlined the supervisor role as more being complex in respect to part-time students and identified communication, planning and empathy as the most crucial elements when supervising such students.

Threat to manager identity

In addition, Diamond and Book, who are both older mature students and, respectively, a senior manager and entrepreneur, found their supervisors to be frustrating and often 'going in circles', requiring them to re-work their written piece several times. One could argue that both students felt their identity as an experienced and successful manager was threatened (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2005; Taylor, 2007), as they are 'downgraded' to a student or novice role, where they need to learn and accept critique from others as experts. This can lead to a diminished experience, which is reflected in Diamond's reaction and her questioning her doctoral endeavour. Book continues to have a different opinion on some of the points his supervisors raised and identifies that he had not expected such divergence and assumes that his supervisors do not understand, and have not read, his work fully.

Both students have already achieved professional success and can rely on their experience and expertise in their manager identity. Both are used to delegating work to others and telling others what is 'right and wrong'. This can perhaps lead to resistance in their doctoral identity development (Petersen, 2014), which is based on different values and requires different thinking but is also necessary for the learning process according to Petersen (2014). This contradictory situation produces stress and frustration (Baker & Lattuca, 2010) that is evident in Diamond's and Book's experiences due to the divergent status of their student and manager roles. One can conclude that a prerequisite of a successful learning process in doctoral studies for DBA students, in particular, is an awareness and

acceptance that they take on the role of a novice – in a domain that is based on different rules and values than that of a manager. Only then is there the potential for development to academic mastery – which goes along with a doctoral (Petersen, 2014), or researcher, identity as a doctoral student. Further aspects of identity development are discussed within superordinate theme one.

Language, and cultural differences

Another reason for tension and misunderstandings in Book's supervisor relationship could be language issues. Book's statements, as well as those of his wife and his business partner, imply that Book has a weakness here, even if proficiency developed over time. Book admitted these challenges himself.

> Book initial
> "…often, you understand the core, the meaning, but not the nuances, because there are so many words or sentences with a rather metaphorical meaning. I always start with a classic translation, well, what does the word mean, what can it mean, but actually it means something completely different in the context …. and that is of course … difficult, especially with such research work, what does he *really* mean by that, yes? An Englishman who grew up there would understand, for me, it makes it difficult…"

Those comments imply that Book may not always understand observations in detail and not in the way his first supervisor meant – for example as an encouragement to take another perspective instead of taking it as critique. Conversely, the clear and pragmatic statements of his second supervisor. as suggested by Erwee et al. (2011) for students with lower English language skills, seem to prevent confusion and helped Book to understand and move forward. Cotterall (2013) even suggests the need for monitoring the impact of supervision style in intercultural work and trying to understand potentially different approaches to learning.

The first supervisor's statement that follows could also imply that Book's English language skills were not sufficient to communicate sensitively and respectfully – and in the way his supervisor is expected and is used to. The supervisor calls others charming, and here he is willing to meet either virtually or in person, which also implies Book is not as charming and by inference not worthy of such contact, and equally, Book's lack of participation in meeting opportunities seems to cause further concern.

Book's first supervisor

"...he displays an intellectual superiority, which makes the supervisor feel a bit small, instead of saying 'Bryan, I'm thinking of this' or 'what do you think, I may approach it like that'..."

"...I mean I Skype with a lot of my students, by the way, some groups, for example, are charming, so I'm very willing to email, very willing to ... to Skype, I'm very willing to meet face-to-face when I'm in Germany, which Book has not taken up..."

The experience of the first supervisor could originate in the distinct cultural backgrounds where a specific form of politeness in the choice of words is common in one context and where some Germans may seem direct or even rude when communicating in English. Book's narrative supports this assumption and he notes that his first supervisor even stated they had cultural differences and a different view.

The communication with the second supervisor was more effective. First because of the clear pragmatic feedback that has less potential for language misunderstanding and, perhaps, because the second supervisor has a different cultural background, as she is also not British and may expect less "charming" behaviour than the first supervisor does.

Diamond's English was also not sufficiently developed at the very beginning, which is evident in her first supervisor's comments. Nevertheless, Diamond's successful open discussion with her first supervisor was perhaps because her first supervisor has a German background, which also provides the possibility to discuss things in German. Discussion in the mother tongue is likely to be easier, especially when it comes to relationship problems and to manage emotional reactions.

Dove and Sugar did not report any language issues, and neither did their supervisors. Language issues were not discussed by all students as a significant problem or obstacle. In general, cultural aspects in the investigation of doctoral students' experience seem to focus mainly on differences between Asian and Western culture (e.g. Abiddin, 2007; Bilsland et al., 2020; Li & Gardner, 2010; Woo et al., 2015), where language and cultural barriers were identified (Caniglia et al., 2017), but not in a British–German context. Nevertheless, based on the experience of the students in this study it can be assumed that cultural differences may create tensions in communication. Due to the scope of this study, however, the impact of

cultural differences is not further discussed in detail, but this issue offers implications for future research in the context of British and German culture.

Managing relationships

It has been confirmed in several studies that a student's supervisors belong to significant others in the doctoral experience and are important for success (e.g. Ali et al., 2016; Cornér et al., 2017; Lovitts, 2002) and is evident in the experience of the DBA students in this study. The limited possibilities for the socialization of part-time students further illustrate the importance supervisors have as a benchmark for academic orientation. Whether supervisors are aware of their significant role in socialization and their specific meaning for part-time DBA students is, however, unclear.

Alternatively, one could argue that this cannot be expected from a supervisor. It is more likely the responsibility of both supervisor and student. From the student perspective, Selmer et al. (2011) suggest, the need to take an active role in maintaining their relationship – where the relationship to the supervisor plays the most important part. That necessitates accomplishment in many ways (Benjamin et al., 2017). Students must maintain, negotiate, discuss, convince to retain and assure their relationships and to maintain their support system. Sugar and Diamond were most active in managing their relationships. Sugar not only had to clarify the supervisory relationship at the very beginning but also had to convince her partner. She also actively maintained contact with several peers and staff members, where she even showed her gratitude in the form of gifts. Diamond sought a clarifying discussion with both of her supervisors to define and assure collective understanding of their cooperation and communication. In addition, she spoke openly with her first supervisor about her doubts about continuing with her doctorate. Both students showed active efforts to overcome problems and to assure a good relationship with their supervisors.

In comparison, a more open discussion between Book and his first supervisor may have helped to clarify misunderstandings. Book found his first supervisor's feedback unhelpful and perceived that his first supervisor had not even read his writing. His first supervisor, on the other hand, thought Book was not listening and

knew better. This suggests that misunderstandings do exist, even though both did find the communication channels used to be effective. Another form of communication may have served to provide more clarity. Although Book's first supervisor offered to meet in person during his visits to Germany, Book had no time to meet because of commitments in his company. Book asked for a Skype meeting but had not received any reply or reaction from his supervisor. This show difficulties in even maintaining regular meetings. One could also argue their misunderstandings are a matter of a lack of sympathy for, and empathy with, each other, or perhaps a mismatch in personality (Ali et al., 2016; Orellana et al., 2016). Dove had no problems with his supervisors and no need to clarify things, he maintained contact with his first supervisors regularly via skype, and he found it immensely helpful to see the other person while speaking. In addition, Dove had an effective communication basis and collective understanding with his first supervisor and emphasized his feedback as fitting to his needs. His first supervisor also confirmed a good 'chemistry', and that Dove was a focused student.

> Dove's supervisor
> "I will say that from the beginning the chemistry was there, okay, so I like him as a student and I hope that he like me as a supervisor, but we seem to have a lot of in common..."
>
> "What was unique about him is, is like some people might lose their motivation I think, if you walk away, it might be difficult to come back and engage, I never sensed that with him, he will come back and carry on as if nothing happened. So, very motivated, I think, very focused..."
>
> "...for Dove, to be honest, I think he it was all about him, he would have finished with any supervisor, I think he would have finished alone."

It appears that a 'good' student who understands and learns quickly is welcome by supervisors, but the other narratives show that an effective basis for communication is also the result of accomplishment and effort. Diamond's experience demonstrates that a tense relationship with misunderstanding can be openly discussed and clarified and can, finally, lead to a successful submission.

In sum, the partner and the supervisor are the most significant persons. Their support can be complementary or reciprocal. To integrate the partner from the beginning seems to be beneficial as they provide not only emotional support but can also support in organizational matters, even if the partner occasionally

experiences the doctorate as a burden. Furthermore, learning can also happen in students' other lifeworlds, where occasional significant others can make a difference in the students' research progress. Nevertheless, for part-time DBA students, the taught phase is essential for their socialization and can also provide occasional significant others, especially at the start of the doctorate.

For part-time students, there seems to be a risk of insufficient socialization that can lead to a strong dependency on their supervisors. This, in turn, can generate problems in the research process and burden the supervisory relationship. Overall, tensions in supervisory relationships can be caused by:

- Lack of socialization
- Conflict with the manager identity
- Language and cultural differences

Managing relationships is an important part of success in doctoral studies, especially the relationships with significant others that can help students to cope with stress and prevent tensions. In addition, institutions and supervisors should be aware of the specific position of part-time DBA students, with their risks and difficulties and the resulting potential dependency on their supervisors.

5.1.5 Superordinate theme five: Motivating and persisting

Motivation is a driver for learning and is required during the entire doctoral journey to be able to finish successfully. In general, there are several reasons why individuals undertake a doctorate (Brailsford, 2010). The students in this study are pursuing a doctorate for professional enhancement, personal development, interest in the research area and the joy of study, this accords with Leonard et al. (2005) findings. Even in Sugar's and Dove's case, one could see a development or change in their motivation. Experience of success and social support by significant others helped all the students to overcome hurdles and maintain their motivation during the course.

Sugar's initial motivation to gain the title changed into joy and interest in learning and development

Sugar initial

"...the motivation simply was, I want to have a title! But it has disappeared in the meantime, of course, it's nice to have a title, but it's now... I don't care about the others anymore; I have learned so much... I have gained so much, also for my new job, I got my new job just because I gained knowledge from the doctorate, because I'm approaching things in a much more reflective way and because the former boss who hired me said 'that's great that you always educate yourself, I see that you can do this',... because of this I have simply learned so much in-depth... I just, without that.... would not see myself in the position to do the job now... therefore, the motivation has changed... in the beginning, it was like 'I want to have the title' and now it's really like I want to learn for life, and I want to do it for myself because I want to become smarter..."

She also describes the doctorate as a life dream.

Sugar initial

"...I'm fulfilling a lifelong dream now..."

Sugar also emphasizes that she is not giving up.

Sugar final

"Hm, … just to say a) No, I don't give up, because I never give up! And I think that's just a matter of personality, I haven't given up anything yet, I want to have it, I'll keep on going, I would also be embarrassed, I have been doing this for so long now … I'm not going to quit now and b) the motivation is also the interest in the topic, and that you just say these are the next steps, look, it's manageable now, just do this and that… and yes, I cannot say it often enough, that now Frank [partner] is supporting this, that's really unbeatable! He regularly asks me 'how many pages do you have? Come on! You know you have to revise it, but first, write it down'!"

In general, Book lives his topic and enjoys exploring and investigating things. His general attitude reflects the idea of personal development, curiosity and learning. His metaphor of discovery reflects this idea:

Book final

"...what is the motivational anchor? I just think … it has two aspects, one is the research topic, the topic about 'adversity', that has.... so, let's say, that's what got me there..., curiosity! Yes, I think that's it! Because you just enter somehow … the room through a door and you turn on the torch, yes, then you shine your light in there and see something and think 'that's it'! And then for some reason a paper comes in or over an alert or whatever, something new comes in... 'aha, there's a new aspect!' So, bang! All of a sudden you have a lot of spotlights and now you turn the big light on and think 'boah! that's a huge topic! There's a lot in it!' Let's say that was certainly what motivated me to continue, like 'look, there's an aspect, here's another aspect'... the topic of adversity developed from a term to a big concept, what I have now, that's great, it's fun! Yes, there's a lot of new things in it, I wouldn't have thought that it would spread so much, that it takes on these dimensions! ..."

In addition, recognition and encouragement from Book's private lifeworld also provide motivation.

> Book final
> "...and I say, another motivation is ... comes from the family area ... something like 'man, you're doing great, you're doing that besides!' So this kind of praise and this recognition and the encouragement from the private, ...that this is also seen and appreciated, this is definitely also a motivation at one point or another..."

Book's colleague and his wife confirm this as follows.

> Book's colleague [George]
> "...with him, it is the mere joy of exploration, ... so a little bit of a creative mind..."
>
> "He lives the topic... and yes, that's a good description... he final gets the reputation to go along with what he is already doing..."
>
> Book's partner
> "...so... my husband is a typical researcher. He's always saying 'no, no! All practice-oriented'... but he's a typical researcher. He just enjoys it..."
>
> "...he enjoys it, I never noticed that somehow... his motivation is simply to move on, you have to keep on developing, this can also refer to his business, that he just keeps on developing his company and other motivations.....will develop, he needs it..."

During the course, reaching milestones motivated Book to continue.

> Book follow up 1
> "...exactly, it is rather the moments when you tick off the next chapter. Somehow like 'the next question is done! Now the next...' that's what motivates again..."

Like Sugar, he seeks to finish things.

> Book initial
> "...that's more like... 'okay, I started that, I want to finish that'..."

During difficult phases, reflection helped Book to find sense in the situation and to maintain his motivation and provide insight into the learning progress.

Like Book, Dove was interested in his topic from his initial undergraduate studies and through experience in his professional life. He had also always studied part-time and liked the idea of combining theory and practice. After his masters, he felt something was missing and had the desire to enhance his job perspectives.

> Dove initial
> "...my topic was in the area of Service Operations Management and that in connection with Lean Management, I actually did that... since I'm did my bachelor studies, I always

did projects in the service area in optimization, I've also tried to connect this with my final dissertations, the master thesis and the DBA thesis... I was simply interested in the topic, if it had not interested me, it would have been difficult over the time..."

"...often methods from the production area are applied, e.g. Lean Management classically applied by Toyota in the production area and yes, there were many attempts in my professional activity to apply these methods and in the end, the results were not good or I was surprised that not much came out of it except for some efficiency gains but usually no improvement of the service level! I was simply interested, and I opened the box and looked to see what was inside..."

"yeah, that was actually the driving force, learn more about it... and understand more about it..."

As with Sugar, moments of progress and discovery in learning gave Dove the motivation to continue.

Dove initial
"...that was a kind of star experience (...) I also published an article about it..."

"...exactly! This turning point (...) when I published this article, which was actually published in the first version, what I found really great..."

"...but yes, that only worked because suddenly the motivation was back again and it easy moved on and I simply got rid of the issue - the stress, being an employee in this function, I quit the job in February..."

As did enjoyment during the data generation phase.

Dove initial
"...for me, the highlight was definitely the case studies! I enjoyed that very very much! And it was also something completely different .... also, the developed concept, many other things... and the case studies with really good results..., which was a great benefit for the company... yes, that was quite nice!"

Like Sugar and Book, Dove also had the intent to finish:

Dove final
"I already had a great internal urge to get it done, I would say it was a certain amount of patience, and I don't find it difficult to familiarize myself with topics and to write them down relative quickly..."

Diamond started the doctorate "just for fun" and the decision arose from the desire for personal improvement and self-challenge.

Diamond initial
"...well, actually, it's just for fun."

"...and then I said, 'actually after 27 years in the job...' and I had been through umpteen stations in the company. I had been in the organization for over 15 years, I've done everything now, I've managed a country, I've built up the corporate structure, it was simply the momentum 'what are you doing next, what can be exciting now'?"

"... then I said... 'maybe that's the point to say now I will simply challenge myself again'!"

Her partner said Diamond enjoyed being a student again, engaging with literature and visiting the University library in her hometown. Motivation also increased by seeing the end was in sight.

> Diamond final
> "Yeah, well, if the end is so close, I guess.... even if I had been at a different stage of the thesis, I might have made a break earlier. Because... of course, it was extreme, but when the end is so close, the motivation is certainly much much bigger..."
>
> "Yes, in the end just for fun if you say so... that was rather a leisure time and you have to be that crazy, first, like me .... (laugh)"

Diamond's motivation also lies in her joy of exploring and investigating new things.

> Diamond initial
> "The new job has certainly inspired me here, get familiar with it, dig my way into the industry, this review has also helped me, let's say, to understand the industry, the mechanism, and everything, the whole legal environment... So every new task has been a little bit like (...) the biggest motivation not to write something that relates to my past, but something brand new, where I have to deal with the issues of the company [that's the key]..."

Discussion

The motivation of the students in this study reflects both internal and external aspects (Locke & Schattke, 2019). Doing a doctorate to gain a title and get future value (Locke & Schattke, 2019) reflects an external or extrinsic aspect that is evident in the initial motivation of Dove to follow an academic career, the ambition of Sugar to gain recognition and the intention of Book to provide proof of his proficiency as a consultant. Even the motivation of Diamond to challenge herself can be interpreted as extrinsic, where she desires satisfaction and self-confirmation as the outcome. The students' pleasure of learning and investigating itself reflects the internal, or intrinsic (Locke & Schattke, 2019). One could ask if extrinsic or intrinsic motivation prevails and what is most important for success.

Would people do a doctorate without gaining a title, even if the pleasure of learning exists? Irrespective, the motivation of all students, especially to be persistent, is remarkable and led all students to finish their studies successfully. Even if the time to completion varied between three and a half years and nine years (taking into account periods of de-registration).

Interestingly, Sugar and Dove's motives developed, or changed, over time (Woodworth, 1918 in Rheinberg & Engeser, 2018). Sugar discovered her pleasure in learning and enjoyed the outcome of the development and expansion of knowledge. Dove's intention to follow an academic career evaporated.

Students showed several coping mechanisms to maintain or re-establish their motivation when things became difficult or frustrating. Previous sections highlight the importance of social support to deal with stress, but the students' narratives also illuminate social support as a motivating function, as well as the feeling of moving forward to the next milestone. Furthermore, in terms of learning and skills, based on their previous success in their academic and professional endeavours, students seem to be convinced about their ability to do a doctorate, which reflects strong self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Locke & Schattke, 2019). Self-efficacy can be weakened by negative emotions, for example, caused through critical feedback (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Can & Walker, 2011; Carlino, 2012). Diamond's resulting doubts about her ability to finish the doctorate reflect the effect of her self-efficacy. However, moments of success (Kerrigan & Hayes, 2016) over the course prevail over frustrating moments and promote self-efficacy, which is evident in students' successful completion. Interestingly all students also demonstrate the desire to want to finish things, especially when they have reached a specific point of investment. The reason could lie in the already invested resources - effort, time and money - but also embarrassment about the self for non-achievement may also be a reason, as found by Zhou (2014) in terms of achievement motivation theory.

In conclusion, the motivation to undertake a doctorate has extrinsic and intrinsic reasons. The interest in development seems to present, either earlier or later, for all students. Besides the initial motivation to start such an endeavour, the motivation during the course combined with self-efficacy is essential to maintain

resilience to finish successfully. There seems to be a point where all students show an ardent desire and motivation to finish, even if experiencing stress.

5.1.6 Superordinate theme six: Moving forward

Temporal experience is significant in all student cases and reflects students' continuous intention of 'moving forward' during their doctoral journey. As a doctorate encompasses the goals of writing and submitting a thesis, and institutions provide regulations detailing the maximum of study time, it is evident that chronological time has a significant impact. This is also demonstrated by the study stages students go through, as identified by Beeler (1991) and Grover (2007). Though how students make sense of their temporal experience can vary between individual and situation.

It was noticeable that all students connected their temporal experience with the intention of 'moving forward' with their research. This can be defined through Crotty's (1998) description as 'moving towards', aligned with the concept of intentionality as a notion of phenomenology. 'Directing oneself to' or 'reaching out into something' refers here to the completing of the doctorate. 'Moving forward' shifts the student closer to the final goal by progressing and creating, step-by-step, a thesis, and, as a result, gaining a Dr-title.

'Moving forward' seems to be a common phenomenon in doctoral studies as the findings by Devos et al. (2017) claim the experience is critical to success in doctoral study, which they describe as "Experiencing a feeling of progress in the development of the material that will constitute the thesis" (p. 68) and that can also be described as meeting key research development milestones. They stated that the feeling of 'moving forward' in combination with a topic a student is convinced is worthwhile, while not experiencing too much stress, are the prevailing factors when comparing completers and non-completers.

The students in this study associate the experience of not 'moving forward' with "losing time" or that things "cost" time, when progress was not perceived as being achieved. As a result, they experience 'time delay'. They argue that contextual issues, underestimation, and different expectations are the reason for this delay.

Their initial response was the intention to regain this wasted period, which also lead, in some cases, to the experience of burden and strain.

Issues preventing students from moving forward - contextual issues, underestimation, and expectations

Sugar and Dove experienced a combination of contextual issues that they perceive prevented them from moving forward:

In her second year, Sugar experienced what she saw as a critical phase, which she called 'a lost year'. During that time, she struggled to develop her final research plan for approval by the University's research degree committee. She was very insecure about her topic and approach and sought support and encouragement from her supervisor but could not find a common basis for understanding and communication in that relationship. As a result, she felt alone and frustrated. At the same time, Sugar started a new job, and she was, therefore, also challenged by new tasks and a gruelling work schedule. She did not have 'enough time and energy' to proactively deal with the situation with her supervisor. After consulting several people and receiving their advice 'to say something', it took her a year of discussing a solution with faculty members and requesting a supervisor change to move forward with a new supervisor.

> Sugar initial
> „....so in effect, I have lost one year, I have... from July 2012 to April 2013, that was totally lost! Yes, exactly! That was the time! I only got feedback 'I don't know what you mean'....and everything...that was the one year... so, unfortunately, I have to say, I was constantly busy with it, but I did not progress..."

As an explanation for the lost year, Sugar emphasized that the conditions had been prejudicial for her: she neither had the 'right' supervisor nor had she finalized her topic and her partner was antipathetical to her doctorate:

> Sugar final
> „....all of this didn't concern me, I did not have the right supervisor, I did not know my research topic, my partner was against it!... so the preconditions were most conceivably stupid! ..."

For Sugar her perception of no progress means lost time:

Dove also described the most challenging time while finalizing his research plan and called it a "gap" and a critical phase. Due to a stressful and challenging time at work, Dove had little time to devote to his research, which led to insufficient quality and rejection of his submitted research plan by the research degree committee. Also, University processes did not run as fast as he thought they ought. Only at Christmas, did he have enough time to rethink his research approach and define a sensible scope for his research and moved forward. In his opinion, without this "gap", he could have submitted his final thesis earlier. However, afterwards, he appreciated this time as valuable and necessary to develop and progress with a well-grounded research plan.

> Dove initial
> " I have forced myself to submit the RD1 in July with a concept I was not convinced of… for a long time there was no feedback on it…. the process went on for quite a long time and only around Christmas when I came to rest again, I found a starting point to continue… but that was the most critical phase… if it had been longer I might have said at some point it does not work…"
>
> "…but this gap … from February to … But if this gap had not been there, theoretically… then even 3 years would have been enough, well, so overall it would have even been before 3 years, if I add it up ….."
>
> "…I am glad this gap was there because it was important for my personal development …"

Diamond and Book described underestimation and different expectations of how long things take time:

As the owner of a company, Book can manage his time autonomously. He worked steadily every day for 2 hours on his thesis to ensure 'moving forward, which worked very well at the beginning. Subsequently, he described time as a resource problem where he could not meet his expectations and experienced time delays due to a higher workload in his company. Book illustrates his dissatisfaction with his temporal experience by using the following metaphor, which emphasizes the determination of the situation by external circumstances:

> "I would draw such a mechanical picture, there is someone on the assembly line working on (…) his projects that come through on the line, yeah? Screw here, weld there… that's

> how I see it at the moment, just this working on something, I would say the assembly line could run a bit faster, but it has its own pace, yes, and I'm not the clock generator, but rather the pace is determined by circumstances from outside, and I am working on it, but nevertheless... overall, I'm satisfied!"

Even if Book concluded by stressing his overall satisfaction, Frankenhaeuser (1980) confirmed in her study of assembly-line working conditions that the inability to control the pace of the assembly-line produces stress. This implies experienced stress but may also arise in Book's case in a more latent fashion, as he is not working on the assembly-line but rather compares his feeling with such a situation.

Diamond admitted that she also underestimated how long things took and her research took her longer than she anticipated going through several circles of rewriting her chapters:

> Diamond final
> "I have certainly underestimated that I need again so much time to completely revise it..."
>
> "...then of course to say, I finally want to get this 'thing' done, but again you have to do the 190th circle ... well, and you always think you're at the end, but you are not..."
>
> "...actually, it took me a whole year longer than planned..."

Students' response to time delay or strategy to move forward

As senior manager of an international company with significant responsibility, Diamond is only able to work on her thesis at weekends and holidays. Like Book she wants to assure 'moving forward' by creating a continuous timetable:

> Diamond final
> "It really helps me to keep at it, so I personally find it very difficult when I put the 'thing' aside and open the books after two weeks again."

All students showed the intention to 'speed up and regain time' to 'move forward'.

Sugar emphasized the desire to accelerate several times during the interviews, showing her intention to 'move forward' and to 'make up' time to an implicit schedule that acts as a mental benchmark.

> Sugar initial
> "I have to speed up now that I am moving forward, that I really have these interviews behind me...."

Sugar had the desire to speed up to regain the lost year, as it also means costs and strain for her:

> Sugar initial
> "...as I said before, I will try to speed up, because I have lost one year... a) it is all about time b) it is also about money, and it is also about reducing the strain... "

Sugar's comments also illustrate the monetary aspect as the longer she studies, the longer she must pay tuition fees. Moving forward would help minimize her cost and reduce perceived physical strain.

Diamond's plan to submit at the end of 2016 did not work due to illness, but she could regain this lost time:

> Diamond follow up 1
> "...well, at Christmas there was this drama ... yes! I say principally I had planned to take things easy, but then I got a little seriously ill, the consequence was that, of course, I couldn't do anything during that time. The positive aspect afterwards was, that when I was still in hospital ... and officially on sick leave... that afterwards, I had a little more time to catch up again, if you see what I mean?"

Dove has not mentioned any intention to speed up, as the first interview happened after his submission and oral defence, but his described intensive engagement with his research during Christmas implies this. Also, in the end, the pressure he put on himself to finish quickly implies the intention to speed up and 'get it done' and 'moving forward', which then lead to pressure and strain.

Results of students' strategy to move forward - temporal experience as strain, burden and investment

Dove put himself under pressure to finish quickly, which created temporal strain:

> Dove final
> "...The temporal strain was actually quite high after the completion of the case studies because I thought I have to finish now quickly ... and it cannot take so long... and I was stressing myself ..."

Besides her challenging work schedule, Diamond also put herself under pressure to finish, which again lead to stress:

> Diamond final
> "...this travel activity, with long distance flights where you have to deal with time changes and all these issues ... when you return at the weekend... of course, on the other side there is also 'the carrot in front of your eyes', you want to finish, well, that gives you a little pressure or stress again, because you think 'come on! You also have to move forward with your doctorate'!"

Book failed in regaining lost time.

> Book follow up 1
> "...well, once it was certainly, let's say, in the run-up to the middle of July, August where I hadn't got as far as I wanted to... well, partly then I caught up during my holiday, but that was not enough for me. It is just a resource problem, well, and maybe also content-related, because the literature research in my case..., it is just always so extensive ..."

He started to accept his delay.

> Book follow up 1
> "...this is the main issue, rather temporal ... of course I did not meet my expectations.That's right, I could get angry about it if I wanted to, but I won't now!"

Nevertheless, Book also describes his temporal experience as his 'being crammed into a corset':

> Book initial
> "...also, I sometimes notice, that this is like being so strongly crammed into a corset, sometimes I think... 'Boah! Now you really have to be careful' ..."

In the final interview, I asked Book to explain this comment:

> Book final
> "...of course, when you have a tight schedule, you simply have to function..."

Discussion

Students' temporal experience of 'moving forward' (or not) and its consequences of time delay and lost time can be understood from different perspectives.

Issues preventing from moving forward - contextual issues, underestimation, and expectations

Drawing on a sociological perspective to understand the subjective experience of time, Flaherty (1999) explains in his theoretical model of variation in the perceived passage of time the difference between subjective time experience and clock time e.g. the time passes quicker than perceived – temporal compression. The experience of lost, or limited, time may be explained or promoted by points when students are strongly involved in other lifeworld activities, which consist of more routine work than on the doctorate and produce the perception that time is passing quickly (temporal compression). In combination with additional problems, temporal compression seems to lead to a negative perception or appraisal of time when students do not progress with their research or experience stagnation in their research process. This may have happened in Sugar's and Dove's cases during their critical phase when they experienced a stressful time in their professional life that prevented them from focusing on their research and, in combination with, what they perceived to be organizational problems with the University. So, part-time doctoral work seems to be characterized by temporal compression - that is viewed negatively when students face problems in their doctoral work that then prevent them from 'moving forward'.

Besides the perceptual experience of time, research on doctoral completion evidence that an experienced period of stress can influence time to completion (e.g. Hales, 1998; McDermott, 2002). This is evident in Dove's case when he said he could have submitted earlier. Previous literature in doctoral education emphasizes the importance of social support to deal with such stress (Kaufmann, 2006; Peltonen et al., 2017; Scheidler, 2008), Sugar's experience, in particular, evidences that a lack of social support (either by her supervisor or by her partner) can influence the ability to cope with a stressful situation which, as a consequence, may have led in her case to the experienced "lost" year.

This reveals the relationship between stress and time. Sugar's contextual issues show that stressors from outside (job stress) and personal conflicts (partner is against it), combined with research challenges (uncertainty about the topic) and its organization (supervisor communication) has a clear effect on the schedule. This

illustrates that part-time students can be exposed to multiple influence factors that create complex situation and illuminate the interrelationship of the lifeworlds - which are interdependent. Both Sugar and Dove experienced a stressful time at work during what they perceived to be a critical phase in their doctorates and had no time resources to deal appropriately with their research. Their professional life simply kept them too busy. It took time until they were able to deal actively with the situation and return to their research. Given that for the approval of their final research plan both had to pass a particular threshold point (Trafford & Leshem, 2009) that requires concentration, this illustrates the need to focus their effort and energy on the doctorate, which was not possible at that time. This also reflects the risk of part-time study, where students may well face the challenge of balancing multiple roles or competing commitments (e.g. Byers et al., 2014, Gardner and Gopaul, 2012; Thinnam, 2011), which can lead to time delays.

From the perspective of cognitive psychology, how a person makes sense of time delay depends on their evaluation of the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). If time delays are considered before and students' expectations were different, the situation may be more accepted than it is. Sugar's expectation that she would progress through the help of her supervisor was not met. Sugar perceived that her supervisor had refused assistance. Even more, for Sugar, it meant a great loss, as the approval of the research plan was an important milestone to be achieved, which she first failed, denying her access to the next stage and producing a feeling of stagnation and not "moving forward". Also, Dove had not expected the duration of the scrutinization process of his final research plan and made a complaint to staff members. The impression arises that factors from outside (duration of the scrutinization process or no support from the supervisor) that are experienced as being out of the individual's control led to the attribution that time has been 'taken away' by an external agent, which results in the perceived "lost year" or "a gap". The responses to this are further heightened when the situation is perceived as 'not right' or where 'something has gone wrong', for instance as the scrutinization process had been indicated as being shorter in university communication and the relationship with the supervisor had been affirmed from other peers as being 'not

normal'. Variation from the perceived norm or expectations set, understandably, creates stress for the student.

In contrast, Diamond and Book experienced delays in their schedule caused by *unexpected* circumstances. Both talked about underestimation or unmet personal expectations, which implies that the student attributes this to internal factors, such as their own ability, and not to an external agent. Book and Diamond seem to be able to accept delay for this reason, and they spoke more about time as "cost" and "investment" and not as being "lost". Book clearly stated that he has not met his expectations, but he does not want to bother worrying about this, which reflects a form of coping mechanism and highlights one of the differences in how students make sense of their temporal experience.

In general, there is, unsurprisingly, evidence that unexpected situations can lead to delays in the thesis process (Holm et al., 2015, Thinnam, 2011) and it is typical in the experience of doctoral students that writing takes more time than expected (Russell-Pinson & Harris, 2019; Thinnam, 2011). One could even argue that unexpected situations are part of life and cannot be avoided, and, consequently, delay is unavoidable and must be considered during doctoral studies. The question is how a student makes sense and finally deals with this experienced delay. In addition, how can they be prepared to experience delays in advance? The notion that time delay is an accepted part of the doctoral experience is not overtly acknowledged by students and supervisors – and perhaps most importantly codified by the institution. Hence, many students are ill-prepared to accept it when it occurs, even though, in many contexts, they may have heard phrases such as 'it always takes longer than you think'.

As Diamond and Book demonstrate, DBA students are usually experienced in time management. Nevertheless, acknowledgement of a realistic time to completion and open discussions with supervisor and staff members about unavoidable time delays - from issues within the research process and sometimes external influences from other lifeworlds - may help to promote awareness and would also set different expectations. Students' expectations in the current study seem to

arise through advertisement by the agency and self-specified time goals, particularly when set against how much students are willing to invest and sacrifice (leisure) time. Issues within the research process or contextual problems that lead to times of inactivity on the thesis are largely not considered, which, as consequence creates the experience of 'lost time' and not 'moving forward'.

Students' response to time delay or strategy to move forward

Flaherty's (2003) concept of "time work", which he defines as "individual or interpersonal effort to create or suppress particular kinds of temporal experience" (p.17) reflects students' strategies to manage their time. The intention to 'speed up' or 'regain time' or 'manage a regular schedule' for the doctorate as in the case of Diamond and Book did inform continuity. This also reflects Flaherty's notion of the 'time work' as the effort of an individual to influence their temporal experience in maintaining a regular event, or constructing a schedule to use the time resource efficiently, as is suggested in several guidebooks as core to effective time management (e.g. Kamler & Thomson, 2014; Phillips & Pugh, 2010; Thomas, 2016). Goal setting as one component of time management is applied by all students where their experience of lost time and the intention to regain time reflects the regulation of the discrepancy between current and desired time goal (Carver and Scheier (2001) through goal setting, goal operating and goal monitoring.

The regaining of time is not possible and can be seen as illusory, but it offers a form of cognitive strategy to force a stronger focus on the doctorate to push things forward. The strategy of continuity pursued by Book and Diamond may be seen as a form of prevention offering a means to assure 'moving forward' and to compensate for unexpected situations. Also, Book's adaption of his time plan and accepting that he needed longer reflect forms of coping behaviour in response to experienced delay.

Flaherty (2003) also describes time work as taking control "over the timing of various events" (p. 27), which reflects, in general, students' behaviour and strategies in managing their dissertation projects alongside their professional and private lives. Specifically, Sugar and Dove regained control in their 'critical phase' to move forward. Book and Diamond try to control work on their thesis through their

continuous timetable, which they also see as key to assuring progress. In contrast, Book's metaphor of the assembly line shows that he is not able to control the pace of his progress as he wishes. In addition, Sugar and Dove show through their perception of lost time that they have also 'lost control', which is also experienced by Diamond through her endless feedback loops or illness in the final weeks. This reflects that losing control is hard to avoid and part of the doctoral experience, and when this occurs, students try to regain their sense of control as a prerequisite to moving forward. Consequently, this affects the experience of time, often in the form of delay. Flaherty (2003, p. 23) even states that "almost no situation is free of efforts to control or manipulate one's experience of duration". Students apply self-discipline to manage or control their temporal resources, which in turn shape their temporal experience (Flaherty, 2003).

The strategies applied in the study of Moen et al. (2013) to cope with time strain, such as prioritizing time, scaling back, blocking out work or non-work time and time-shifting, were also deployed by Diamond, Dove, Sugar and Book, and perhaps reflect strategies applied in their professional lifeworld. They all set priorities for their research and scaled back leisure time or, in Dove's case, even scaled back work to have more time for his research. Or they block specific times for the research – for instance, Book takes two hours every morning, Diamond every weekend and during holidays, Sugar too blocked several weeks when she travelled to the UK in her leave time or Dove when he dived into research from Friday until Monday morning during the taught phase. Time-shifting can also be recognized in Book's behaviour when he is working for his company and undertaking his research during Christmas and other holidays or even by getting up two hours earlier every morning. Dove also demonstrated this behaviour in working on his research at night, as did Sugar. This demonstrates various strategies to manage time but even this seems unable to prevent the experiencing of 'delay'.

Students' experience of the influence of other lifeworlds also shows evidence that time work additionally depends on the social context (Flaherty, 2003), which promotes, depending on the context, a specific understanding and expectation of how time has to be modulated to create the desired experience of 'moving forward'.

This mirrors that understandings of time can vary between social groups and organizations (Plakoyiannaki & Saren, 2006). For instance, the understanding of time in business can be different (Ruef, 2005) to that of the academic world (Kolb, 1984).

The different use and understanding of time can, perhaps, explain students' impatience and the continuous feeling of losing time and the need to speed up. So, one could say, the culture of time in business is based on a linear understanding whereas in an educational setting the understanding is circular. This requires a switch, or change, in approach and time management. This may be a challenging task for students who are principally situated in their professional life and where the doctorate is 'part-time'. This certainly leads to tension in their experience, as the students' comments above demonstrate.

Agency as an important part of 'time work'. Flaherty (2003) emphasizes that a prerequisite for time work is having control and the need to regain control when it is lost. The influence of the social context elucidates that agency can be restricted by factors from outside that are beyond the students' control, such as Diamond's illness, professional life demands in all cases or the duration of university processes. Flaherty (2003) describes agency as an accomplishment rather than a habitual reaction. This, again, emphasizes the effort and endeavours students must take in their time management behaviour, especially to regain control when they perceive it is lost. It also illustrates the amount of effort students need to balance their lifeworlds besides the challenging task of creating high-quality research. As a logical consequence, students' narratives show evidence of the experience of strain and burden.

Results of students' strategy to move forward - temporal experience as strain, burden and investment

Sugar's statement emphasizes the connection of time, money and physical strain. It reinforces not only Sugar's attributed 'value' of time, but also the monetary and physical burden that emerges, or increases, through a longer duration of the part-time experience. These are also reflected by Book's metaphors, being in a corset or working on an assembly line, which elucidates the experience of having no, or

restricted, control, and that leads to a feeling of strain (Frankenhaeuser, 1980). Book emphasized this during a follow-up interview and mentioned the relationship between restricted time and strain:

> Book follow up 1
> "...yes, the realist says, in fact, you are already in the red, but it's just the tendency... well when you look at the strain and the possible free time you would need..., that is still a glaring imbalance, that is already the case."

Diamond also emphasized that the 'endless' writing loops were painful, and Dove admitted experiencing strain at the end. All students experience strain or burden at one point, and explained their intention to move on quickly, to get things done or get the issues behind them or to overcome them. Experiencing unpleasant moments, such as suffering and intense emotions can create an experience of lasting duration (Flaherty, 1999), which reflects Diamond's description of 'endless' loops with her supervisor or the perception of waiting 'too long' for feedback in Sugar and Dove's case when they felt uncertain about their topic.

The part-time experience of all students illustrates the burdening experience of studying beside a full-time job that helps explain the intention to get 'it' done quickly to relieve this double burden. On the other hand, students experience time as passing too quickly and feel the need for more time. This emphasizes the imbalance of time and progress where 'time' is short, and 'progress' is not fast as desired. In other words, students wish for more time but want to get it done quickly. This paradox, or contradictory position, illustrates the complexity of the doctoral part-time experience in terms of time and energy - where tensions are core to the students' experience.

In sum, time delay, as the counterpart to 'moving forward', is part of the doctoral experience and cannot be avoided. There are both situational and attributional reasons for this experience:

- The demands from other lifeworlds for part-time students can lead to the perception of time passing quickly (temporal compression, (Flaherty, 1999)) without any progress.
- Part-time students' demands from other lifeworlds (especially a combination of contextual issues) can lead to insufficient time for the doctorate and, as

a consequence, can lead to insufficient research quality and stagnation in research progress, which is experienced as 'time delay'.

- Overly elevated expectations of time goals can lead to the appraisal of time delay and influence coping behaviour concerning the temporal experience.

- Time work (to manage time delay) needs agency and control and is influenced by the social context, whereas losing control can also lead to the experience of time delay.

- Social support or significant others can help to deal with time pressure.

The experience of potential time delay requires 'time work' (Flaherty, 2003) as available time is limited and the obligation of different lifeworlds must be balanced. This necessitates significant effort and accomplishment and leads, at some point, to strain and burden. The experience of time is also influenced by cultural aspects of the social context, which can lead to different time understandings and expectations of temporal events. Therefore, it is essential that managers studying part-time acknowledge time delay as normal and understand doctoral work as a cyclic process in their intention of 'moving forward' rather than as a linear time sequence.

In DBA students' doctoral experiences, time is experienced as a stressor – not only produced from outside but also from the student themselves through self-specified time goals. All students demonstrate experience with time management and apply several strategies as coping mechanisms. Nevertheless, this cannot prevent time delay. Time management in doctoral study requires a different understanding of time sequences in the learning process. Additionally, social support or significant others can help a student to cope with time strain through the provision of either organizational or emotional support.

5.2 Answering the research questions

Stress and coping are recurring mechanisms throughout the doctoral experience. Stress is understood in a wider sense: including the perceived stressors from the environment (physical or socio-cultural) as threatening in the primary appraisal regarding the transactional model of (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) but which can be

relieved by sufficient available personal resources (secondary appraisal); and also the stress that arises when students perceive a lack of adequate resources and need to find appropriate coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This means stress in this study refers to perceived challenges as a cause (stressor), but also the effect of a threatening stimulus in the form of experienced stress (Folkman, 2013; Russell et al 2019; Segerstrom & O'Connor, 2012; Wagner, 1990).

The research answers the following research questions:

How do managers experience being part-time DBA students?

- **What stressors do managers face as part-time DBA students?**
- **What coping strategies do managers apply to overcome those stressors to progress their research?**

The first overarching research question has been answered in the previous section detailing the emerging themes that describe students' most meaningful aspects of their doctoral experience. The superordinate themes often describe both, stressors and resulting stress, as well as personal resources and coping strategies – and it is not the 'thing itself' that leads to its designation, but rather its perception, use and effect on, the student. For example, significant others can be experienced as a stressor, but also as support. Time delay as a consequence of 'not moving forward' is a stressor, the effort to speed up to assure moving forward is a coping strategy. This reflects the complexity and interaction of the forces that part-time study is subject to, as they come from outside but also within the student. These aspects then influence the students' lived experience depending on their individual perceptions and responses. To directly address this research question, the following gives an overview of students' experienced stressors:

Research question one: What stressors do managers face as part-time DBA students?

The stressors DBA students experience are related to the research process but in combination with contextual issues from other lifeworlds. This illustrates that experienced stress often emerges through the interplay of complex situations in which several circumstances collide and that mutually depend on each other.

Therefore, the specific stressor, or the resulting stress, has to be understood in terms of the context (Aldwin & Werner, 2009; Gardner et al., 2007) rather than simply seeking to identify a single generic stressor in isolation. By seeking to classify stressors only as generic factors, there is significant potential for the understanding developed to be overly approximate and, in so doing, to lose sight of the distinctiveness needed to make sense of what is experienced within the complexity of the context by the individuals. Therefore, rather than attempt to define generic factors merely at the classificatory level, there is more insight to be gained by considering the issues at a more granular level. The following describes perceived stressors within their experienced context.

Time was one of the main experienced stressors because of unexpected situations and changing circumstances (see also Beauchamp et al., 2009; Russell-Pinson & Harris, 2019). Typically, it was the experience of being 'short of time', 'losing time' and that things 'cost time' that led to experienced stress. The following situation describes the interconnections between circumstances that generate the relationships between these experiences.

One characteristic situation was experienced by Sugar and Dove; their demanding professional life prevented both students from working sufficiently on their doctorate. As a result, this led to the rejection of their final research plan by the University committee. Sugar's uncertainty about her research topic and problems in supervisor communication further increased her experienced stress and led to the experience of a "lost year". Dove experienced frustration through the unexpected long scrutinization of his research plan and termed this lost time a "gap". As a result, stress arose through the feeling of stagnation, having no control and time passing without moving forward with the thesis. This has been reinforced by the situation being appraised as 'not right', due to different expectations about supervisor behaviour and scrutinization process. The described situations comprise single stressors such as demanding professional life, failure of research plan approval, stagnation of research process, research inactivity, uncertainty in the research process, problems in supervisor communication, perceived slowness in university processes and different expectations. Those stressors led to resulting and lasting stress when resources had not been available, or sufficient, to deal

with such stressors (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984). Lasting stress was evident in all student cases through experienced strain (see also Levecque et al., 2007), which is also reinforced or fostered by experienced time pressure.

The experience of being 'short of time', 'losing time' and that things 'cost time' also led to the occurrence of *time pressure* – produced from outside but also from within the students themselves through self-specified time goals. One example was the intention of all students to regain time and speed up to meet self-specified time goals. In addition, because of Dove's family planning (his wife was pregnant), he put himself under pressure towards the end of his studies to finish promptly. Factors from outside, which led to time pressure, were, for example, the changing conditions of Diamond's agreement about the usage of company data for her research, which also put pressure on her to finish promptly. Physical reactions in the form of gastritis were the result. Another reason for Sugar's time pressure was the financial facet. In general, German students are not used to paying tuition fees, which are standard in the UK. The longer students need for their studies, the more costs they accrue. This created pressure, particularly when Sugar experienced stagnation in her study.

Professional life is a typical stressor in part-time study and that itself impacts time, This was the main reason for Sugar's experienced stress, largely due to her high workload and overtime requirements, which lead to research inactivity. She even stated she experienced physical reactions because of work pressure. In addition, Sugar experienced recurring stress due to her uncertainty in the research process, which lead to feelings of panic, helplessness, and anxiety.

Another source of stress was the *supervisor relationship* (see also Cotteral, 2013; Russell-Pinson & Harris, 2019), in particular, communication problems and critical feedback on writing (see also Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Hockey 1996; Orellana et al., 2016). Sugar experienced problems in supervisory communication at the very beginning, which could be solved only through a change in the supervision team. More striking was the emotional response of Diamond and Book to their supervisor feedback. The requirement of multiple revisions led to recurring moments of frustration, anger and self-doubt. In addition, Book experienced stress caused by unclear communication with his first supervisor. The reason for such

emotions seems to lay in an identity conflict (Baker & Lattuca, 2010) as being 'just' a novice and perceiving their writing as being sufficient but evaluated by others as being 'insufficient'. The manager identity based on a specific mindset seems to be an obstacle to developing scholarly thinking that emphasizes the learning process in combination with managers' identity as the greatest stressor.

Learning and challenging identity, which appears to be the greatest stressors of DBA students, become especially apparent in Diamond and Book's experience but is also recognizable in Dove's and Sugar's narrative. Since all students show several years of work experience and remain working in business, their identity as manager has been stabilized over years and reflect a particular mindset that is contrary to that of a scholar (Watts, 2009). Tensions arise through the discrepancy of "practitioner relevance and academic rigour" (Taylor, 2007, p. 163). While learning requires constant practice and needs time, students must engage in identity work to overcome struggle when their manager identity is challenged.

The experienced stressors maintain the transactional model of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), where stress arises through the interaction of person and environment, and where cognitive processes are central in the form of 'appraisal'. This illustrates the experienced stress as a mental process or mental product that is influenced by personal and situational factors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). One could assume that part-time DBA students' appraisal of stress may differ from traditional PhD students because of their professional background and context. They may appraise some stressful situations as being less [or more] stressful because of their life experience and access to more support options.

Additionally, the specific mindset and working habits of a manager may lead them to appraise a stressor as threatening when habitual strategies from within their professional life do not work in the context of doctoral study, and they experience losing control and the stagnation of their research process. In particular, the experience of receiving critical feedback is experienced as a stressor that might be perceived differently by a traditional PhD student – and perhaps specifically one that is full-time and who is seen as a 'member of faculty'. The classical master-apprentice-model (Kehm, 2020) implies a clear power relationship from the outset, which provides initial clarity of expectation that feedback from 'the master' can be

'critical'. As PhD students in Germany are usually a member of faculty, this supports awareness and clarity about the role. In contrast, a structured doctoral programme delivered by a foreign university, for which managers have to pay a certain amount of money, may lead to a lack of clarity about roles or create inappropriate expectations. Also given that paying a certain amount of money may imply 'buying' a service or support (as tuition fees do not exist in Germany), students do not expect feedback to be received as 'critical'. This emphasizes the interplay of managers' backgrounds in combination with cultural differences based on a particular programme design, which may rise different expectations and result in negative emotional responses when those expectations are not being met.

This recognises the transnational context in which the study is conducted and the implied assumption that different expectations and understandings, arise through cultural differences that can then influence the learning experience of DBA students and lead to stress. Nevertheless, stressors arising from cultural issues have not been indicated by the students but could represent underlying components of which the students are not aware. This indicates future research possibilities given the different focus and boundaries of the study.

Research question two: What coping strategies do managers apply to overcome those stressors to progress their research?

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) divided coping behaviour into problem-focused coping strategies and emotional-focused coping strategies. Students showed both kinds of coping behaviour when dealing with experienced stress. Time management was one main problem-focused coping strategy to deal with time delay (Moen et al., 2013). This included strategies such as setting milestones and maintaining a continuous work schedule to assure progress (e.g. Ashikaga, 2010, Hopwood et al. 2011; Abiddin, 2007). Furthermore, all students prioritized time for the doctorate instead of leisure time, or even blocked specific times or scaled time back for other activities and shifted working hours into the night. Other problem-focused coping strategies refer to maintaining their balance in the form of negotiation of support mechanisms and adaption to changing conditions. Students also asked others for help and reflect on problematic situations to understand

different perspectives. This, at the same time, also facilitated problem-focused coping, and students applied emotion-focused coping (e.g. Skinner et al., 2003, Carver, 2019, p. 114) such as suppression, diversion, acceptance, talking to somebody (partner) and reflection to overcome their emotional fluctuations. Reflection can also be described as meaning-focused coping (Folkman, 1997), where the student tried to make sense of the situation to maintain motivation and well-being. This is evident in Book's approach around his unmet time goals in the form of 'benefit finding' and 'adaptive goal processes'. He accepted the delay and that things need to develop to release strain and pressure to maintain his well-being. Dove showed coping behaviour in the form of 'benefit finding' when he retrospectively appreciated the 'time gap' as valuable for his development.

As Aldwin and Werner (2009) emphasize, given the complexity of coping and the need to consider context, the following describes students' coping behaviour within their situations. Generally, all students live in Germany for their daily business life and three of themdid not visit the University in the UK before their oral defence.

Book

A dominant stress situation experienced by Book was the misleading communication and critical feedback by his first supervisor. The following provides contextual understanding in describing Book's coping behaviour within a typical situation with his first supervisor.

Feedback on written chapters by Book's first supervisor happened from a distance through a scanned hand-written version by e-mail. Book met his supervisor just once during a taught module. Discussion in person, or via Skype, or phone did not happen much during the time of the interviews. Book mentioned the feedback was not always easy to decipher, which annoyed and reinforced negative emotions, such as frustration and anger caused by the misunderstandings in their communication. In the last interview, Book described his coping process as a response to his second supervisor's feedback in five steps: gain distance, analysis of the situation, talk to others, acceptance or change attitude/expectation (realistic, optimistic), start the solution process (planning, orientation, goal setting, reflection). First, Book seemed to apply emotion-focused coping strategies to deal

with emerging negative emotions through talking to his wife before trying to understand the situation and be ready to think of a solution as a problem-focused coping strategy. He tried to make sense of the situation in a positive way to maintain motivation by changing his attitudes and expectations as a form of meaning-focused coping (Folkman, 1997). In the interviews, he always concluded by expressing an optimistic view. His coping behaviour illustrates a rational approach, which he certainly applies in business and suggests that Book has already reflected on his behaviour during previous conflict situations.

Dove

A stress situation experienced by Dove was the critical phase during the process of the final research plan when several circumstances coincided.

Through his stressful professional life (with overtime and demanding difficult tasks – he had to implement organizational changes), Dove did not have sufficient time for his research and during an interview described his strategy in demanding times as being 'just to concentrate on one'. Time went by, and he showed dissatisfaction by moaning to his wife about his research inactivity. He tried to submit 'something' as the final research plan although he was not convinced by the plan. The scrutinizing process by the University took longer than he expected, which produced frustration and anger and led to his voicing complaints to staff members. Finally, on receiving feedback, the result was the rejection of the research plan, which created further dissatisfaction and frustration.

In the first instance, Dove seemed to suppress the situation as he had to concentrate on his professional life. Only when he had more time available (during Christmas break), and his wife pushed him to decide what to do, did he undertake action in the form of problem-focused coping strategies and started to engage intensively with the literature to develop a sensible research scope. Through reflection, he realized the inadequate quality of his previous research plan, which he discarded and fundamentally changed. The further discovery of exciting literature promoted his motivation to publish an article. The successful publication of the article maintained his motivation further and led to the fundamental decision

to change his job situation to finish the doctorate. He showed emotion-focused coping when he was complaining to his wife for instance because of his research inactivity. This implies a more unconscious response to emotions such as guilt (Compas et al., 2014). Dove's behaviour also demonstrated the pressure he needed to take action, but when reaching the point at which action was precipitated, he showed a strong problem-focused coping strategy that he deployed until things were fully resolved to enable him to move forward with the research.

Sugar

Stress situations experienced by Sugar were, on the one hand, the recurring uncertainty in her research approach and, like Dove, the critical phase during the process of the final research plan when several circumstances coincided.

After the taught phase, when Sugar had to develop and submit her final research plan, she was forced to change jobs and suddenly faced a challenging time in her professional life as she swiftly needed to become familiar with the new role and needed to engage in significant amounts of overtime to meet prescribed deadlines. Her job situation led to insufficient time for her research, while her research scope remained unclear and supervisor communication was problematic given the long response times and failure to develop a common communication basis. The entire situation was accompanied by emotions such as frustration, which also resulted in stress. Sugar felt that never having met her supervisor in person also made things more difficult. The result was the rejection of her submitted research plan. Frustration remained, and this is why Sugar started to talk to others as an initial emotion-focused strategy.

In general, Sugar's habitual coping strategy in difficult situations was initially to talk to others, applying an emotion-focused strategy to deal with emotions of doubt and uncertainty. Additionally, discussion with others helped her to find viable solutions as problem-focused coping. Social networks provided feedback about the "veridicality" of appraisals in the coping process and thus influenced the chosen coping strategy (Aldwin & Werner, 2009, p. 242). This is evident in Sugar's

partner's advice to focus on a rational solution, and not to bother the supervisors with 'emotional panicking'. Also, comparison to others can determine one's coping strategy (Mechanic, 1978), which Sugar did in her critical phase when she talked to others about her communication problems with her supervisor. Sugar also applied problem-focus coping in the form of 'hard work' to move forward. This can also be interpreted as emotion-focused coping, as it is used to relieve the guilt experienced during inactivity.

Diamond

The dominant stress situation experienced by Diamond was feedback on her writing from her first supervisor. The requirement for numerous revisions and the number of comments lead to negative emotions such as frustration, doubt and anger. She received her written piece with comments via e-mail and had regular phone calls with her first supervisor.

Diamond showed problem-focused coping strategies when she talked to her first supervisor in German, via telephone, to clarify and discuss the meaning of the critical feedback, which Diamond experienced as being very painful and hard. Nevertheless, to deal with the anger she initially felt as an emotional response, she first talked to her partner to overcome her negative emotional state. Across the further rounds of research feedback, Diamond developed the strategy of first asking her husband to look at the feedback and then to help prepare her for what to expect. This strategy seems to be an emotion-focused strategy to prevent herself from the first 'shock'. During her studies, she realized that the number of comments provided by her first supervisor does not reflect the quality of her work nor the extent of required revision.

5.3. Conceptual framework of DBA students' lived experience

The research provides insight into the lived experience of four German managers who undertook part-time doctoral study at a British University. The six emerging themes reflect significant aspects of their doctoral journey, including stressors and

their coping strategies, where *learning and challenging identity* appear to create the dominant challenges and stressors. To illustrate the relationships and dynamics of those themes, given the dominance of learning and identity conflicts, the following conceptual framework based on van Manen's (1990) four existentials – temporality, corporeality, relationality and spatiality – reflects all aspects of lived experience in a development cycle to offer a holistic understanding of DBA students' lived experience:
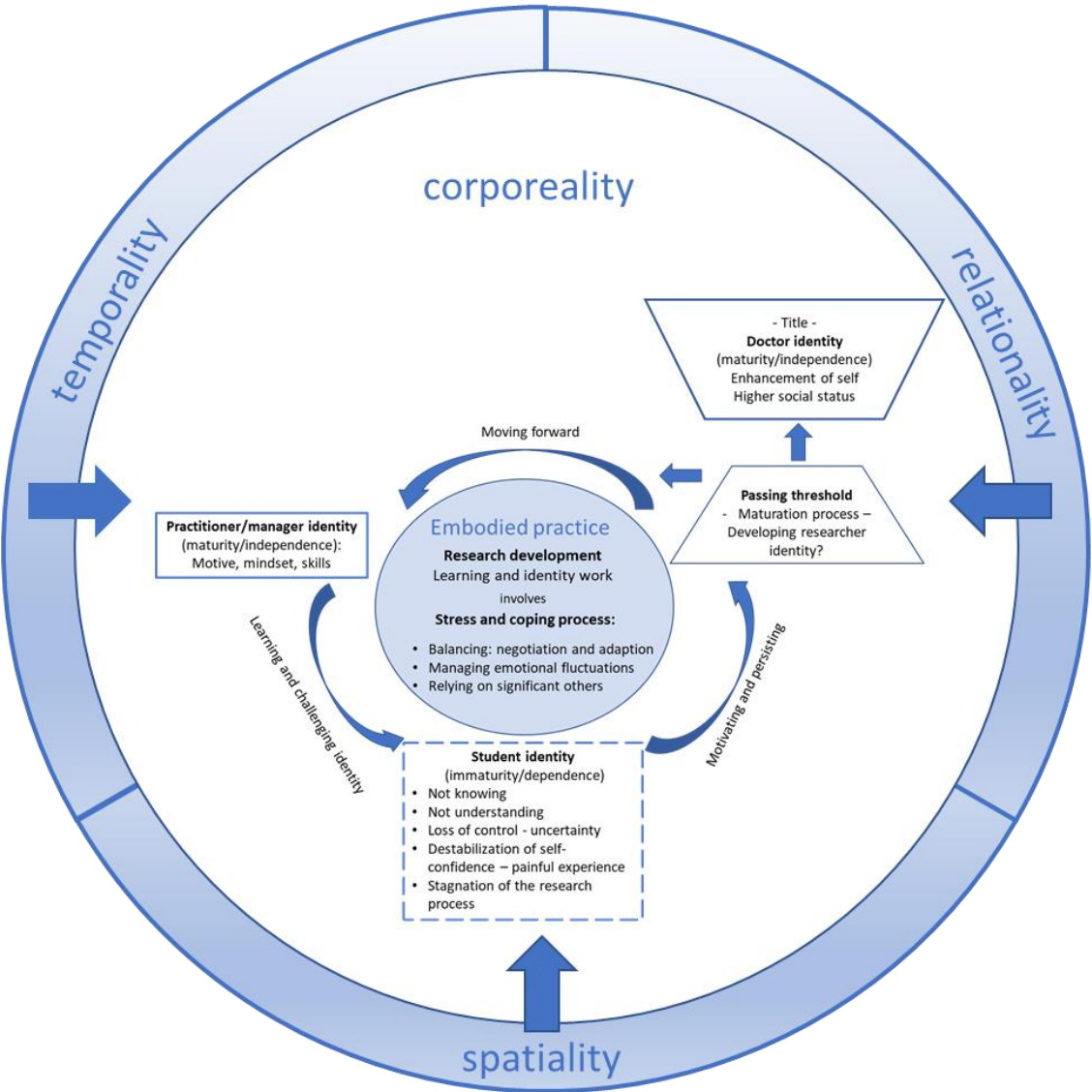

Figure 2: Conceptual framework of DBA students' lived experience

The doctoral journey is represented as cyclic development, where embodied practice is centred and reflects research development as an ongoing stress and coping process. Embodied practice illustrates a bodily experience as a core element of the doctoral experience where a student's constant practice is required in several forms and in different arenas, such as learning and identity work, balancing multiple demands through negotiation and adaption, managing emotional fluctuations and managing relationships to significant others.

In particular, the development is characterized by challenge to students' manager identity. The initial start in the doctoral journey is from the manager or practitioner's mindset, its associated skills and driven by specific motives. Those are firmly anchored through several years of professional experience and in managers' current full-time jobs (Watts, 2009), which reflect maturity and independence. Nevertheless, for a manager, embarking on a doctorate this means entering a different world with different rules and that a different thinking pattern is required. Being a student (again) means returning to an immature and dependent state where new knowledge must first be established through learning and development (Watts, 2009). Hence, managers' professional competence is challenged, as rather contrary forms of thinking are required. Stagnation of the research development may happen and, as a result, students experience uncertainty and destabilization of their self-confidence and thus also to their manager identity. The key is to maintain motivation and persistent. The maturation process appears to be characterized by passing a threshold, once, or several times, depending on the students' progress until a 'doctor' identity has been reached by achieving completion. Moving forward by managing time is a constant intention until completion.

Thus, this framework reflects that research development is embodied practice, which cyclically involves learning and identity work. What managers may have not considered, before 'moving up' and in seeking higher social status, is that they must first need to 'move down' to a lower status, which can lead to destabilization of the self.

van Manen's (1990) existential 'corporeality' or 'lived body' addresses the entire doctoral journey as embodied practice, while influenced by the other dimensions –

temporality, relationality and spatiality. The stress students encounter primarily arise from issues within temporality and relationality, for example, supervisor's feedback or timely demands from their professional life. Though, relationality also provides the main support through significant others, which appears to be especially important in all student cases and seems to be a significant success factor. Spatiality influences the lived experience in the form of the existing space that a student needs to work on their thesis. As mature professionals lived space is already firmly established in all the student cases and does not create any specific tensions or challenges (this might be different for younger full-time PhD students when moving to another city/country). Students occasionally worked on their thesis during their travels, but home was their main location for study. Only for one student did being on campus (studying in the library) have a special meaning, enabling delimitation from daily work and offering support from others from within the University.

The framework reflects how, in part-time DBA students' lived experience, van Manen's dimensions relate to each other and how those dimensions - temporality, relationality and spatiality - offer both destabilizing and stabilizing forces that influence corporeality as embodied practice. As theoretical models are always a simplification of reality to support better understanding, this framework illustrates one view on the lived experience of part-time DBA students - experienced stress and coping behaviour. Nevertheless, the intention was to create a holistic understanding within terms of the context.

The development of students explored in this study can be illustrated through this model, though individuals proceed through a different number of cycles. Significant development has only been confirmed by supervisors in the cases who had completed or were just about to complete. This suggests significant development happens nearer the end, close to completion. In general, given the cyclic nature of development, some students take longer, some complete quite quickly and some may never complete.

Comparing the framework with the "maturity model of PhD student growth" developed by Grover (2007, p. 12), which looks at the development of knowledge creation in different stages (exploration, engagement, consolidation and entry to

the academic profession), the framework in this study takes a more holistic view on the lived experience of DBA students, where identity is a significant component in students' development and their experienced stress. The risk of mistakes that Grover (2007) may reflect some of the causes that students had experienced as stress in this study such as 'managing the relationship to the supervisor' in Book's case or being 'too ambitious' in Sugar's approach to data analysis. Nevertheless, most typical mistakes refer to a PhD student's intention to follow an academic career, which emphasizes the distinctness of DBA and PhD students' experience through their different career intentions.

5.4 Conclusion

The contribution of the present study adds further understanding of the doctoral experience of a particular student population, within a particular context, and highlights potential tensions that impact the learning process and trigger identity work. This reflects, in general, that the generation of tension and struggle are typical in the learning process of DBA students, involving identity work, while being optimistic and persisting are worthwhile. Accepting 'destabilization of self' as a potential source for growth and maturation seems to be the key for such an endeavour and in all other situations of learning.

The results of the current study may help prospective students to understand that the DBA is a process of learning and identity development and is, therefore, a transformational experience rather than just instrumentally gaining a title. Educators and supervisors may be helped by understanding that part-time DBA students are a non-traditional student group, strongly influenced by their professional work context and may have different needs and understanding to that of a conventional PhD student. Problems can also be a source of enrichment on the other hand, which means DBA students bring a great deal of knowledge and experience from their professional practice. Supervisors' key task should be to support and enable students to merge their knowledge with theory.

Due to the development and requirements of the knowledge economy (Deem & Dowle, 2020), researchers see professional doctorates, in general, as dominant in

the future (Blackman, 2016) and as an integral part of doctoral education. DBA graduates in particular may serve the increased need for graduates with transferable skills to improve productivity and economic growth in the form of an entrepreneurial leader (Neumann & Tan, 2011). Stronger support in helping to form approaches or offer possible coping strategies to create a 'less painful' experience, may serve to support and maintain better completion rates and reduce the time to completion.

Furthermore, methodologically, this study contributes to research on stress and coping in doctoral students through a qualitative perspective and highlights the complexity of the context giving an integrated, in-depth understanding and contributing to the growing body of literature produced through IPA. Although, there is a growing body of IPA studies in education (e.g. Manoochehri, 2011; Priyadarshini et al., 2015; Sultana, 2014; Yale, 2018) in relation to doctoral studies only a few researchers have applied an IPA approach to date (e.g. Dickens, 2014; Stoten, 2016).

6. Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

The present study sought to explore managers' experience of being part-time DBA students and, in particular, what stressors managers face and what coping strategies they apply to overcome those stressors to progress their research. To unveil students' meaning-making about their experience, I applied IPA, focusing on the individual in a particular context. This work has considered four German managers who undertook part-time doctoral study at a British University, and taken into account their professional, personal and student lifeworld. Students' experience emphasizes the value of the DBA for managers as a structured, practice-oriented programme but also outlines challenges.

Six themes emerged through the data analysis and provide insight into the lived experience by revealing both stressors and coping strategies. Results maintain previous literature about doctoral students' experienced challenges and provide further details about the coping mechanisms part-time students apply. As previous literature indicated (e.g. Byers et al., 2014; Fairchild, 2003; Giancola et al., 2009; Medhurst, 2008), the experience of the students in the current study evidence that contextual issues from other lifeworlds do contribute to the experience of stress, or are a source of stress themselves, such as the demands of the professional life or tension in the supervisor relationship. Nevertheless, surprisingly, the most intense stress and pain appear to arise in the learning process, where the manager's mindset – as a practitioner - is perceived as contrary, or insufficient, to meet the requirements of academic practice and the rigour required at this level of study (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2005; Taylor, 2007). Uncertainty and destabilization of self-confidence is the result, which then challenges managers' identity (Baker & Lattuca, 2010) and leads to stress.

The proposed theoretical framework illustrates those identity conflicts as a cyclic development that requires constant activity to cope with challenge to maintain motivation and move forward - from mature manager to immature student and on to a mature doctor identity. Students' coping strategies to traverse this transformation include negotiation and adaption to maintain balance, managing

their emotions by talking to significant others and receiving their support to maintain embodied practice. The development cycle offers not only a holistic understanding of DBA students' research development but also embeds van Manen's (1990) existentials and reflects the lived experience as a whole – where research development, as embodied practice, is part of corporeality influenced by temporality, relationality and spatiality. This delivers a theoretical underpinning to the research on lived experience and reflects the significance of DBA students' experience – the discrepancy between practitioner relevance and academic rigour in the learning process – adding further evidence to the existing literature.

The DBA journey can be seen as a visit into scholarship, where a manager enters a new world that they do not perceive as their own, and in which they do not intend to remain. If those managers were asked if a part-time DBA means joy or pain, they would certainly state both, or perhaps even only pain, which students' narratives evidence.

Classical stress research confirms the relevance of the issue in doctoral study, nevertheless, studies lack more detail and deeper understanding. Although qualitative studies in doctoral education give further details in relation to particular aspects of the doctoral student experience, they do not offer an overall picture. This study contributes to this through the development of the conceptual framework and provides a holistic picture of the doctoral student experience in terms of their stress and coping strategies. It does so through the representation of the doctoral journey as a cycle influenced by forces that are generated through the broader context in which study occurs.

The implications for policy and practice are now further discussed, followed by a reflection on the strengths and limitations and suggestions for future research and concluding comments.

6.2 Implications for policy and practice

The findings of this study illuminate the barrier between 'practitioner' and 'academic' thinking that DBA students need to overcome and emphasizes the

need for consideration in the development of programme conception and its acknowledgement by educators, supervisors and prospective students. The following core points need awareness and open discussion:

- Time delay is part of the doctoral experience
- Understanding of temporal experience can differ between manager mindset and scholar mindset
- Differences of manager mindset and scholar mindset produce tensions
- Resistance and stagnation of learning can occur through a dominant manager identity
- The learning process in the doctoral experience is cyclic (not linear)
- Losing control, uncertainty and destabilization of self is part of the learning process
- Doctoral study, especially for DBA students, also means having one's identity challenged and this requires identity work
- Managing relationships, in particular with the supervisor, is part of research development and needs attention by the student
- The supervisor plays an important part in the socialization process.

In terms of *programme conception*, those points could be outlined and discussed in induction, with the focus on how to cross the border between business and academia using 'tools' and information to enhance thinking and deal with the potential discrepancy between professional relevance and academic rigour. Additional exercises (among others for personality development and learning) within the programme could help to train and maintain different thinking, although students remain embedded in their daily business life, and advice on how to negotiate different identities could be provided. The implementation of regular reflection sessions on how to bring the manager mindset and scholarly thinking together could support this. Even the metaphor of border crossing can be used as an initial help at the study start; students should be made aware of the potential transformational experience, and that they may well need to go through destabilization of their self to create a new version.

In addition, *supervisor training* focusing on those aspects could promote further understanding and awareness and be supplemented by regular reflection sessions with others. As professional doctorates gain importance in contributing to knowledge production, policy makers could establish further resources (with time and financial support) to promote, and maintain, a quality standard for supervision in professional doctorates as a core for success. At the beginning of the supervisory relationship, roles and expectations should be openly discussed and could be supported by official guidelines or a code of practice, where the active participation of students is also clearly demonstrated.

6.3 Reflection

The current study sought to explore a particular lived experience, in-depth, by considering contextual influence factors, but not to provide a generalization about the stress and coping of DBA students. In-depth exploration limits the number of participants or cases (Smith et al., 2009); nevertheless, the four student cases provide rich insight into the doctoral journey of managers studying part-time and may offer careful reflections on other cases, as well as suggestions and implications for educators and supervisors. Therefore, the sample size is appropriate in terms of the research aim and is congruent to the methodological choice employed, particularly given IPA has an idiographic emphasis rather a universal one (Smith et al., 2009). Additionally, IPA is appropriate to explore complex phenomena (Smith et al., 2009), which reflects the consideration of the context in this study and the intention to gain a holistic understanding. By following the systematic guideline of Smith et al (2009), this study meets the requirements of IPA research in generating appropriate data, focusing on the idiographic and comparing across cases, balancing students' meaning-making and adopting an interpretative view, showing evidence through many excerpts from the interviews to assure transparency and by fully outlining the analysis process, discussing the finding in relation to relevant theory and literature and also discussing the role of the researcher and, finally, reflecting on any presuppositions (see chapter 4.3). As discussed, being a research student myself and a contact at the agency was an

advantage as participants showed trust and were willing to share their experience, and as I was also able to take an insider perspective.

Part-time business students are in a group that is difficult to access given their professional full-time life (Gardner & Gopaul, 2012). The current study is, therefore, unique in that, four students agreed to share their stories in up to five interviews. Additionally, they provided interview partner access, enabling voices from their private, professional and academic life to be heard. Whilst one student was not able to keep one particular interview appointment (from five) or to offer an interview partner from their professional life, this did not significantly diminish the quality of the data generated but it does reflect the demanding life of part-time students.

The students' experiences detailed in these interviews represent an excerpt of their total doctoral experience and cannot reproduce the entire doctoral journey, which can last up to eight years. Due to time limitations and student access, the period of data generation was restricted to eight to ten months and did not explore students' entire study time in all its richness and complexity. And even though two students were about to finish, retrospective narratives (from the view of a submitted thesis or passed viva voce) may lead to different musings and evaluations, than might narratives from a different position, such as a crisis, that is being experienced contemporaneously.

The study focused on DBA part-time students in one specific doctoral programme, the Doctor of Business Administration at the University of Gloucestershire delivered through a "flying faculty" approach in Germany, which is why this is a perspective based on German students' cultural background. Exploring part-time British DBA students' experiences to compare those to the German students' experience would bring further knowledge about the influence of language, culture and distance in relation to the University. Due to temporal limitations, and a different focus, cultural influences have not been further explored in this study and could offer a rich avenue for future research projects.

IPA research is also limited by the ability of the researcher to reflect and analyse the data (Smith et al., 2009). I took sufficient time to reflect and analyse the data in several hermeneutic circles, developed through different levels of thinking. I

discussed findings and thoughts with supervisors, other academics, and peers to overcome and reflect on my assumptions. Additionally, the interview ability of the researcher limits the collection of data, which is why I conducted a pilot study to test probe questions and the interview situation. However, I also had interview experience from a previous study, where I acted as a research assistant, and this was invaluable and assisted in developing my own practice as a researcher. I have also reflected in section 4.3 on my role as a researcher and discussed ethical considerations. In addition, IPA relies on participants' ability to express and articulate their experience (Willig, 2013) to provide rich data. All the students in this study showed active engagement and motivation to do so, as well as the ability to reflect and articulate their experiences in depth. Although, of course, students who volunteer are the ones who are motivated and willing to do, which emphasizes their interest in reflection and the sharing oftheir experience. Furthermore, even if motivation and the ability to articulate the experience does exist, experience can still remain as unconscious or be suppressed and therefore, not be articulated in the interviews.

The influence of my subjective interpretation of students' experience is inevitable in a phenomenological study (Smith et al., 2009), which is why I tried to 'bracket off' my prior knowledge and assumptions of the phenomena during the data analysis. Nevertheless, one cannot fully bracket off previous knowledge and assumption sand hence it is important to make the role and background of the researcher transparent and explain all the steps in the methodological approach to generate and analyse data (see chapter 4).

6.4 Future research

Given the initial aim to explore stress and coping experienced by DBA part-time students, this research identified the most stressful experience as being the discrepancy of an individual's mindset as a manager and that of academic thinking and the rigour required, which led to tension and stagnation in the learning process. Exploring the entire doctoral journey from the first day to the last day would bring further insight into developmental aspects (Devine, 2012), especially how

managers create, develop and negotiate their identity and how socialization contributes to this. Instead of follow-up interviews, audio or written diaries may be an appropriate method to gather current lived experience. They may even be easier to engage with for the student and, therefore, possibly enable research to be undertaken over an extended period.

Multiple qualitative cases of different UK universities that provide professional doctorates in different countries could illuminate further understanding of the lived experience of professionals undertaking a professional doctorate and may further evidence the theoretical framework. In addition, variation in the contextual characteristics of the sample, such as family status or professional status, would perhaps bring additional insight into individual coping strategies and development. Especially where a partner is not present in the personal sphere, which has been identified as essential for the students in this study or where different professional statuses may create differences in managers' mindsets and the ability to be open to change. Also, given the cultural context and TNE approach, exploring cultural aspects in depth could illuminate possible differences between German and British culture as a source of tension and stress and enable consideration of how those differences impact the learning experience. This could also be explored in the context of other cultures offering professional doctoral education in another location.

Further research questions could focus on the DBA, but could also apply to other professional doctorates:

- How does the supervisor relationship impact socialization in the context of DBA part-time students?
- How does socialization impact and contribute to identity development during doctoral study?
- How, and in which study phase of the doctorate, does identity development takes place?
- How do managers see their role as a student during their doctoral study?
- What kind of identity do managers develop during their doctoral study?

- How do managers create and develop their identity during their doctoral study?
- How does culture impact the learning process of part-time students in a TNHE programme?
- How does culture impact the identity development of part-time students in a TNHE programme?
- How does the professional culture impact the identity development of part-time students?
- How do family status, the duration of business experience and position (senior manager with personnel responsibility) - influence the ability to switch from a business mindset to academic thinking?
- How do part-time DBA students experience learning during doctoral study?
- How does the experience of DBA completion change management practice in the long run and their identity?

6.5 Concluding comments

The present study has made an original contribution to knowledge through the exploration of a niche student group applying IPA and considering their context, which led to the development of a theoretical framework of the lived experience of managers embarking on a part-time doctorate. It particularly contributes to the knowledge about DBA students' experience that has hardly been explored to date and highlights the tension between practitioner relevance and academic rigour thatstudents face in the learning process and which requires identity work.

Development characterizes the lived experience of the students in this study because doctoral research is both a process of development and generates the outcome of development. Contextual issues cause the stagnation of both aspects of development, as development (as a process) needs to take place for success to be demonstrated (development as outcome) by the students in this study. In the light of this doctoral experience, this research also reflects that development has moved from being understood through a focus on the stress and coping of DBA part-time students to the learning process itself, as this is the most stressful and

challenging aspect for the students in this study. As a researcher and PhD candidate, I have developed from holding the view that part-time doctoral study is hardly possible, to the opinion that if someone is willing to try and can take a deep breath, everything is possible – whether it be experiencing joy and pain.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Overview of current DBA research

author	Year	country	Title	Method	Outcome	Critique
Fink	2006	Australia	The Professional Doctorate: Its Relativity to the Ph.D. and Relevance for the Knowledge Economy	Theoretical comparison of the ProfDoc and Ph.D. of one University in Australia, analysis of the internal and external context, interviews with 4 students	Recommendations for programme improvement, suggestions for examination criteria, DBA thesis is not the same as a PhD, relevance of DBA for knowledge economy and need to focus more on a student and industry focused approach Students' voice: new knowledge and broaden management skills, programme fits to students' needs as professionals, enhance status, door opener	Analysis restricted to a particular programme, small sample with focus on a broader view
Gill and Hoppe	2009	USA/ Germany	The Business Professional Doctorate as an Informing Channel: A Survey and Analysis	Overview about distribution and development of the DBA in different countries and comparison to PhD, case study of one DBA programme as sample, not empirical	Suggestions for programme improvement. Greatest benefit of DBA – creation of enduring informing channels between practice and industry, should be viewed as an essential part of the broader research ecology	Not empirical
Grabowski and Miller	2015	USA	Business Professional Doctoral Programs: Student Motivations, Educational Process, and Graduate Career Outcomes	Mixed method: survey (n=297) and interviews (n= 20) with alumni's and students	Survey: Over 50% career change, greatest contribution prestige of degree and research process. Interviews: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation - desire to personal or professional transformation, research process was important for professional development Conclusion: Process model of career outcome	No description about programme content (leadership training?), Authors talk about business professional doctoral graduates of various programs worldwide, 75% from the US, hardly not mentioned DBA, just in the model
Simpson and Sommer	2015	UK	The Practice of Professional Doctorates: The Case of a UK-Based Distance DBA	Interviews with 12 DBA students and 2 tutors from the same DBA programme of this study	DBA as complex, indeterminate process of becoming Application of Cultural Historical activity theory and actor network theory: DBA as "practice" and "border object" between theory and practice	
Hay and Samra-Fredericks	2015	UK	Desperately seeking fixedness: practitioners' accounts of becoming doctoral researchers	Analysis of 20 DBA reflective journals of students' development for assessment purpose at the programme end (based on recorded reflective diaries during the entire study time)	Practitioner-self travels from workplace to classroom context which cause struggle, moments of being stuck, students negotiate struggle through practitioners' endeavours to seek fixedness, three strategies: scaffolding through others, putting the past-to-work for explanation, bracketing identity work on certain aspects	

					→confirm threshold concept as troublesome and transformative	
Pervan	2016	Australia	Framing the socialisation process of the DBA candidate: What can universities offer and what should candidates bring?	Development of conceptional framework, not empirical derived	Provide a conceptual framework of candidate's transition to independent scholar – journey framed within four knowledge modes presented as process of socialization (disciplinary, technical rationality, dispositional and transdisciplinary, critical knowledge) Emphasise different cultures of great value (cultural and social capital), indicate supervisor relationship as not typical which need consideration, identify difference in approach of academics and practitioners and in particular different ways of thinking, confirm the theory-practice gap	Lacks empirical evidence of students' experience that supports framework, process is only linear,
Farrell et al.	2018	UK	Doing a doctorate in business administration: The case for critical reflexivity	Online questionnaire (n=15) and focus group (n=11)	The authors see reflexivity as the only way that helps to make sense of experienced challenges and to find a way through them (practitioner-researcher tension)	Does not consider context and other perspectives, but confirm problem practitioner-student tension
Davies et al.	2019	UK	Autoethnography and the doctorate in business administration: Personal, practical and scholarly impacts	Analysis of impact statements in autoethnographies, 5 DBA students (one current, four graduates)	Results highlighted the value of the integration of academic and professional knowledge and the importance of critical reflexivity and need for publication, students report stress in form of fragmented identities through academic and practice role	Does not consider context and other perspectives, but confirm problem practitioner-student tension, fragmented identities
Hay and Samra-Fredericks	2019	UK	BRINGING THE HEART AND SOUL BACK IN: COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY AND THE DBA	Analysis of reflective journal from 20 DBA graduates informed by grounded theory	Collaborative inquiry developed a humility and openness; this humility and openness evoked a form of cognitive empathy through a critical shift towards Yanow's language of inquiry where students respected and embraced difference and otherness; empathy generated a connectedness to others, creates promise for a more heartfelt and soulful practice (lead to 'better' business managers?),	
Stoten	2019	UK	How do doctoral students interpret the idea of being part of a doctoral community at an English business school	IPA study, semi-structured interviews with DBA (n=3) and PhD (n=4)	No common identity of DBA and PhD and DBA's feel less part of community	Interviewees are full-time lecturer and staff member at the university (no business managers), which influence and may create difference in social interaction with other students

Appendix 2: Letter for inquiry – initial E-Mail

The following letter had been sent out to around 150 German DBA students via E-mail:

Liebe Doktoranden,

Ich schreibe meine Doktorarbeit über die Erfahrung berufsbegleitend zu Promovieren. Der Titel lautet:

"Exploring part-time German doctoral students' lived experiences of life role stress and coping behaviours"

Ich suche Doktoranden, die sich in der Studienphase **ab RD1 und weiter** befinden und die von Ihrer Erfahrung „berufsbegleitend zu promovieren" erzählen möchten und für ein 1-2-stündiges Interview zur Verfügung stehen.

<u>**Der Haken dabei:**</u> Ich möchte nicht nur den Doktoranden, sondern auch sein Umfeld interviewen.

Eine Person aus dem **privaten Bereich**, eine Person aus dem **beruflichen Bereich** und eine Person aus dem **akademischen Bereich** (insgesamt also 4 Interviews).

D.h. Ehefrau/-man/Partner/in/Freund/in **und** Kollege/in/Chef/in/ Kooperationspartner/in **und** einen Supervisor/in.

Ich würde die anderen Personen befragen (abgeleitet von dem Interview mit dem Doktoranden), wie diese den Doktoranden erleben im Umgang mit Stress, den verschiedenen Rollen in Bezug auf die Doktorarbeit.

Ich suche <u>**einen**</u> Doktoranden (und sein Umfeld) ab ca. **Oktober/November 2014**, der als „Test-Lauf" zur Verfügung steht und dann ab **Januar/Feburar 2015** <u>**vier weitere Doktoranden**</u> (und das Umfeld). Die Interviews mit dem Umfeld werden sicher erst 1-2 Monate nach dem Interview mit dem Doktoranden stattfinden (da ich erst analysieren muss und davon Fragen für ein halb-standardisiertes Interview mit dem Umfeld ableite).

Ich weiß, das ist nicht ohne, aber vielleicht kann der ein oder andere durch den Austausch und die Reflektion auch profitieren. ☺

Ich würde mich sehr über eine Teilnahme freuen! ☺

Viele Grüsse,

Daniela

Translated:

Dear doctoral students,

I am writing my doctoral thesis about the experience to do a doctoral programme part-time. The title is called:

"Exploring part-time German doctoral students' lived experiences of life role stress and coping behaviours"

I' m searching for doctoral students who are in the study phase post RD1 and later and are happy to talk about their experience to do a doctoral programme part-time and are available for a 1–2-hour interview.

The challenge: I would like to interview not just the doctoral student but also his environment.

One person of the private field, one person of the professional field and one person of the academic field (in total 4 interviews).

That means the wife/husband/partner **and** a colleague/boss/business partner **and** a supervisor.

I would like to ask the other persons (derived from the interview with the doctoral student) how they experience the student according to stress and the different life roles in relation to the thesis.

I'm searching for one doctoral student (and his environment) in October/November 2014 as a pilot to test and then from January/February 2015 four further doctoral students (and the environment). The interview with the environment will take place approx. 1-2 month after the interview with the doctoral student (as I have to analyse and will derive questions for a semi-structured interview with the environment).

I know this seems to be an effort, but maybe the student can benefit from the reflection.

I would be very happy for your attendance! ☺

Best regards,

Daniela

Appendix 3: Detailed timeline of interviews

Candidate	Study phase	Initial	Follow up			lifeworlds			Final
			1	**2**	**3**	**Private**	**Professional**	**Academic**	
1 (Sugar)	Research	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Oct. 2015	Dec. 2015	Nov. 2015	Nov. 2015	Nov. 2015	April 2016
2 (Book)	Research	June 2015	Sept. 2015	Nov. 2015	Jan. 2016	Dec. 2015	Dec. 2015	Nov. 2015	April 2016
3 (Dove)	Submitted	Aug. 2015	-	-	-	Feb. 2016	Feb. 2016	Nov. 2015	May 2016
4 (Diamond)	Final	Dec. 2015	Jan. 2016	Candidate could not provide the time	June 2016	Feb. 2016	No contact provided	Feb. 2016	Aug. 2016

The first contact happened with the initial e-mail in August 2014.

Appendix 4: Interview guidelines of the pilot study

4.1 Student interview

Erst einmal herzlichen Dank für die Zeit die Du Dir für diese Interview nimmst!

Ich möchte mit Dir über Deine persönliche Erfahrung sprechen berufsbegleitend zu promovieren, insbesondere wie Du die Doktorarbeit mit Berufsleben und Privatleben vereinbarst.

Ich bitte Dich ehrlich von Deinem Erleben und Erfahrungen zu erzählen und über Gefühle, Wahrnehmung, Denkmuster etc. zu reflektieren.

Es gibt kein richtig oder falsch, ich möchte wissen, wie es Dir persönlich dabei geht.

Deine Erzählungen bleiben anonym und werden vertraulich behandelt.

Für die Analyse möchte ich unser Gespräch auf Tonbandaufnahmen. Bist Du damit einverstanden?

Alle Fragen beziehen sich immer auf den Zeitraum während der Doktorarbeit.

Zum Einstieg erst einmal paar demographische Daten:

Demographische Daten:

- Alter
- Familienstand
- Kinder
- Arbeitstätigkeit
- Arbeitsstunden/Woche
- Viele Geschäftsreisen
- in einer führenden Position
- Erfahrung mit berufsbegleitendem Studium

Nun kommen zur **Doktorarbeit**. Erst einmal möchte ich ein paar **Eckdaten** wissen:

- In welcher Phase des Studiums befindest Du Dich aktuell?
- Wann geplant abzugeben?
- Hast Du bereits Erfahrung mit einem berufsbegleitenden Studium gemacht?
- Wie eng ist Dein Thema mit Deiner beruflichen Arbeit verbunden?
- Was war Deine Motivation?
- Dein Thema?
- Wie strukturierst Du Dich zeitlich, um an Deiner Doktorarbeit zu arbeiten?

Die Engländer sprechen ja immer von der „doctoral journey", also ein Weg, ein Entwicklungsprozess. Ich würde nun gerne mit Dir gemeinsam Deine „doctoral journey" bildhaft darstellen. Ich habe hier Flipchart und Stifte dabei.... Wie würdest Du Deine individuelle

„**doctoral journey**" darstellen? (Bsp. Immer beschreiben lassen und wie man damit umgegangen ist)

- Anfang
- Ende
- Wo stehst Du?

- Meilensteine (Highlights, Schlüsselerlebnisse)
- Kritische Phasen (Welche Situationen hast Du als Herausforderung oder besonders schwierig erlebt? Gab es Momente, wo die Entscheidung zum DBA bereut wurde? Gab es Momente aufkommender Gedanken, um abzubrechen?)
- Euphorische Phasen, Flow
- Krisen, Spannungen, Belastungen (was belastet Dich in Bezug auf die Doktorarbeit?)
- Inspirationen (wer oder was inspiriert Dich, motiviert Dich?)
- Anker, Rettungsinseln
- Ängste, Sorgen, Befürchtungen
- Faktoren, die die Doktorarbeit beeinflussen/gefährden
- Personen, die beeinflussen oder unterstützen/ Einflüsse von außen

Was ist die größte Gefahr, die Doktorarbeit nicht zu Ende zu bringen?

Beschreibe mir Deine **RD1-Phase**. Wie hast Du diese erlebt?

Beschreibe mir den **Übergang in die research phase.**

Wie bist Du mit dem **Zeitaspekt** umgegangen? Hast Du Zeitdruck erlebt (wann? Wodurch? Von außen oder von dir selbst? Wie bist du damit umgegangen?)

Beschreibe mir die **Zusammenarbeit mit Deinen Betreuern** (wann erster Kontakt? Rhythmus der Zusammenarbeit? Art und Weise der Zusammenarbeit? Gab es Spannungen/Meinungsverschiedenheiten/ Probleme? Wie hast Du Kritik erlebt? Wie gehst Du damit um?

Hat sich durch die Doktorarbeit etwas im privaten Leben verändert?

→ Hat Dein Privatleben Einfluss auf die Doktorarbeit? Gab es Veränderungen/Entwicklungen?

Hat sich durch die Doktorarbeit etwas im beruflichen Leben verändert?

→ Hat Dein Berufsleben Einfluss auf die Doktorarbeit? Gab es Veränderungen/Entwicklungen?

Würdest Du rückblickend etwas anders machen?

Was würdest Du Doktoranden auf den Weg geben, die jetzt mit dem DBA beginnen?

Gibt es noch etwas, was Du aus Deiner Erfahrung „Berufsbegleitend promovieren" erzählen möchtest.

Dann herzlichen Dank!

4.2 Professional world – boss/ colleague

Erst einmal herzlichen Dank für die Zeit die Du Dir für dieses Interview nimmst!

Ich untersuche im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit die persönliche Erfahrung und das Erleben von Doktoranden, die berufsbegleitend zu promovieren, insbesondere wie die Doktorarbeit mit Berufsleben und Privatleben zu vereinbaren ist.

Deine Erzählungen bleiben anonym und werden vertraulich behandelt.

Für die Analyse möchte ich unser Gespräch auf Tonband aufnehmen. Bist Du damit einverstanden?

Um ein besseres Bild zu bekommen was es heißt berufsbegleitend zu promovieren befrage ich auch das Umfeld.

Du bist Chef und Kollege von Metje Rocklage. Mich würde interessieren, wie Du Metje von der beruflichen Perspektive wahrnimmst.

- Wenn ich mich recht erinnere, hast Du X die Promotion schmackhaft gemacht oder Sie dazu ermutigt??

- Spricht X mit Dir über die Doktorarbeit?
- Fragt X Dich um Rat bezüglich Ihrer Doktorarbeit? Kannst Du Ihr helfen?
- Welche Probleme treten bei Ihr auf? Was hilft ihr dabei?

- Hat die Doktorarbeit in irgendeiner Weise die berufliche Tätigkeit von X erkennbar beeinflusst?
- Kannst Du einschätzen, inwiefern die berufliche Tätigkeit Einfluss auf die Doktorarbeit hat?

- Sind im Job Anspannungen bei X zu erkennen, die auf die Doktorarbeit zurückzuführen sind?
- Wenn ja, wie geht X damit um?

- Sind Dir bestimmte Stressfaktoren bekannt, die mit der Doktorarbeit einhergehen und X belasten? Oder kritische Phasen?

- Hast Du das Gefühl X kann Job und Doktorarbeit gut miteinander vereinbaren?
- Ist hier eine Entwicklung/Veränderung über die Zeit erkennbar?

4.3 Academic World - supervisor

Erst einmal herzlichen Dank, dass Sie für meine Fragen Zeit haben.

Ich untersuche im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit die persönliche Erfahrung berufsbegleitend zu promovieren, insbesondere wie die Doktorarbeit mit Berufsleben und Privatleben zu vereinbaren ist.

Ihre Erzählungen bleiben anonym und werden vertraulich behandelt.

Für die Analyse möchte ich unser Gespräch auf Tonband aufnehmen. Sind Sie damit einverstanden?

Um ein besseres Bild zu bekommen was es heißt berufsbegleitend zu promovieren befrage ich nicht nur den Doktoranden, sondern auch sein Umfeld. Das Umfeld habe ich in 3 Lebensbereiche eingeteilt: Der private Bereich, der berufliche Bereich und der akademische Bereich. Aus jedem Bereich werde ich eine Person interviewen.

Als Pilot-Projekt habe ich X gewählt. Da Sie X in ihrer Doktorarbeit betreuen, möchte ich Sie heute als Ihre Betreuerin und aus Sicht des akademischen Bereiches befragen. Es geht also, um die persönliche Erfahrung von X berufsbegleitend zu promovieren. Auch wie Sie mit damit einhergehenden Stresssituationen umgeht und die verschiedenen Lebensbereiche miteinander vereinbart, auch inwiefern die verschiedenen Bereiche sich gegenseitig beeinflussen und bedingen:

- In welcher Phase befindet sich die Doktorandin Ihres Erachtens aktuell?

- Sind Ihnen **kritische Phasen** bekannt, in denen die Doktorandin zu kämpfen hatte?
  Nennen Sie **Beispiele**
  Wie **ging** die Doktorandin **damit um**?
  In welcher Form konnten **Sie hier unterstützen**?
- Haben Sie die Doktorandin in **akuten Stresssituationen** erlebt?
  Beschreiben Sie diese.
  Wie ging die Doktorandin damit um?
- Sind Ihnen **Ängste und Sorgen** der Doktorandin in Bezug auf die Doktorarbeit bewusst/bekannt?
- Sind Ihnen **äußere Faktoren** bekannt, die **die Doktorarbeit gefährden** würden?
- Wie nehmen Sie das **Zeitmanagement** der Doktorandin wahr?
- Hat sich dies im Laufe der Zeit **verändert**?
- Können Sie als Betreuerin einschätzen, ob X Beruf, Familie und die Doktorarbeit gut **miteinander vereinbaren** kann?
- Sind aus Ihrer Perspektive **berufliche oder private Einflüsse** auf die Doktorarbeit bemerkbar? Wie wirkt sich dies genau aus?

4.4 Private world - parents

Erst einmal herzlichen Dank, dass Sie für meine Fragen Zeit haben.

Ich untersuche im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit die persönliche Erfahrung berufsbegleitend zu promovieren, insbesondere wie die Doktorarbeit mit Berufsleben und Privatleben zu vereinbaren ist.

Ihre Erzählungen bleiben anonym und werden vertraulich behandelt.

Für die Analyse möchte ich unser Gespräch auf Tonband aufnehmen. Sind Sie damit einverstanden?

Um ein besseres Bild zu bekommen was es heißt berufsbegleitend zu promovieren befrage ich nicht nur den Doktoranden, sondern auch sein Umfeld. Das Umfeld habe ich in 3 Lebensbereiche eingeteilt: Der private Bereich, der berufliche Bereich und der akademische Bereich. Aus jedem Bereich werde ich Personen interviewen.

Als Pilot-Projekt habe ich Ihre Tochter gewählt. Als Elternteil möchte ich Sie aus der Perspektive des privaten Bereiches befragen. Es geht also, um die persönliche Erfahrung Ihrer Tochter berufsbegleitend zu promovieren und wie Sie mit damit einhergehenden Stresssituationen umgeht:

- Sind Ihnen **kritische Phasen** bekannt, in denen X mit der Doktorarbeit zu kämpfen hatte?
  Nennen Sie **Beispiele**
  Wie **ging** sie **damit um**?
  In welcher Form konnten **Sie hier unterstützen**?

- Haben Sie X in **akuten Stresssituationen** erlebt, die mit der Doktorarbeit zusammenhängen?
  Beschreiben Sie diese.
  Wie ging X damit um?

- Erzählt X regelmäßig von Ihren **Ängsten und Sorgen** in Bezug auf die Doktorarbeit?
  ➔ Was stresst sie Ihrer Ansicht nach am meisten?
  ➔ Wie geht sie damit um?
- Gibt es etwas (Situation/ Ereignis), was **die Fortführung der Doktorarbeit hindern** würden...?

- Wie hat sich die **Geburt von X's Sohn** auf die Doktorarbeit ausgewirkt?

- Wie hat sich der **Hauskauf und Umzug** auf die Doktorarbeit ausgewirkt?

- In welcher Form beeinflusst das Privatleben X's Doktorarbeit?
- In welcher Form beeinflusst die Doktorarbeit X's Privatleben?
- Kann aus Ihrer Perspektive X Beruf, Familie und die Doktorarbeit gut **miteinander vereinbaren** kann?

Appendix 5: Re-developed interview guidelines of the pilot study

5.1 Student interview

First of all, thank you for your time and effort being her and sharing your experience with me.

(Will also mention that I'm not in the role of the student administrator during the interview situation, if there are any request in relation to that I'm happy to talk about this afterwards)

I would like to talk with you about your personal experience doing a doctorate part-time, especially how you balance your doctorate with your working life and private life.

Please tell me honestly about your experience and reflect about emotions, perceptions and thinking pattern. There is no right or wrong, I would like to know how your personal experience looks like.

Surely your narratives stay anonymous and will be handled confidently. For the analysis I would like to record this interview. Do you agree with that?

All questions refer to the time span during the doctorate. For the start I would like to know some **demographical data**:

- age
- family status
- children
- profession/ job description
- working hours/ week
- business trips
- in a leading position?
- Previous experience with a part-time study?
- How close is your topic connected with your daily business?
- What was your motivation to start the DBA?
- Your topic?

The English colleagues talking about the „doctoral journey", a path, a process of development. I would like you to draw with you together your „doctoral journey "on a time scale with the connection to you private and professional life and also with critical phases, special events or highlights.

Here are flipchart paper and pencil... Here is your starting point. How does your „**doctoral journey**" look like? (Will student ask to describe situations and how the student has dealt with that, examples? emotions?)

- Start/ end
- Where are you now? (When have you planned to submit?)

- Draw a second and third line (in another colour) which shows your private and professional development during that time (How are those connected/influenced by your doctoral journey)

- Milestones (Highlights, key situations, feeling of success -> ask to describe situation, development)
- Critical phases (which situations have you experienced as challenging or most challenging, or difficult? Did you once regret to start the DBA? Did you once consider giving up, withdraw?)

- Please describe your **RD1-Phase**. How did you experience that? How did you feel?
- Please describe a normal week with your daily routines
- Please describe a classical day working on your thesis.

Structure/time/location
- How do you structure yourself to work on your thesis? How many hours a week? Where? Separate room? Do you study somewhere else? In the plane, the train…? Where do you feel most productive? Has your working behaviour changed over the time?
- In which situations does the time pass quickly, when feel it long?
- How flexible are you in your time? Do you have to discuss your time with somebody?
- What are the things that most affect your time available for you doctorate? Who in your life requires your time? Which activities requires your time? How do you balance/organize that?
- Which factors do you consider when you have schedule conflicts? Do you have a specific strategy? What is working for you? What is not? How did you feel after such decisions?
- Do you feel you have enough time in total for the doctorate? Do you feel you have enough time during the week for the doctorate?

Relationship/support/location/inspiration
- How do you feel about the fact that the University is not nearby? Have you been often on campus in Cheltenham? Do you wish to be more often on campus?
- Do you feel part of the University? Do you feel part of the research community?
- Please describe your cooperation with your two supervisors. (Kind of contact, rhythm, problems, disagreement? How have you experienced critique? How have you dealt with?) Does skype supervision work for you as well as personal meeting? Or would you prefer more often a personal meeting?

- Which role plays your family, partner? What is their opinion about your doctorate? Does your partner support you in any way (emotional or professional)? Have other members of you family done a doctorate as well?
- How do friends react when they know that you are doing a doctorate? In general, do you tell people about your doctorate? How do they react?
- Do you discuss your research with other doctoral students on a regular basis? Are there any other persons with who you discuss your research? Which persons do support you? In any kind of? Who most? Did you meet interesting people through you doctorate? Have you attended a conference and present a paper?
- Who or what inspires you? Motivates you? Gives you support and orientation when you have problems?

- Which role plays your work, your colleagues, and your boss? Does your boss know about your doctorate? What is his opinion about? Do your colleagues know? Are you satisfied with your professional life?

  Leisure time/ physical and mental fitness
- What do you do in your leisure time? What do you do to make yourself relax? What do you do to get new energy to continue your study? Did you experience situation when you have not been able to work on your thesis in terms of physical matters? How do you get access to your creativity? Does sports/exercise play a role in your life? Have you experienced situations when you felt unable to work on your thesis because of tiredness? What did you do? What helps you in such situations? Have you experienced a situation when you just did not understand an issue in your research? How did you cope with that? Did you come over it?

- Looking back would you do anything different?

- What would you recommend a DBA student who has just started?

- Is there anything that you would like to add?

  Thank you for your time!

5.2 Professional world - colleague

German

Erst einmal herzlichen Dank, dass Sie sich Zeit für dieses Interview nehmen!

Ich untersuche im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit die persönliche Erfahrung und das Erleben von Doktoranden, die berufsbegleitend promovieren, insbesondere wie die Doktorarbeit mit Berufsleben und Privatleben zu vereinbaren ist.

Um ein besseres Bild zu bekommen, was es heißt berufsbegleitend zu promovieren, befrage ich nicht nur den Doktoranden, sondern auch sein Umfeld.

X bot sich an, an meiner Studie teilzunehmen. X schlug vor, dass ich mit Ihnen als Person seines beruflichen Umfeldes spreche. Das Interview geht ca. 45 Minuten. Ihre Erzählungen bleiben anonym und werden vertraulich behandelt.

Für die Analyse möchte ich unser Gespräch auf Tonband aufnehmen. Sind Sie damit einverstanden?

Ich hatte bereits ein langes Interview mit X, der mir von der Zusammenarbeit mit Ihnen erzählte, auch, wie sehr Sie x unterstützt haben (? Bezug finden, etwas erzählen was x erzählt hat). Sie sind der Chef/Kollege von X?

Sie kennen X seit.... arbeiten mit X zusammen seit... (Describe relationship, what X told me....) Mich würde interessieren, wie Sie X in der Zeit der Promotion wahrgenommen haben. Es gibt kein richtig oder falsch. Es geht hier um Ihre persönliche Perspektive von Seiten des beruflichen Umfeldes.

Somit komme ich zu meiner ersten Frage....

- Was verstehen Sie unter einem berufsbegleitenden Doktorat, was halten Sie davon?
- Würde das für Sie auch in Frage kommen?
- In welcher Form arbeiten Sie mit x zusammen?
- Wann hat x Ihnen zum ersten Mal von der Promotion erzählt?
- Welches Ziel verfolgt x damit? Wissen Sie das?
- Hat sich für Sie etwas geändert, seit x begann zu promovieren?
- Profitieren Sie als Chef/Kollege von der Promotion von x?
- Ist Ihnen bekannt, ob sich die Doktorarbeit auf die berufliche Tätigkeit von X in irgendeiner Form ausgewirkt hat?
- Wo sind Berührungspunkte sichtbar?
- Waren Veränderungen/ Entwicklungen zu erkennen im Verhalten/Arbeitsverhalten von X in der Zeit der Promotion?
- Ist die Doktorarbeit thematisch mit dem Job verknüpft?
- Waren Sie über den Verlauf der Promotion regelmäßig informiert?
- Hat X Sie in Bezug auf die Doktorarbeit um Rat gefragt? Mit Ihnen diskutiert?
- Sind Ihnen schwierige Phasen bekannt, die X während der Promotion durchlebte?
- Wenn ja welche? Wie ist X damit umgegangen?
- Sind Ihnen Highlights oder Schlüsselerlebnisse bekannt, die X während der Promotion erlebte?

- Wie würden Sie x als Person beschreiben in Bezug auf die berufliche Tätigkeit?

X hat mir von der und der Situation erzählt, haben Sie das mitbekommen? Wie haben Sie das erlebt?

X kann sich glücklich schätzen einen so großartigen Chef/Kollegen zu haben...

English

First, thank you for your time and effort to talk to me.

In relation to my PhD research, I am investigating the „lived experience "doing a doctorate part-time, especially how to balance a part-time doctorate with working life and private life.

To get the whole picture what it means doing a part-time doctorate I am not only interviewing the student, but also the environment.

X agreed to take part in my research. X suggested, to talk to you as person of his professional life. The interview takes approx. 45 minutes. Surely your narratives stay anonymous and will be handled confidently. For the analysis I would like to record this interview. Do you agree with that?

I had already a long interview with X, he/she told me from your working relationship and that he/she highly appreciate your support. You are the boss/colleague from X?

You know X since.... working with X since... (Describe relationship, what X told me....).

I'm interested, how you perceived X during the doctorate. There is no right or wrong. This is about your personal perspective from the side of the working environment.

I would come now to my first question....

- What does a part-time doctorate mean for you? What is your opinion?
- Do you also consider doing a doctorate in the future?
- Please could you describe your working relationship to x?
- When has x told you the first time about the doctorate?
- Do you know the motivation/aim why is x doing this?
- Had this any impact on your situation/ working relationship (that x started the doctorate?)
- Do you benefit from the doctorate of X in any way?
- Do you know if the doctorate effects the professional life/daily business of X in any way?
- Have you recognized any changes or development in the behaviour/working behaviour of X?
- Does the topic of the thesis relate in any kind to the daily business of X?
- Has x regularly informed you about the process of the doctorate?
- Has X asked you for help in relation to his doctorate?
- Do you know any critical phases which X experienced during his doctorate?
- If yes which one? How did he cope with that?
- Do you know any highlights or key situations, which X has experienced during his doctorate?

- How would you describe x as person in relation to the working relationship?

X told me from the situation Y, can you remember? How did you experience this from your perspective?

X can be glad to have such a supporting boss/colleague!

5.3 Academic World - supervisor

First, thank you for your time and effort to talk to me.

In relation to my PhD research, I'm investigating the „lived experience "doing a doctorate part-time, especially how to balance a part-time doctorate with working life and private life.

To get the whole picture what it means doing a part-time doctorate I am not only interviewing the student, but also the environment.

x agreed to take part in my research. x suggested, to talk to you as person of his academic life. The interview takes approx. 45 minutes. Surely your narratives stay anonymous and will be handled confidently.

For the analysis I would like to record this interview. Do you agree with that?

I had already a long interview with x, he told me from your cooperation and that he highly appreciated your support. You are the first supervisor from X?

(Describe relationship, what X told me....).

I am interested, how you have perceived X in the period of his doctorate. There is no right or wrong. This is about your personal perspective as supervisor.

I would come now to my first question....

- What does a part-time doctorate mean for you? What is your opinion?
- Do you realize any difference between a part-time or a full-time doctoral student?
    - o Which one? Please describe. Do you have any preference?
    - o Can you describe similar/specific situation with x?
    - o Have you recognized any impact/effect on the doctorate which comes from the private life?
    - o Have you recognized any impact/effect on the doctorate which comes from the professional life?
- In which study phase is X currently?
- Please describe your working relationship (cooperation, rhythm of contact). Has he always met deadlines? Had there occurred any time problems so that you had to cancel a meeting etc.
- Can you remember any critical phases which X has experienced during his doctorate?
- If yes which one? How did he cope with that?
- Do you know any highlights or key situations, which X has experienced during his doctorate?
- Do you have perceived any changes in the behaviour of x since you are working together?
- Can you say anything about how x balances his doctorate, private life, and professional life?
- How would you describe x as person?
- What is his weakness? What are his strengths?

X told me from the situation Y, can you remember? How did you experience this from your perspective?

5.4 Private World - partner

German

Erst einmal herzlichen Dank, dass Sie sich Zeit für dieses Interview nehmen!

Ich untersuche im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit die persönliche Erfahrung und das Erleben von Doktoranden, die berufsbegleitend promovieren, insbesondere wie die Doktorarbeit mit Berufsleben und Privatleben zu vereinbaren ist.

Um ein besseres Bild zu bekommen, was es heißt berufsbegleitend zu promovieren, befrage ich nicht nur den Doktoranden, sondern auch sein Umfeld.

X bot sich an, an meiner Studie teilzunehmen. X schlug vor, dass ich mit Ihnen als Person seines privaten Umfeldes spreche. Das Interview geht ca. 45 Minuten. Ihre Erzählungen bleiben anonym und werden vertraulich behandelt. Für die Analyse möchte ich unser Gespräch auf Tonband aufnehmen. Sind Sie damit einverstanden?

Ich hatte bereits ein langes Interview mit X und dass Sie ihn sehr dabei unterstützt haben und er dies sehr schätzt...) (? Bezug finden, etwas erzählen was x erzählt hat).

Sie sind mit X verheiratet.... haben y Kinder... (Describe relationship, what X told me....)

Mich würde interessieren, wie Sie X in der Zeit der Promotion wahrnehmen. Es gibt hier kein richtig oder falsch. Es geht hier um Ihre reine persönliche Perspektive als Ehefrau.

Somit komme ich zu meiner ersten Frage....

- Was verstehen Sie unter einem berufsbegleitenden Doktorat, was halten Sie davon?
- Würde das für Sie auch in Frage kommen?
- Wann hat x Ihnen zum ersten Mal von der Promotion erzählt?
- Was ist die Motivation/Ziel von x zu promovieren?
- Hat sich für Sie etwas geändert, seit x begann zu promovieren?
- Wie wirkt sich die Doktorarbeit auf das Privatleben von X aus?
- Sind hier Veränderungen/ Entwicklungen zu erkennen im Verhalten von X?
- Sind Sie über den Verlauf der Promotion regelmäßig informiert?
- Spricht X mit Ihnen regelmäßig über die Promotion?
- Fragt X Sie in Bezug auf die Doktorarbeit um Rat?
- Sind Ihnen schwierige Phasen bekannt, die X während aufgrund der Doktorarbeit durchlebt?
- Wenn ja welche? Wie ist X damit umgegangen?
- Sind Ihnen Highlights oder Schlüsselerlebnisse bekannt, die X während der Promotion erlebte?
- Hatte X während der Promotion dennoch genügend Zeit für die Familie?
- Wie hat sich X zeitlich strukturiert, um an der Promotion zu arbeiten?
- Wie würden Sie x als Person beschreiben
- Können Sie beschreiben, wie x sich entspannt? Wie er einen Ausgleich findet?

X hat mir von der und der Situation erzählt, haben Sie das mitbekommen? Wie haben Sie das erlebt?

English

First, thanks a lot for your time and effort to talk to me.

In relation to my PhD research, I am investigating the „lived experience "doing a doctorate part-time, especially how to balance a part-time doctorate with working life and private life.

To get the whole picture what it means doing a part-time doctorate I am not only interviewing the student, but also the environment.

X agreed to take part in my research. X suggested, to talk to you as person of his private life. The interview takes approx. 45 minutes. Surely your narratives stay anonymous and will be handled confidently.

For the analysis I would like to record this interview. Do you agree with that?

I had already a long interview with X and that you have given him strong support which he really appreciates.

You are married with X since.... having 2 children... (Describe relationship, what X told me....).

I am interested, how you have perceived X in the period of his doctorate. There is no right or wrong. This is about your personal perspective as wife.

I would come now to my first question....

- What does a part-time doctorate mean for you? What is your opinion?
- Do you also consider doing a doctorate in the future?
- When has x told you the first time about the doctorate?
- Do you know the motivation/aim why is x doing this?
- Had this any impact on your personal situation? Which one? Please describe.
- How does the doctorate effect the private life of X?
- Have you recognized any changes or development in his behaviour?
- Does x inform about the process of the doctorate?
- Has X regularly talked to you about his doctorate?
- Has X asked you for help in relation to his doctorate?
- Do you know any critical phases which X experienced during his doctorate?
- If yes which one? How did he cope with that?
- Do you know any highlights or key situations, which X has experienced during his doctorate?
- Was X able to spend enough time with the family during his doctorate?
- When did X work on his thesis? How did he structure himself?
- How would you describe x as person?
- Do you know any strategies which x apply to relax?

X told me from the situation Y, have you known? How did you experience this from your perspective?

X can be glad to have such a supporting wife/husband!

Appendix 6: Final interview guidelines

6.1 Student interview

German

Erst einmal herzlichen Dank für die Zeit die Du Dir für diese Interview nimmst!

Ich möchte mit Dir über Deine persönliche Erfahrung sprechen berufsbegleitend zu promovieren, insbesondere wie Du die Doktorarbeit mit Berufsleben und Privatleben vereinbarst.

Ich bitte Dich, ehrlich von Deinem Erleben und Erfahrungen zu erzählen und über Gefühle, Wahrnehmung, Denkmuster etc. zu reflektieren. Es gibt kein richtig oder falsch, ich möchte wissen, wie es Dir persönlich dabei ergeht.

Deine Erzählungen bleiben anonym und werden vertraulich behandelt.

Für die Analyse möchte ich unser Gespräch auf Tonbandaufnahmen. Bist Du damit einverstanden?

(Alle Fragen beziehen sich immer auf den Zeitraum während der Doktorarbeit.)

Zum Einstieg erst einmal paar **demographische Daten:**

- Alter
- Familienstand
- Kinder
- Arbeitstätigkeit
- Arbeitsstunden/Woche
- Viele Geschäftsreisen?
- in einer führenden Position?
- Erfahrung mit berufsbegleitendem Studium?
- Wie eng ist Dein Thema mit Deiner beruflichen Arbeit verbunden?
- Was war Deine Motivation zu promovieren?
- Dein Thema?

Die Engländer sprechen immer von der „doctoral journey", also ein Weg, ein Entwicklungsprozess. Ich würde nun gerne mit Dir gemeinsam Deine „doctoral journey" bildhaft auf einem Zeitstrahl darstellen aber dazu auch die Verknüpfung zu Beruf und privaten Leben mit schwierigen Phasen, besondere Ereignisse, Highlights.

Hier sind Flipchart und Stifte.... Hier beginnst Du mit dem Doktorat. Wie sieht die Entwicklung Deiner **„doctoral journey"** aus? (Situationen beschreiben lassen, nachfragen, wie ging man damit um, Beispiele nennen, Gefühle…)

- Anfang/ Ende
- Wo stehst Du? (Wann hast Du geplant abzugeben?)

- Zeichne mit einer anderen Farbe Deine private und berufliche Entwicklung ein. Wie überlappen sich diese? Beeinflussen sich gegenseitig?

- Meilensteine (Highlights, Schlüsselerlebnisse, Erfolgserlebnisse ->nachhaken was dem vorausging)
- Kritische Phasen (Welche Situationen hast Du als Herausforderung oder besonders schwierig erlebt? Gab es Momente, wo die Entscheidung zum DBA bereut wurde? Gab es Momente aufkommender Gedanken, um abzubrechen?)

- Beschreibe eine normale Arbeitswoche mit täglichen Routinen
- Beschreibe einen klassischen Arbeitstag an der Promotion!

Struktur/Zeit/Ort
Erzähl mir, wie teilst du deine Zeit ein, um an deiner Doktorarbeit zu arbeiten? Kannst du mir genauer erklären, wie du damit umgehst Zeit für deine Doktorarbeit zu haben aber auch Zeit für die anderen Bereiche in deinem Leben? Wie schaffst du hier eine Balance?

- Wie strukturierst Du Dich, um an Deiner Doktorarbeit zu arbeiten? Wie viele Stunden in der Woche? Wo? Separater Arbeitsplatz? Oder auch an anderen Orten? Im Flugzeug, im Zug...? Wo fühlst Du Dich am meisten produktiv? Hat sich deine Arbeitsweise über die Zeit verändert?
- Kannst du dich an Situationen erinnern, in denen die Zeit schnell vorbei ging? Oder auch ewig andauerte (langweilig?)
- Wie flexibel bist Du in deiner Zeiteinteilung? Musst du dich hier mit jemanden absprechen?
- Welche Dinge beeinflussen Deine Zeit für die Doktorarbeit am meisten? Wer in Deinem Leben beansprucht Zeit von Dir? Welche Aktivitäten erfordern Deine Zeit? Wie organisierst Du alles?
- Welche Faktoren musst Du in Erwägung ziehen, wenn Du Terminkonflikte hast? Hast Du eine besondere Strategie? Was funktioniert? Was nicht? Wie hast Du Dich nach solchen Entscheidungen gefühlt?
- Hast du das Gefühl die Zeit ist ausreichend, die du für die gesamte Dauer der Doktorarbeit eingeplant hast? Hast du das Gefühl genügend Zeit während der Woche für die Doktorarbeit zu haben?

Beziehungen/Support/Ort/Inspiration
Beschreibe mir welche Beziehungen in deinem Leben spielen eine besondere Rolle in Bezug auf die Doktorarbeit oder beeinflussen diese? Wer gibt dir Halt und Unterstützung?

- Wie geht es dir mit der Tatsache, dass die **Uni** nicht vor Ort ist? Warst du schon öfters in Cheltenham auf dem Campus? Wärst du gerne öfters dort?
- Fühlst du dich zur Uni dazugehörig? Fühlst du dich als Teil der akademischen Gesellschaft?
- Beschreibe mir die **Zusammenarbeit mit Deinen Betreuern** (wann erster Kontakt? Rhythmus der Zusammenarbeit? Art und Weise der Zusammenarbeit? Gab es Spannungen, Meinungsverschiedenheiten, Probleme? Wie hast Du Kritik erlebt? Wie

bist Du damit umgegangen?) Funktioniert für dich ein Skype Supervision Meeting genauso gut wie ein persönliches Treffen? Oder würdest du dir öfters ein persönliches Treffen wünschen?

- Welche Rolle spielt Deine Familie, Dein Partner? Wie ist deren Meinung zu Deiner Doktorarbeit? Unterstütz dein Partner dich in irgendeiner Weise (emotional oder sogar fachlich?) Haben andere in Deiner Familie promoviert?
- Wie reagieren Freunde, wenn sie erfahren, dass du promovierst? Erzählst du generell anderen Leuten von deiner Doktorarbeit? Sprichst du offen darüber? Wie reagieren sie?
- Tauschst Du Dich regelmäßig mit anderen Studenten aus? Oder hast Du andere Personen, mit denen Du Deine Arbeit diskutierst? Welche Personen unterstützen Dich? Welche am meisten? Hast du durch die Doktorarbeit auch neue interessante Leute kennengelernt? Hast Du an Konferenzen teilgenommen und auch eine Präsentation gehalten?
- Wer oder was inspiriert dich? Gibt dir Halt? An wen kannst du dich bei Problemen wenden?

- Welche Rolle spielt Deine Arbeit/ Deine Kollegen/ dein Chef? Weiß dein Chef/ Kollegen von deiner Doktorarbeit? Was denkt er /sie darüber? Bist Du zufrieden mit Deinem Berufsleben?

Freizeitverhalten/körperliche und geistige Fitness
Beschreibe mir, wie deine Freizeitgestaltung aussieht. Fühlst du dich physisch und geistig fit? Beschreibe.

- Was tust Du in Deiner Freizeit? Was tust du, um Dich zu entspannen? Um abzuschalten? Neue Energie zu tanken? Hast du Situationen erlebt, in denen du physisch einfach nicht in der Lage warst, etwas für die Doktorarbeit zu tun? Unter welchen Voraussetzungen bist du kreativ? Spielt Sport in deinem Leben eine Rolle? Gab es auch schon Situationen, in denen du mit Müdigkeit zu kämpfen hattest? Was machst du dann? Wie gehst du damit um? Was hilft? Gab es auch Situation in denen du nicht weiterkamst oder Dinge nicht verstanden hast? Wie bist du damit umgegangen? Wie hast du das Problem gelöst?

- Würdest Du rückblickend etwas anders machen?

- Was würdest Du Doktoranden auf den Weg geben, die jetzt mit dem DBA beginnen?

- Gibt es noch etwas, was Du ergänzen möchtest?

Dann herzlichen Dank!

English

First of all thank you for your time and effort being here and sharing your experiences with me.

(Will also mention that I am not here in the role of the student administrator during the interview situation, if there are any requests in relation to that I'm happy to talk about this afterwards.)

I would like to talk with you about your personal experiences of doing a doctorate part-time, especially how you balance your doctorate with your work-and private life.

Please tell me honestly about your experience and reflect about your emotions, perceptions and thinking patterns. There is no right or wrong, I would like to know about your personal experiences as you see them.

Your narrative will remain anonymous and will be treated as confidential. For the analysis I would like to record this interview. Would that be okay?

All questions refer to the time span during your doctorate. Just to assist me in the analysis I would take down some **demographical details**:

- age
- family status
- number of children
- profession/ job description
- working hours/ week
- business trips on average a month
- Are you in a leading position?
- Previous experience with a part-time study?
- How closely is your topic connected with your daily business?
- What was your motivation to start the DBA?
- What is your topic of the thesis?

Our English colleagues leading the modules often talk about the „doctoral journey ", a path, a process of development. I would like you to draw r your „doctoral journey "over time from the start of the programme with connections to you private and professional life as appropriate. Please could you also highlight any critical phases, special events or highlights?

Here are flipchart paper and pencil... Here is your starting point. What does your „**doctoral journey** "look like? (Will student ask to describe situations and how the student has dealt with that, examples? emotions?)

- Start/ end
- Where are you now? (When have you planned to submit?)

- Draw a second and third line (in another colour) which shows your private and professional development during that time (How are those connected/influenced by your doctoral journey)

- Milestones (Highlights, key situations, feeling of success -> ask to describe situation, development)

- Critical phases (which situations would you describe as challenging or the most challenging, or difficult? Did you at any time regret starting the DBA? Did you ever consider giving up or withdrawing?)

- Please describe a normal week, along with your daily routines in that week.
- Please describe a typical day working on your thesis.

Structure/time/location
Tell me how you manage your time in terms of working on your doctoral studies?
Could you explain how you approach your doctorate and the other areas of your life in terms of having time for each?

- How do you create a structure to work on your thesis? How many hours a week? Where? Separate room? Do you study somewhere else? In the plane, the train…? Where do you feel most productive? Has your working behaviour on your thesis changed over the time?
- In which situations does the time pass quickly, in which situation does pass the time very slow and you felt bored?
- How flexible are you in terms of managing your time? Do you have to discuss your time with somebody?
- What are the things that most affect the time available for you doctorate? Who in your life requires your time? Which activities requires your time? How do you balance/organize that?
- Which factors do you consider when you have schedule conflicts? Do you have a specific strategy? What works for you? What does not? How did you feel after such decisions?
- Do you feel you have enough time in total for your doctorate? Do you feel you have enough time during the week for your doctorate?

Relationship/support/location/inspiration
Please describe which relationships are relevant in terms of your doctorate? How do they influence the doctorate? Who/what gives you support and help?

- How do you feel about the fact that the University is not nearby? Have you often been on campus in Cheltenham? Do you wish you could be on campus more often?
- Do you feel part of the University? Do you feel part of the research community?
- Please describe your cooperation with your two supervisors. (Kind of contact, rhythm, problems, disagreement? How have you experienced critique? How have you dealt with it?) Does Skype supervision, e-Mail, or phone work for you as well as personal meeting? Or would you prefer a personal meeting?

- Which role does your family, partner play in your studies? What is their opinion about your undertaking a doctorate? Does your partner support you in particular ways (emotional or professional)?
- How do friends react when they know that you are doing a doctorate? In general, do you tell people about your doctorate? How do they react?

- Do you discuss your research with other doctoral students on a regular basis? Are there any other persons with whom you discuss your research? Which people would you say support you in any kind of fashion? Who most? Did you meet interesting people through your doctorate? Have you attended a conference, have you presented a paper?
- Who or what inspires you? Motivates you? Gives you support and direction? When you have problems?

- What role does your work play, your colleagues, and your boss? Does your boss know about your doctorate? What is their opinion about your doing a doctorate? Do your colleagues know? Are you satisfied with your professional life?

Leisure time/ physical and mental fitness
Please describe how you spend your leisure time. How is your physical and mental fitness?

- What do you do in your leisure time? What do you do to make yourself relax? What do you do to get new energy to continue your study? Did you experience a situation when you have not been able to work on your thesis as a result of being ill, or similar physical or mental matters? How do you get access to your creativity? Does sports/exercise play a role in your life? Have you experienced situations when you felt unable to work on your thesis because of tiredness? What did you do? What helps you in such situations? Have you experienced a situation when you just did not understand an issue in your research? How did you cope with that? Did you come over it?

- Looking back would you do anything different?

- What would you recommend a DBA student who has just started?

- Is there anything that you would like to add?

Thank you for your time!

6.2. Professional world - colleague

German

Erst einmal herzlichen Dank, dass Sie sich Zeit für dieses Interview nehmen!

Ich untersuche im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit die persönliche Erfahrung und das Erleben von Doktoranden, die berufsbegleitend promovieren, insbesondere wie die Doktorarbeit mit Berufsleben und Privatleben zu vereinbaren ist und wie Doktoranden damit umgehen.

Um ein besseres Bild zu bekommen, was es heißt berufsbegleitend zu promovieren, befrage ich nicht nur den Doktoranden, sondern auch sein Umfeld.

X bot sich an, an meiner Studie teilzunehmen. X schlug vor, dass ich mit Ihnen als Person seines/ihres beruflichen Umfeldes spreche. Mich interessiert, wie Sie X in der Zeit der Promotion wahrnehmen/wahrgenommen haben. Es gibt hier keine richtige oder falsche Antwort. Es geht hier um Ihre persönliche Perspektive als Kollege.

Das Interview geht ca. 45 Minuten. Ihre Erzählungen bleiben natürlich anonym und werden vertraulich behandelt. Zur Erleichterung der Analyse möchte ich unser Gespräch auf Tonband aufnehmen. Sind Sie damit einverstanden?

Ich hatte bereits ein langes Interview mit X. (Bezug finden, etwas erzählen was x erzählt hat, z.B.: Sie arbeiten mit X zusammen, X schätzt sie sehr als Kollege, sie wissen von der Doktorarbeit...)

Somit komme ich zu meiner ersten Frage....

- Wie lange kennen sie nun X?
- Wie lange arbeiten sie mit x zusammen?
- Bitte beschreiben ihre Zusammenarbeit mit X. (im selben Raum, Berührungspunkte, Zusammenarbeit)
- Treffen sie x auch mal außerhalb der Arbeit?

- Was denke sie ist die Motivation von X, ein berufsbegleitendes Doktorat zu absolvieren?
- Kennen sie das Thema der Doktorarbeit?
- Hat X mit ihnen regelmäßig über die Doktorarbeit gesprochen?
- Hat X sie um Rat gefragt?

- Sind Ihnen Highlights oder Schlüsselerlebnisse bekannt, die X während der Promotion erlebte?
- Sind Ihnen schwierige Phasen bekannt, die X während der Promotion durchlebte?
- Wissen Sie, wie X damit umgegangen ist?

- Was denken Sie, inwieweit hat die Doktorarbeit von X Einfluss auf sein/ihr Berufsleben?
- Haben sie Änderungen im Verhalten von X bemerkt, seit diese/r das Doktorat begonnen hat?
- Hat die Doktorarbeit von X Einfluss auf Ihre Zusammenarbeit?

- Wie geht es ihnen dabei, dass X mit der Promotion begann?

- Hat die Doktorarbeit von X einen Einfluss auf ihre persönliche Arbeitserfahrung?

- Gibt es besondere Situationen, in denen die Doktorarbeit von X im täglichen Berufsleben zum Tragen kam?

- Was verstehen Sie unter einem berufsbegleitenden Doktorat, was halten Sie davon?
- Basierend auf der Erfahrung mit x, wäre für sie auch ein Doktorat denkbar?

English

First, thank you taking the time to speak to me, your support is greatly appreciated.

In my PhD, I am investigating the „lived experience "of doing a part-time doctorate, particularly how candidates balance a part-time doctorate and other elements of their lives and which coping strategies they apply.

To get the whole picture of what it means to do a part-time doctorate, I am interviewing not only the student, but also others in their life.

X agreed to take part in my research. X suggested I talk to you as someone who is involved in their academic life. I am interested, how you have perceived X during their doctorate. There are no right or wrong answers. This is about your personal perspective as a colleague/business partner.

The interview takes approximately 45 minutes. Your comments will be anonymous and treated as confidential. To assist with analysis, I would like to record this interview. Is that okay with you?

I had already had an interview with X. (Describe relationship, what X told me; for example: you are working with x together…, X told me that he/she appreciates you much as colleague, x has told you about the doctorate…)

- How long have you known x?
- How long have you worked together?
- Please could you describe your working relationship to x (workplace in the same room, point of contact, collaboration)?
- Do you meet x also outside of work?

- What do you think is X's motivation for undertaking a doctorate?
- Do you know the topic of X's doctorate?
- Has X regularly discussed the current state of the doctorate with you?
- Has X asked you for advice?

- Do you know any highlights or key situations, which x has experienced during his/her doctorate?

- Do you know any critical phases which x experienced during his/her doctorate?
- What do you think how X has coped with that?

- What do you think how does the doctorate influence the professional life of x?
- Have you recognized any changes in the behaviour of x since she/he started her/his doctorate?
- Has there been any influence/impact on your collaboration with x from him/her studying for a doctorate?

- How has it felt for you that X started with the doctorate?
- Had X's doctorate any influence/impact on your personal work experience?

- Is there any other specific situation in which the doctorate of x had influence on daily business?

- What does a part-time doctorate mean for you? What is your opinion?
- Based on you experience with X as your colleague, would you consider doing a doctorate as well?

6.3 Academic world - supervisor

First, thank you taking the time to speak to me, your support is greatly appreciated.

In my PhD, I'm investigating the „lived experience "of doing a part-time doctorate, particularly how candidates balance a part-time doctorate and other elements of the their lives and which coping strategies they apply.

To get the whole picture of what it means to do a part-time doctorate, I am interviewing not only the student, but also others in their life.

X agreed to take part in my research. X suggested to talk to you as someone who is involved in her/his academic life. I am interested, how you have perceived X during her/his doctorate. There are no right or wrong answers. This is about your personal perspective as a supervisor.

The interview takes approximately 45 minutes. Your comments will be anonymous and treated as confidential. To assist with analysis, I would like to record this interview. Is that okay with you?

I had already had an interview with X. (Describe relationship, what X told me; for example: you are x's 1st / 2nd supervisor…, X told me that they highly appreciate your support...)

My first question to you is.…
- What do you think is X's motivation for undertaking a doctorate?
- How long have you been working with X as his/her supervisor?
- In which study phase of the DBA is X currently?

- Please describe your working relationship with X (kind of contact, rhythm of contact).
- How has s/he fared with meeting agreed deadlines?
- Have any other time issues occurred that have led to the cancelation of a meeting or similar event?
- Is that unusual in your experience for a part-time doctoral candidate?

- How do you think X's feels about how she/he has been able to manage his/her relationship with you?
- Do you think X has found anything particularly challenging?
- *How has she/he responded to that?*
- Have you found anything particularly challenging in your relationship with X?

- Where do you think is the best place for x to work effectively on his/her thesis?
- What do you think are the best times for x to work effectively on his/her thesis?
- What do you think helps x most to move on with his/her doctorate?
- Who do you think are the most important support mechanisms for X in her/his doctorate besides you?
- *Why do you think that is the case?*

- Do you know of any highpoints or key situations, which x has experienced during his/her doctorate?

- *What do you think is it about these incidents that made you remember them particularly?*

- Do you know of any critical *phases* that x experienced during his/her doctorate?
- *How do you think X coped with such phases?*
- *Can you describe one of the things you recall strongly that X did to manage this phase?*

- Have you recognized any changes in the working methods of x since s/he started her/his doctorate?
- *How would you characterize those changes?*
- Have you recognized any development in the thinking of x since she/he started her/his doctorate?
- *How would you describe that development?*

- How have you perceived X in the following situations? (Depending what X said, for example critical situations like: DBA start, job change, boss change, RD1, …)

- Have you recognized any aspects of X's private life as having an effect on her/his doctorate?
- Have you recognized any aspects of X's professional life as having an effect on her/his doctorate?
- Can you say anything about how X seeks to balance her/his doctorate alongside his/her private and professional life?
- *How successful do you think s/he are at this?*

- What does a part-time doctorate mean for you? What is your opinion?
- Do you see any differences between a full-time or part-time doctoral student, particularly German DBA students?

6.4 Private world - partner

German

Erst einmal herzlichen Dank, dass Sie sich Zeit für dieses Interview nehmen!

Ich untersuche im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit die persönliche Erfahrung und das Erleben von Doktoranden, die berufsbegleitend promovieren, insbesondere wie die Doktorarbeit mit Berufsleben und Privatleben zu vereinbaren ist und wie Doktoranden damit umgehen.

Um ein besseres Bild zu bekommen, was es heißt berufsbegleitend zu promovieren, befrage ich nicht nur den Doktoranden, sondern auch Personen aus ihrem Leben.

X hat sich bereit erklärt, an meiner Studie teilzunehmen. X schlug vor, dass ich mit Ihnen als Person seines/ihrs privaten Umfeldes spreche. Mich interessiert, wie Sie X in der Zeit der Promotion wahrnehmen/wahrgenommen haben. Es gibt hier keine richtige oder falsche Antwort. Es geht hier um Ihre persönliche Perspektive als Ehefrau/-man/Partner.

Das Interview geht ca. 45 Minuten. Ihre Erzählungen bleiben anonym und werden vertraulich behandelt. Für die Analyse möchte ich unser Gespräch auf Tonband aufnehmen. Sind Sie damit einverstanden?

Ich hatte bereits ein langes Interview mit X. (Bezug finden, etwas erzählen was x erzählt hat, z.B.: Sie sind mit X verheiratet.... haben y Kinder... Sie unterstützten x, halten x den Rücken frei, x schätzt dies sehr...)

Somit komme ich zu meiner ersten Frage....

- Was denken sie ist x's Motivation, ein berufsbegleitendes Doktorat zu absolvieren?
- Kennen sie das Thema der Doktorarbeit?
- Hat X mit ihnen regelmäßig über die Doktorarbeit gesprochen?
- Hat X sie um Rat gefragt?

- Was denken Sie ist für X der beste Ort, um effektive an der Doktorarbeit zu arbeiten?
- Was denken Sie ist die beste Zeit für X, um effektive an der Doktorarbeit zu arbeiten?
- Was denken Sie hilft X am meisten, um mit der Doktorarbeit voranzukommen?
- Was denken Sie wer ist die wichtigste Unterstützung für X?

- Sind Ihnen Highlights oder Schlüsselerlebnisse bekannt, die X während der Promotion erlebte?
- Sind Ihnen schwierige Phasen bekannt, die X während der Doktorarbeit durchlebte?
- Wie ist X damit umgegangen?
- Was denken Sie belastet X am meisten in Bezug auf die Doktorarbeit?

- Können sie mir sagen wie X am besten abschalten oder sich erholen kann? Gibt es eine bestimmte Tätigkeit?

- Welchen Einfluss hat die Doktorarbeit auf das Privatleben von X?
- Gibt es seit Beginn der Promotion Veränderungen im Verhalten von X?

- Hat dies Einfluss/Auswirkung auf Ihre Beziehung mit X?

- Wie ging es Ihnen damit, dass x mit der Promotion begann?
- In welcher Art und Weise wirkt sich die Doktorarbeit von X auf Ihr Leben aus?
- Sind dadurch besondere Schwierigkeiten entstanden?
- Wie sind sie damit umgegangen?
- Haben Sie davon profitiert?

- Wie haben Sie x in folgenden Situationen erlebt: (identified stress situations depending on the student)

- Was verstehen Sie unter einem berufsbegleitenden Doktorat, was halten Sie davon?
- Basierend auf der Erfahrung mit x, wäre für sie auch ein Doktorat denkbar?

Man kann eine große Entwicklung bei X erkennen, sie/er hat sehr viele unterschiedlichen Phasen erfolgreich gemeistert und ist auf dem besten Wege....

X ist sicher froh sie als Unterstützung zu haben!

English

First, thank you taking the time to speak to me, your support is greatly appreciated.

In my PhD, I am investigating the „lived experience "of doing a part-time doctorate, particularly how candidates balance a part-time doctorate and other elements of the their lives and which coping strategies they apply.

To get the whole picture of what it means to do a part-time doctorate, I am interviewing not only the student, but also others in their life.

X agreed to take part in my research. X suggested I talk to you as someone who is involved in their academic life. I am interested, how you have perceived X during their doctorate. There are no right or wrong answers. This is about your personal perspective as a supervisor.

The interview takes approximately 45 minutes. Your comments will be anonymous and treated as confidential. To assist with analysis, I would like to record this interview. Is that okay with you?

I had already had an interview with X . (Describe relationship, what X told me; for example: you are married/together with X since.... having children/no children... he/she told me that you have given him/her strong support which he/she really appreciates)

- What do you think is X's motivation for undertaking a doctorate?
- Do you know the topic of X's doctorate?
- Has x regularly discussed the current state of her/his doctorate?
- Has X asked you for advice?

- What do you think which is the best working place for x to work efficiently on her/his thesis?
- What do you think which is the best times for x to work efficiently on her/his thesis?
- What do you think helps x most to continue/move on with her/his doctorate?
- What do you think who are the most important support for X in her/his doctorate?

- Do you know any highlights or key situations, which X has experienced during his doctorate?

- Do you know any critical phases which X experienced during his/her doctorate?
- What do you think how X has coped with that?
- What do you think bothers X most in relation to her/his doctorate?

- Do you know any strategies which x apply to relax/come down?

- How does the doctorate effect the private life of X?
- Have you recognized any changes in the behaviour of x since she/he started her/his doctorate?
- Has there been any influence/impact on your relationship with x from him/her studying for a doctorate?

- How has it felt for you that X started with the doctorate?
- In which way does the doctorate of X effects your life?
- Has this created any particular difficulties for you?
- How have you dealt with that?
- Has you gained any benefit from that?

- How have you perceived X in the following situations? – DBA start, job change, boss change, supervision change RD1, X's visits to Cheltenham, X's change of work hours

- What does a part-time doctorate mean for you? What is your opinion?
- Based on you experience with X as your partner, would you consider doing a doctorate as well?

You can see a great development of X and that she/he managed different stages successfully…

X can be glad to have such a supporting partner!

Appendix 7: Guideline final student interview

Before the interview:
- Identify first main themes
- Go through all transcriptions, summaries and reflections
- Identify critical stress situations

In the interview:
- Last follow up what happened since the last interview
- Follow up questions about things which still unclear to me/ or uncertainties left about situation etc
- Ask to describe the identified stress situations in the following structure:
    - Describe your emotions (emotional)
    - Describe what you have thought (cognitive)
    - Describe what you have done (behavioural)
    - Which person plays a role here? In which way?
    - What is significant for your relationship with others? (I have noted this question in earlier supervisor discussions)

Appendix 8: Example of use of Analytical Memos[1]

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[1] Codebook – Analytical memos were used to note ideas and analytical thoughts in the coding process to conduct a systematic review of the thematic framework developed from the primary data.

Appendix 9: Codebook: Phase 1 – Initial Coding and Noting (example of Dove's case)[2]

Phase 1 - Initial Coding and Noting (Case 3) 155 initial codes developed in case 3	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded	Phase 1 - Initial Coding and Noting (Case 3) 155 initial codes developed in case 3	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Abgrenzung von peers	1	3	Kritische Phase_Probleme	3	21
Anlaufphase_Aufraffen	1	3	lösungsorientiert	1	1
Annehmen	1	1	meaning part-time	1	4
Anstrengung nochmal am Ende	1	1	Metapher	3	8
approach	1	4	Methode	1	1
Arbeitsweise	5	34	Module	4	20
attitude supervisor	1	7	Motivation DBA	4	11
Aufraffen	2	2	Motivation Dranbleiben	1	3
Aufwand	1	1	Motor und Aufschwung	1	2
Aufwand nach Abgabe unterschätzt	1	1	Müdigkeit	1	2
Auseinanadersetzung mit der Literatur	1	3	Naivität	1	1
Ausrichtung nach Familienplanung	1	2	needs of student	1	1
Austesten - neue Erfahrungen	1	1	Nicht Weiterkommen_Lösungssuche	1	1
Award	1	2	Optimismus	2	2
Balance zwischen Arbeit und Dis	1	1	Orientierung Struktur	1	2
Bedeutung Doktorat	2	5	Ort	3	13
Befreiungsschlag - Initiative übernommen	1	1	Partner	0	0
Begründung Ansatz	1	1	Personality	1	2
Belastung am Ende	1	1	Persönliche Entwicklung	4	10
Belastung privat	1	2	philosophical paradigm	1	2
Belastungskurve DBA	3	6	Plan nach DBA	1	1
Belohnung	1	2	Praktische Erfahrung - Einfluss DBA	1	2

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[2] Codebook – Phase 1 – Initial coding and noting involved deconstructing the data from its original chronology into an initial set of non-hierarchical codes.

Phase 1 - Initial Coding and Noting (Case 3) 155 initial codes developed in case 3	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded	Phase 1 - Initial Coding and Noting (Case 3) 155 initial codes developed in case 3	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Bilder	1	3	Prerequisites of exchange with others	1	3
challenge	1	3	Private Umstände	3	19
confidence	1	6	Prozess - verschiedene Stufen	1	2
corrections	1	3	quality of work	1	1
Danach	2	2	RD1	1	2
Dauer Fallstudien	1	1	Reflection about own skills	1	9
DBA advantage	1	2	Reflektion über eigene Ziele	1	2
Demographische Daten	1	1	requirements	1	2
discipline and commitment	1	1	Rückblickend	2	4
doctoral journey	3	41	Rückzugsort	1	2
Druck von außen notwendig	1	1	runing out of energy	1	6
Durchführung Fallstudien_Zeit	1	3	Saisonarbeiter	1	3
Einfluss auf Beziehung Partner	1	1	schlechtes Gewissen	1	1
Einfluss Ort_Land	1	1	schwierige Phase	1	1
Einigeln	1	2	Schwierigkeit external examiner zu finden	1	2
Einschätzung Aufwand	1	4	security and control	1	1
Einsicht	1	2	Selbstbeschreibung	1	2
Eltern, Geschwister	1	4	setzt sich unter Druck	2	5
Empfehlung an andere Studenten	2	7	sich gezwungen	1	1
Entscheidung - Veränderung Job	1	4	significant for success	1	2
Entscheidungsprozess	1	4	soziale Kontakte weniger	2	3
Entspannung_Erholung_Ausgleich	2	11	Sport	1	3
Enttäuschung Viva	2	4	Sternenerlebnis_Artikelveröffentlichung	1	7
Entwicklung	2	4	struggle	1	1
Eskalation spätes RD1 Feedback	1	1	Supervisor	2	7
Fachlicher Austausch	1	5	supervisor relationship	1	3

Phase 1 - Initial Coding and Noting (Case 3) 155 initial codes developed in case 3	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded	Phase 1 - Initial Coding and Noting (Case 3) 155 initial codes developed in case 3	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Fallstudien	2	8	Support nach Viva	1	1
Feedback RD1 -Reflektion	1	2	Tiefpunkt	1	1
Findungsprozess mit 2. Supervisor	1	1	time	1	7
Fokus	1	1	topic	1	3
Freude an Erkenntnis - Erlangen neuen Wissens	1	7	Transfer	2	2
Freundeskreis	2	7	Überwindung	1	1
geplante Abgabe	1	3	Umgang mit Feedback	1	2
Grundbereitschaft	1	1	Unsicherheit	2	3
Grundsatzentscheidung	1	2	Unzufriedenheit	1	3
Haushalt	1	3	Urlaub	1	2
Herausforderung als Praktiker	1	4	Veränderung durch Erlangung Titel	1	3
Hochzeit	1	2	Vergleich Angestelltenverhältnis	1	3
Inhaltlicher Austausch	1	3	Vergleich Kinder bekommen	1	2
Interesse am Thema	1	11	Vergleich peers	2	7
Interviews	1	1	Vergleich zu Deutschland	1	1
ist weiter als Dozent tätig	1	2	Verschoben	1	1
Jammern	1	2	Verstehen_andere Perspektive einnehmen	1	5
Job	4	6	vorheriges Studium	2	12
Jobbedingungen während DBA	5	78	Vorteil - Erfahrung aus vorherigem Studium	2	8
Jobstart vor DBA	1	1	Wahl Wohnort	1	3
keine Motivation	1	2	Wahrnehmung Dauer	1	2
key situation	1	2	Wahrnehmung über Entwicklung	1	1
Kommunikation DBA in Firma	2	8	Wartezeit wichtig	1	1
Kommunikation nach außen	1	2	Werte	1	5
Kontakt mit Supervisor	1	2	Zeit für Entwicklung	1	2
Kontakt peers	3	13	Zeiteinteilung	3	18

Phase 1 - Initial Coding and Noting (Case 3) 155 initial codes developed in case 3	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded	Phase 1 - Initial Coding and Noting (Case 3) 155 initial codes developed in case 3	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Konzentration auf das Wesentliche	2	2	Zeitliche Planung	1	1
Kreativität und Inspiration	1	4	Zeitpunkt Jobwechsel	1	1
Zweifeln	1	2	Zusammenarbeit Supervisor	4	33

Appendix 10: Codebook: Phase 2 – Developing Subordinate Themes[3]

Phase 2 - Developing Subordinate Themes (155 initial codes mapped to 14 subordinate themes)	Documents Coded	References
Contacts peers	**4**	**33**
Comparison to peers	2	7
Contact to peers	3	8
Differentiation to peers	2	10
Professional exchange	2	8
Coping	**5**	**148**
After Viva	3	10
Balance life-roles	2	31
Critical point	4	32
Curl up into a ball_distance oneself	2	5
Discipline extreme	4	13
Feedback	1	5
Focus_goal oriented	3	3
Keep control	1	1
Motivation to continue	5	38
Optimism	2	2
Solution oriented	1	2
Structure	2	2
Time Management_Initial phase	2	2
To plan	2	2
DBA	**3**	**15**

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[3] Codebook – Phase 2 – Developing Subordinate Themes – involved merging, renaming, distilling, and clustering related initial codes from Phase 1 codes into broader categories of codes to reconstruct the data into a framework that makes sense to further the analysis and address the research questions and aims of the study. It further required 'coding on' of content into more refined codes to better understand the meanings embedded therein.

Phase 2 - Developing Subordinate Themes (155 initial codes mapped to 14 subordinate themes)	Documents Coded	References
Comparison German system	1	1
DBA advantage	1	2
Motivation Start	1	1
Requirements	1	2
Significant for success	1	2
Suggestions to other students	2	7
Demographic Data	**1**	**1**
Doctorate	**5**	**19**
Meaning Doctorate	2	6
Meaning part-time study	2	5
Metaphor	3	8
Place and Time	**4**	**51**
Place	3	14
Time for Development	2	4
Time Management	3	20
Time Total Duration	4	13
Previous Experience	**2**	**20**
Previous experience_ advantage	2	8
Previous Study_content	2	10
Working methods	1	2
Privat life	**5**	**116**
Choice of residence	1	3
Communication outward	1	3
Friends	2	7
Holiday	1	2
Housekeeping	1	4

Phase 2 - Developing Subordinate Themes (155 initial codes mapped to 14 subordinate themes)	Documents Coded	References
Impact on relationship with partner	1	1
Less social contacts	2	3
Parents and Siblings	1	6
Partner	4	61
Private Circumstances	3	16
Private Stress	2	5
Sports	1	3
Wedding	1	2
Professional life	**6**	**107**
Communication about DBA at work	2	8
Comparison employment relationship	1	4
Decision - Professional Independence	4	18
Job	5	8
Job conditions during DBA	5	64
Business trips	1	2
Collaboration with colleagues	1	3
Company holiday_luck	1	1
Development of skills	2	8
Impact Job on Doctorate	2	4
Job change during DBA	1	4
Load curve Job	4	11
Metaphor	1	1
Position_ task	2	9
Professional independencies_task	2	4
Reflection	2	7
Support Employer	1	4

Phase 2 - Developing Subordinate Themes (155 initial codes mapped to 14 subordinate themes)	Documents Coded	References
Working hours in employment relationship	1	2
Working methods	1	4
Practical experience - impact on DBA	1	2
Start job before DBA	1	1
Working as lecturer	1	2
Reflection afterwards	**3**	**19**
Afterwards	2	2
Change through gaining title	1	3
Comparison having children	1	2
Plans after DBA	1	1
Retospective	2	11
Research- Doctoral Journey	**5**	**104**
1_Start	1	1
2_Module	4	19
3_After Modulphase	1	1
3_Transfer	3	3
4_RD1	4	12
5_Philosophical Paradigm	2	4
6_Method	2	8
7_Job change	1	2
8_Case studies	3	15
9_Development	4	8
91_Analysis	1	1
92_Writing	1	2
93_Quality of Work	1	1
94_Corrections	1	3

Phase 2 - Developing Subordinate Themes (155 initial codes mapped to 14 subordinate themes)	Documents Coded	References
95_After Submission	2	3
96_Viva	3	13
97_Amendmends	2	6
98_Award	1	2
Stressors	**4**	**98**
after Modulphase	4	48
Challenge during start	3	10
Combination Job and Doctorate	3	5
Load curve DBA	3	7
Side effect_fatigue	2	8
Uncertainty and doubts	3	10
Viva and afterwards	2	10
Supervision	**4**	**60**
Attitude supervisor	1	7
Collaboration Supervisor	4	36
Contact Supervisor	1	3
Finding process with 2. Supervisor	2	2
Supervisor relationship	3	12
Traits Student	**6**	**67**
Personal Development	5	10
Personality	2	6
Reflection about own skills	1	9
Seasonal worker	1	3
Values	1	5
Working method	5	34

Appendix 11: Codebook: Phase 3 – Developing Superordinate Themes[4]

Phase 3 - Developing Superordinate Themes (14 subordinate themes collapsed to 6 superordinate themes)	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Emotions	**4**	**14**
Disappointment Viva result	2	4
Uncertainty and doubts	3	10
Energy level - pressure at the end	**4**	**24**
Load curve DBA	3	7
Put himself under pressure at the end	2	5
Side effect_fatigue	2	8
Strain at the end	2	2
Viva	1	2
Loosing time or finding process	**5**	**92**
Critical point	4	32
Achievement_Highlight	1	7
Clearance _ Initiate Action	1	2
Concentrating on Essentials	2	2
Discard and Redo	1	1
Engaging with the Literature	2	6
Force themself	1	1
Fundamental Decision	2	10
Important persons	1	1
Orientation to structure	1	2
Decision - Professional Independence	4	18

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[4] Codebook – Phase 3 – Developing Superordinate Themes – involved conceptually mapping and collapsing subordinate themes and their refined codes that inform them into superordinate themes.

| Phase 3 - Developing Superordinate Themes (14 subordinate themes collapsed to 6 superordinate themes)	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Decision - Professional Independence (2)	4	18
Missing structure_ start-up time_snatch up_no Motivation	3	20
Time for Development	2	4
Motivation to continue	**5**	**82**
Achievement	1	5
Ambition	2	5
Basic readiness	1	1
Boost phase	1	1
Check out new experience doctorate	1	1
Collaboration Supervisor	4	36
Experienced topic in daily life	1	5
Focus goal oriented	3	3
Keep control	1	1
Module	2	2
Motivation Topic Learning	3	17
Notes at night	1	1
Optimism	2	2
Solution oriented	1	2
Private life - safe heaven	**4**	**61**
Partner	4	61
Appreciation	1	4
Assist	1	2
Backing and support	2	2
Commitment	3	5
Difficult phases	1	3
Fear and doubts	1	3

Phase 3 - Developing Superordinate Themes (14 subordinate themes collapsed to 6 superordinate themes)	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
First point of contact	3	3
Growth of relationship	1	1
Highlight_Support	1	1
Listening	1	1
Maintain contacts	2	5
Part-time doctorate	1	2
Patient	2	3
Problem with doctorate	1	4
Pushing	4	10
Retrospective	1	1
Shared time	3	8
Understanding	2	3
Working alone	**5**	**65**
Contacts peers	4	33
Comparison to peers	2	7
Contact to peers	3	8
Differentiation to peers	2	10
Professional exchange	2	8
Curl up into a ball_distance oneself	2	5
Discipline extreme	4	13
Place	3	14

Appendix 12: Codebook: Phase 4 – Developing Cross-case Superordinate Themes[5]

Phase 4 – Developing Cross-case Superordinate Themes (6 Cross-case themes identified)	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
1_Moving forward	16	62
2_Relying on significant others	23	185
3_Balance - negotiation and adaption	22	148
4_Managing emotional fluctuations	26	120
5_Motivating and persisting	21	88
6_learning and challenging identity	28	177

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[5] Codebook – Phase 4 – Developing Superordinate Themes across all cases - involved conceptually mapping and collapsing subordinate themes from each case and their refined codes that inform them into superordinate themes.

Appendix 13: Example - flow from codes to core categories to superordinate themes
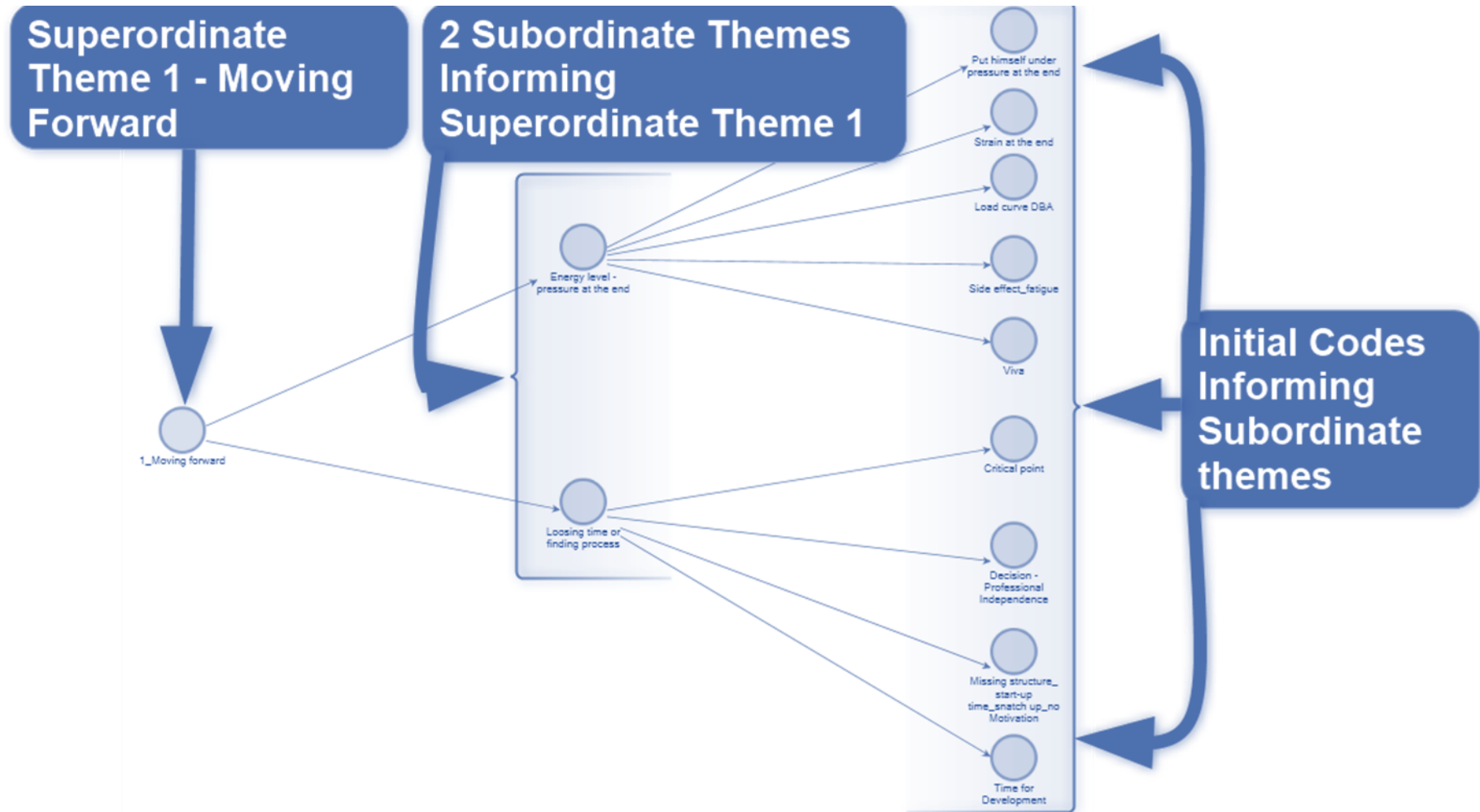
Appendix 14: Overview of student themes informing cross-case themes

	Moving forward	Relying on significant others	Balancing: negotiation and adaption	Managing emotional fluctuations	Motivating and persisting	Challenging identity
Sugar	Critical phase – lost one year Distractive factor - job	Being on campus – socialization Sparring partner and social interaction	Sparring partner and social interaction Distractive factor - job	Goal setting: panic and breakthrough	Being on campus – socialization Sparring partner and social interaction	Goal setting: panic and breakthrough
Book	Continuity and discipline Goal setting – optimism and adaption	Supervisor communication	Forced into a corset Goal setting – optimism and adaption	Supervisor communication Frustration – reality shock	Goal setting – optimism and adaption Continuity and discipline	Frustration – reality shock Supervisor communication
Dove	Loosing time or finding process Energy level – pressure at the end	Working alone – intensive times Private life – safe heaven	Working alone – intensive times Energy level – pressure at the end	Private life – safe heaven Loosing time or finding process	Motivation to continue Loosing time or finding process	Loosing time or finding process
Diamond	Countless loops – crucial question Persistent - effort at the end – dragging on	Partner as solid rock Crucial questions – supervisor feedback	Organizational changes – drenched in sweat Partner as solid rock	Countless loops – crucial question Organizational changes – drenched in sweat	Persistent - effort at the end – dragging on	Countless loops – crucial questions Switch worlds