




RESEARCH UPTAKE AT A SOUTH AFRICAN COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITY

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Literature review

- The paper firstly unpacks the literature review exploring views from across the world to understand the planning and decision-making domain and ideas about the research uptake and valorisation

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- The international literature does show that there has been increased interest in IR and that this has been shaped by various environmental (*internal & external*) factors (Chirikov, 2013; Gagliardi and Wellman, 2015).
 - We have examples of how *internal and external factors such as* globalisation and massification affected the nature of the work of IR and also how their work was uptaken and one case where there was a constraint or lag in uptake.

Research Focus

- However, despite this noted growth and nature of IR, what has not been clearly established is the illustration of how this research uptake has emerged in the different environments that IR is undertaken
- This paper thus focuses on ways to illustrate this uptake at comprehensive university.

Arguments of constraints in Uptake

- Ewell (2000) argues that the dearth of formal research on the use of information in decision making has made it necessary for some of these questions to be investigated through the experiences of practitioners IR.
- This particular research thus aims at zooming in on *experiences* of practitioners in IR and HER at a South African comprehensive university on research uptake.

Constraints in IR uptake

- In making the case for the poor uptake of IR in HE, Ewell (2000) points to decades of rich research of interventions in areas of HE challenges of which most systems have not had significant progress of improvement, thus questioning the use of this rich research in decision making.

Methodology

- Case study approach
- Purposeful sampling (IR and *HER practitioners*)
- Semi structured interviewed
- One on one interviews were not possible
- Focus group interviews
- We thus only had a focus group approach
- 10 people from institutional planning, academic planning, and institutional research have been interviewed
- Group politics emerged...i.e. dominant voices
- Interviews with HER practitioners have not been conducted

Theoretical framework (Valorisation)

Van Drooge et al, 2013

- process of creating value from knowledge by making knowledge suitable and/or available for economic and/or societal use and translating that knowledge into competitive products, services, processes and entrepreneurial activity [USEFULNESS} (Van Drooge et al, 2013)
- We use the Valorisation framework to illustrate how value has been attached to IR and HER work
- In the illustration of this process we adapted an approach by McLaughlin et al (1998) and Ewell (2000) in the creation of value to IR and *HER*

Enabling of Uptake (an illustration)

- McLaughlin et al (1998) and Ewell (2000) provide a map that can be used to illustrate how to attach value to *IR and HER*
- The basic argument is value can only be attached to IR and HER if the work by these practitioners is found useful by end users (THUS ENABLING UPTAKE)
- One key enabler in the uptake of IR is the value that end-users obtain from its utilization

Enabling of Uptake (an illustration of adding value)

McLaughlin et al (1998) and Ewell (2000)

Identifying institutional needs and defining the problems (before data is collected).....**Situational modeling**

- IR practitioners must be aware and clear of the needs of the end user
- have a holistic understanding of the activities, values, and goals of the end user
- Must be clear of the functioning of the institution and broader environmental expectations so that the appropriate data is sourced and interpreted
- This is to enable that information is produced and presented in an appropriate and useful format.

Enabling of Uptake (an illustration of adding value)

McLaughlin et al (1998) and Ewell (2000)

Bringing meaning to the data and Appropriate presentation

- The data acquisition process is then followed the converting or the restructuring of the data to useful information given the identified situation to be addressed through a decision making process
- The conversion of the data involves the integration of data from multiple sources into with the aim of making confident interpretation on a given institutional phenomenon
- The appropriate conversion of data to information thus expands the users knowledge base on the given phenomenon and enable the use of information in decision making

Enabling of Uptake (an illustration of adding value)

McLaughlin et al (1998) and Ewell (2000)

Addressing/managing structural and cultural constraints in the IR process

- At times the appropriate research maybe produced by the IR office but institutional barriers such as constraining cultures such as attitudes towards such research and constraining structures in the form of communication processes, resources, timing (environmental factors) and expertise can restrict uptake.

Analytical Framework

Van Drooge's et al (2013) and

- Mapping / illustration of the value creating process within Van Drooge's et al (2013) framework and mapping of the process by McLaughlin et al (1998) and Ewell (2000)

The four dimensions of Valorisation

Actor (several actors are responsible for valorization)	Level of Aggregation (the responsibility for Valorization is held at different levels)	Discipline (mono-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research. There as appropriate forms of valorization for each discipline)	Stage (Valorisation is a process in which awareness and interaction are important in all stages of research)
The knowledge provider	Institutional level of university	From patents and spin-offs	Formulation of mission and policy
The knowledge user	The midlevel departments	Through advice on new legislation	Agenda setting
The intermediary	The practical level of researcher		Conducting of research
			Dissemination of results and application and use of research

Source: (Van Drooge et al, 2013)

Analysis (Application one finding from the data)

- The below table presents a valorization table adapted for the comprehensive university starting off with an example of a problem that was identified in the university of which research was conducted and led to an intervention within the university to benefit the university society (students).

Map for the University of Johannesburg

- Actor/Party – IR practitioners, Other departments, executive
- Level of aggregation – departmental level
- Discipline – form of presentation

The indicators are presented in the fourth dimension (**Stage**) and applied to one of the UJ interview examples

Stage	Keyword	Indicator and explanation
Mission/ position Agenda setting Decision of action plan Problem identification Conduct research Utilisation Interaction		
Mission	Student experience	Provision of appropriate physical access for improved student experience (Institutional KPA)

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Stage	Keyword	Indicator and explanation
Mission/ position Agenda setting Decision of action plan Problem identification Conduct research Utilisation Interaction		
Agenda setting/ what is the goal or task	Assure the improvement of the student experience from a diverse student body	Provision of facilities/ infrastructure/ interventions to address specific needs of student groups

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The indicators are presented in the fourth dimension (**Stage**) and applied to one of the UJ interview examples

Stage	Keyword	Indicator and explanation
Mission/ position Agenda setting Decision of action plan Problem identification Conduct research Utilisation Interaction		
Problem identification	Water fountains	Number of students indicating the need for water foundation or available water fountains

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The indicators are presented in the fourth dimension (**Stage**) and applied to one of the UJ interview examples

Stage	Keyword	Indicator and explanation
Mission/ position Agenda setting Decision of action plan Problem identification Conduct research Utilisation Interaction		
Conducting or research Integration Presentation Interaction to end users	Presentation of research	Not sure what to put here (still thinking if this approach works and answers the questions)

MAIN FINDINGS

- most of the institutional research conducted at the comprehensive university was undertaken at the request of senior management
- external factors (Globalisation/ Rankings/massification/decolonisation drive) increasingly influencing the work of IR practitioners. This shaped what they do and how they do it

Main Findings (Research Areas)

- student experience studies, graduate attribute research, student performance research, programme relevance research
- bulk of the work done by the IR practitioners included work that provided intelligence data aimed university efficiency, institutional viability and relevance and improving the teaching and learning environment

Findings (resourcing)

Results show that Funding for IR work at the university was mainly from:

- Institutional operational budgets
- Commissioned research from internal committees
- Earmarked state funding

Findings (collaboration and interaction)


The findings showed that:

- some collaboration between certain IR units and practitioners takes place
- there was little evidence of research interaction and collaboration with higher education research units or practitioners within the university (*HER practitioners still need to be interview*)

Findings constraints

The preliminary analysis shows that one of the main constraints to IR:

- was limited funding
- Constraining organizational structuring
- lack of buy in from key stakeholders within the institution resulting in lag or lack of uptake
- the volatility of the South African higher education system.



Thank you!