

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING, STRATEGIC
PLANNING, AND ORGANISATIONAL
PERFORMANCE IN
DISABILITY BASED ORGANISATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the effects of the education and training levels of top management teams in disability-based agencies on the organisational performance of those agencies.

In this Thesis, it was hypothesised that disability-based agencies whose top management teams have greater levels of education and training perform better than disability-based agencies with top management teams with lesser levels. This enhanced performance may be mediated by the intensity of strategic planning processes and systems. This Thesis therefore dealt with the constructs of education and training of managers, organisational performance, and strategic planning.

This research was of significance because:

- the changing nature of the disability sector in Australia requires more of managers and their agencies;
- no research on strategic planning has taken place in the disability sector in Australia or in disability sectors elsewhere;
- no external research on multidimensional organisational performance measures has taken place in the disability sector; and
- no research on levels of managerial training and education and its effects on performance and/or strategic planning systems has taken place in the disability sector.

The study involved a number of procedures incorporating multisite, multimethod, and multistakeholder data from a survey of 588 disability sector organisations, the total population in Victoria and Tasmania.

The study involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches to the development of instruments based on measurement data relevant to the disability sector, and to the collection of data from a number of stakeholders.

The methodology used in the study comprised three stages. Stage 1 (consisting of two procedures), focussed on identifying the parameters of management education and training, strategic planning, and organisational performance measures in the disability sector leading to development of a questionnaire. Procedures 1 and 2 provided an in-depth understanding of the parameters from an industry perspective and facilitated preparation of a draft questionnaire.

Stage 2 involved pretesting the draft questionnaire in Procedure 3, while Stage 3 (comprising two procedures) focused on the relationships between management education and training, strategic planning, and organisational performance measures within disability sector organisations. Data were gathered in Procedure 4 so as to provide a multisite, multistakeholder perspective, while Procedure 5 added an external 'expert' assessment.

The major finding of the study was that there are statistically significant correlations between the education and training levels of top management teams in disability sector organisations and their respective organisations' performance on four out of the five measures of organisational performance used in this research. On the other hand, there are no statistically significant correlations between the education and training levels of top management teams in disability sector organisations any of the five dimensions of strategic planning used in this research. However, there are statistically significant correlations between the intensity of strategic planning processes and systems in disability sector organisations and their respective organisations' performance on two out of the five measures of organisational performance used in this research.

This research will provide some justification and impetus for managers, agencies, and peak bodies to (further) engage in the systematic development and implementation of management training and development programs. Further, in view of the many environmental changes experienced by the disability sector, such justification may provide the various stakeholders, particularly funding bodies and people with a disability, with a means of helping to ensure that the best possible efficiency and effectiveness outcomes are achieved.

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