

# **Towards an Understanding of the Strategic Influence of the Occupational Health and Safety Professional**

Pamela B Pryor

BSc (Latrobe)

BEd (Latrobe)

GDOHM (Ballarat)

Thesis for Masters by Research

VIOSH

School of Health

Federation University

University Drive, Mt Helen Victoria

Australia

PO Box 663, Ballarat 3353

Submitted 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014

Examined December 2014

## **Preface**

The primary focus of the occupational health and safety professional is prevention of harm to people at work. Whilst this is a clearly stated objective, the activities required to achieve this, and the required role of the professional compared with that of others in the workplace, have not been clearly articulated.

Both legally and practically, occupational health and safety is a management responsibility and so it would be expected that, to achieve the aim of prevention of harm to people at work, the occupational health and safety professional would closely liaise with management and be a valued advisor to senior managers. However, research (Borys, Else, Pryor, & Sawyer, 2006; Pryor, 2006) has confirmed what has been known anecdotally for some time, namely that while Australian occupational health and safety professionals frequently engage with supervisors and line managers, they have much less involvement with senior managers. Also their activities tend to focus on less strategic, functional tasks, low consequence hazards and low impact controls such as procedural compliance and personal protective equipment.

These disturbing findings are at the heart of this study. The lack of access by the occupational health and safety professional to strategic decision-making forums within the organisation may imply that occupational health and safety professional advice is not being considered, or even heard, during critical decision-making and planning. It is postulated that this lack of access by the occupational health and safety professional to strategic forums to present information and champion workplace safety and health may mean that opportunities to minimise the numbers of Australians suffering work-related injury and ill-health are being missed.

The significance of this finding is further emphasised when it is realised that, at the time of commencement of this study, compensation claims for work-related injury and ill-health were estimated to cost the Australian economy in the order of \$34 billion per year (NOHSC, 2004) which was 5% of GDP. Further, when the cost of pain, suffering and early death of 447,000 people each year (ABS, 2003) were considered, the total national cost increased to \$82.8 billion (NOHSC, 2004).

The Australian National OHS Strategy 2002-2012 (NOHSC, 2002) stated that the capacity of business operators and workers to manage occupational health and safety effectively must be radically improved in order to reduce this level of workplace injury and ill-health. It would be expected that the strategic influence of the occupational health and safety professional could be a vital step in achieving this. The role of the OHS professional has been recognised on the current Australian Work Health and Safety 2012 -2022 of which one of the outcomes is that “those providing work health and safety ... advice will have appropriate capabilities” (Safe Work Australia, 2012, p. 9). As a contribution to ensuring that business operators have access to effective OHS advice, this study investigated the question of “What are the factors impacting on the way senior managers perceive occupational health and safety professional advice” and “How does this perception impact on the strategic influence of OHS professionals”. This will develop a sound understanding of the way in which the strategic role of the occupational health and safety professional is currently viewed and, more importantly, how it might be more effectively used in the future.

The knowledge developed through this research may provide guidance for OHS professionals, managers, educators of OHS professionals and possibly recruiters, informing their activities and so contributing to a safer workplace for Australians and achievement of the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy.

## **Abstract**


As indicated by the emergence of occupational health and safety (OHS) professional bodies in the United States of America (1911), United Kingdom (1945) and Australia (1949), OHS advisors have had a role in industry for over 50 years. However, despite changes in legislation and in the major paradigm for OHS together with changes in the industrial and economic environment, it appears that the role of the OHS professional has changed little from the technically-oriented, people-focused, compliance approach of 50 years ago. It appears that senior managers may not seek the input of OHS professionals on strategic business matters that may impact on workplace health and safety, and the activities of OHS professionals do not position themselves to be influential with senior managers. This lack of strategic influence may be inhibiting improvement in OHS in Australian workplaces.

This document outlines the rationale, research framework and research design for a study that applied grounded theory analysis methods to data collected through interviews of senior managers and OHS professionals, supported by observations, to develop a theory and model to explain the way OHS professionals interact with senior managers and how the manager processes and perceives OHS professional advice. The implications for OHS professional practice are presented in the form of a letter to a young colleague. The outcomes of this research should assist OHS professionals in developing the capability to enhance the acceptance of OHS professional advice at senior levels of management and so optimise safety and health in Australian workplaces.

## Statement of Authorship

Except where explicit reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been relied upon or used without due acknowledgement in the main text and bibliography of the thesis.

Signed:



Dated: \_\_1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 \_\_

Pamela B Pryor

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Associate Professor James Sillitoe

Supervisor

## **Author statement**

Having been an OHS professional for over 20 years, and an OHS educator for a good part of this time, this study and the topic was motivated by the author's desire to clarify and address a deficiency in OHS knowledge and professional practice.

This study began as research leading to a Doctor of Philosophy. However after an initial productive period the author became the lead person in a national OHS professional project that is changing the face of the OHS profession with the outputs of this professional project having an impact both nationally and internationally. The time commitment required by the professional project did not allow for the study to be completed at the Doctor of Philosophy level. Thus the data collected has been analysed and presented as Masters by research.

## **Dedication**

This research is dedicated to those OHS professionals, OHS practitioners and others whose work and life passion is the improvement of safety and health conditions in the workplace and who believe that work should be a positive life influence rather than a source of harm.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the VIOSH community of practice that in the early days of this study provided support, encouragement and invaluable advice. Led by Professor Dennis Else, Associate Professor Jim Sillitoe and Dr David Borys, I would also like to acknowledge the student 'community' of Dr Susan Leggett, Dr Gerry Ayers and Dr Annabelle Tuesner.

I acknowledge the managers and OHS professionals who not only gave their time to be interviewed, provided me with their insights and allowed me access to their meetings. Research such as this is impossible without the generosity of such people.

The ongoing friendship and professional support of Dr David Borys was instrumental in me completing the thesis.

I also acknowledge the tolerance of Federation University Australia (previously the University of Ballarat) in allowing me to proceed with the study despite extended timelines.

I make special acknowledgement of my husband Ross Harlock who provided financial, moral and proof reading support throughout the research period.

I also acknowledge the following people who provided access to research data or reports not otherwise available:

Prof Dr Andrew Hale, Delft University, Netherlands (for access to international data collected via the *Safety Professionals Task Questionnaire*);

Frank Guldenmund, Delft University, Netherlands (for access to international data collected via the *Safety Professionals Task Questionnaire*);

Julie Honore, Safesearch (for access to health, safety and environment remuneration and related data)

Bill Stavreski, WorkSafe Victoria (for access to WorkSafe Victoria research on OHS motivators for managers).

Dr Neroli Sawyer, University of Ballarat (who applied SPSS to convert raw data collected via the Australian and international *Safety Professionals' Task Questionnaire* into percentages that could then be analysed to assist in defining the problem).

## Contents

<b>Attachments</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>xiv</b>
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>xv</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>xvi</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction to the Study</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<i>1.1 The problem and its significance</i> .....	<i>1</i>
<i>1.2 The OHS professional</i> .....	<i>3</i>
1.2.1 Perceptions of the OHS role and function.....	4
1.2.2 The OHS role.....	6
<i>1.3 Existing studies and the position of this research</i> .....	<i>7</i>
<i>1.4 This study</i> .....	<i>11</i>
1.4.1 The aim of this research .....	11
1.4.2 Research question .....	12
1.4.3 Research approach .....	12
<i>1.5 Summary</i> .....	<i>13</i>
<b>Chapter 2: Research framework and design</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<i>2.1 Research framework</i> .....	<i>14</i>
2.1.1 Paradigm.....	14
2.1.2 Philosophical framework.....	15
2.1.2.1 Epistemology.....	15
2.1.2.2 Theoretical perspective .....	15
2.1.3 Methodology.....	16
2.1.4 Theoretical framework .....	19



2.1.5	Summary .....	20
2.2	<i>Research design</i> .....	22
2.2.1	The researcher as an interpreter .....	22
2.2.2	The role of the literature review .....	23
2.2.3	Validity and reliability .....	24
2.2.4	Ethical issues .....	25
2.2.5	Recruitment of participants for qualitative component.....	26
2.2.5.1	Sampling .....	26
2.2.5.2	Recruitment.....	29
2.2.6	Data collection .....	31
2.2.6.1	Interview .....	32
2.2.6.2	Field observations.....	35
2.2.6.3	Demographic questionnaire .....	36
2.2.6.4	Text analysis.....	36
2.2.6.5	Field notes/research journal .....	37
2.2.7	Data analysis.....	37
2.2.7.1	The analytical process applied in the research .....	39
2.2.7.2	Use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software.....	44
2.2.8	Summary .....	45
2.3	<i>Summary</i> .....	46
<b>Chapter 3: Literature review: A model for studying interaction .....</b>		<b>47</b>
3.1	<i>A model for investigating the strategic influence of OHS professionals</i> .....	47
3.2	<i>Context as a component impacting on influence</i> .....	53
3.2.1	Organisational context .....	53
3.2.1.1	Industry .....	53

3.2.1.2	Size of organisation .....	54
3.2.1.3	Title and reporting arrangements.....	54
3.2.2	Social context .....	55
3.2.2.1	Organisation culture.....	55
3.2.2.2	Occupational cultures .....	56
3.3	<i>Characteristics of managers that may impact on how they perceive OHS professional advice</i>	57
3.3.1	OHS motivators for senior managers .....	58
3.3.2	Personal characteristics of managers .....	59
3.3.2.1	Age and experience .....	60
3.3.2.2	Education .....	60
3.3.2.3	Values, beliefs and attitudes.....	61
3.4	<i>Characteristics of the OHS professional</i> .....	61
3.4.1	Personal characteristics .....	62
3.4.2	Professional characteristics .....	63
3.4.2.1	Education .....	63
3.4.2.2	Experience.....	63
3.4.3	Social skills.....	63
3.5	<i>The relationship between the manager and the OHSP</i> .....	64
3.5.1	Parent-Adult-Child relationship metaphor .....	64
3.5.2	Consultant relationship: expert, ‘doctor’ or process consultant.....	66
3.5.3	Social exchange theory and reciprocity in relationships .....	66
3.5.4	Power and influence.....	67
3.5.4.1	Power .....	68
3.5.4.2	Influence .....	71
3.5.5	A taxonomy of relationship descriptors .....	71

3.6 Summary.....	76
<b>Chapter 4 Analysis and findings.....</b>	<b>79</b>
4.1 Trust in the relationship .....	79
4.2 Trust from the managers' perspective.....	81
4.2.1 Credibility from the managers' perspective .....	82
4.2.1.1 Track record .....	82
4.2.1.2 OHS knowledge .....	82
4.2.1.3 Interaction with others .....	83
4.2.1.4 Personal attributes .....	84
4.2.2 Shared understanding from the managers' perspective.....	85
4.2.2.1 Shared background .....	86
4.2.2.2 Manager as a mentor.....	86
4.2.2.3 Informal relationship .....	86
4.2.3 Confidence from the managers' perspective .....	88
4.2.4 'Affective trust' .....	90
4.2.4.1 'Like me'.....	90
4.2.4.2 Involvement in recruitment .....	90
4.2.5 Diagram summarising managers' perception of trust .....	91
4.3 Trust from the OHSPs' perspective.....	92
4.3.1 Shared understanding from the OHSPs' perspective .....	93
4.3.1.1 Informal relationship .....	93
4.3.1.2 'Bringing the manager along'.....	93
4.3.1.3 Understanding the manager.....	94
4.3.1.4 Understanding the organisational business environment.....	94
4.3.2 Credibility from the OHSP perspective.....	97

4.3.2.1	Advice.....	97
4.3.2.2	Call the shots.....	98
4.3.2.3	Change through ‘supported empowerment’ .....	98
4.3.2.4	Track record.....	101
4.3.3	Confidence and trust to get on with the job from the OHSP perspective.....	104
4.3.4.1	Strategic support.....	104
4.3.5	Diagram summarising trust in the relationship from the OHSP analysis.....	105
4.4	Trust as a category in the relationship between the senior manager and the OHSP .....	106
4.4.1	Trust and decision making.....	107
4.4.2	Credibility as a property of trust.....	108
4.4.2.1	Track record.....	109
4.4.2.2	Informed advice.....	109
4.4.2.3	Call the shots.....	110
4.4.2.4	Interaction with senior executive.....	110
4.4.2.5	Change through ‘supported empowerment’ .....	110
4.4.3	Shared understanding as a property of trust .....	111
4.4.3.1	Shared background .....	113
4.4.3.2	Understanding the individual manager .....	116
4.4.3.3	Understanding the organisational environment.....	117
4.4.3.4	Bringing the manager along .....	117
4.4.4	Confidence as a property of trust.....	118
4.4.5	Trust to get on with the job as a property of trust.....	118
4.4.5.1	Strategic support.....	118
4.4.6	Diagram of the properties and dimensions of trust .....	118
4.5	Summary.....	120

<b>Chapter 5: Summary and conclusion.....</b>	<b>122</b>
5.1 <i>The research question and summary.....</i>	<i>122</i>
5.2 <i>Towards a theory and a model.....</i>	<i>125</i>
5.3 <i>Limitations of the research.....</i>	<i>128</i>
5.4 <i>Implications for OHS practice.....</i>	<i>129</i>

**References 133**

**Attachments**

## **Attachments**

Attachment 1: Vee heuristic

Attachment 2 Graphic representation of the components of symbolic interactionism

Attachment 3 University of Ballarat Human Research Ethics Approval

Attachment 3A Plain language information statement - Manager

Attachment 3B Plain language information statement – OHSP

Attachment 3C Plain language information statement - Organisation

Attachment 3D Informed consent – Organisation

Attachment 3E Informed consent – Manager/OHSP

Attachment 4A Interview guide - Manager

Attachment 4B Interview guide - OHSP

Attachment 5 Observation sheet and guidelines

Attachment 6A Demographic questionnaire – Manager

Attachment 6B Demographic questionnaire - OHSP

Attachment 7 Example of an interview summary

Attachment 8 Example of ‘text dumps’ as part of first level coding

Attachment 9 Example of memo on the emergence of ‘trust’

Attachment 10 Example of a second level code

Attachment 11 Example of completed observation record

## List of Figures

Figure 1: The framework underpinning this research .....	21
Figure 2: A model describing the interaction between the OHSP and the senior manager .....	48
Figure 3: Factors impacting on social perception (Klimoski & Donahue, 2001).....	49
Figure 4: Interactive model of social cognition and perception (Klimoski & Donahue, 2001)	52
Figure 5: Three types of manager-OHS professional relationship .....	65
Figure 6: Sources of power for non-executive board members.....	69
Figure 7: Interactive model of social cognition and perception noting literature review.....	78
Figure 8: Managers' perception of trust in the relationship.....	92
Figure 9: OHSP perception of trust in the relationship .....	106
Figure 10: Properties and dimensions of trust in the manager OHSP relationship.....	119
Figure 11: A model of the social cognition and perception of the manager and the OHSP...	127

## List of Tables

Table 1: Research levels and the location of this research .....	11
Table 2: Criteria underpinning rigour of this study .....	25
Table 3: Demographics of organisations in sample .....	30
Table 4: Demographics of managers in sample <sup>a</sup> .....	30
Table 5: Demographics of OHSPs in sample <sup>a</sup> .....	31
Table 6: Examples of first level coding questions for manager analysis .....	40
Table 7: Sources of power and the relevance to the occupational health and safety professional .....	70
Table 8: Correlation of concepts related to influencing tactics and interpersonal relationships .....	72
Table 9: Manager quotes illustrating 'credibility' .....	85
Table 10: Common features observed during manager-OHS interactions.....	87
Table 11: Manager quotes illustrating 'shared understanding' .....	88
Table 12: Manager quotes illustrating confidence .....	89
Table 13: Manager quotes illustrating affective trust.....	91
Table 14: OHSP illustrative quotes for components of 'shared understanding' .....	96
Table 15: Change through supported empowerment.....	99
Table 16: OHSP illustrative quotes for credibility .....	102
Table 17: OHSP illustrative quotes for 'trust get on with the job' .....	105
Table 18: Principles of change through 'supported empowerment' .....	111
Table 19: Relationship descriptors and influencing tactics that may be applied by 'trusted' OHSPs (an extract from Table 7) .....	126
Table 20: Questions for further research .....	128



## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>ABS</b>	Australia Bureau of Statistics
<b>ASCC</b>	Australian Safety and Compensation Council
<b>HaSPA</b>	Health and Safety Professionals Alliance
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>HREC</b>	Human Research Ethics Committee
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IOSH</b>	Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
<b>NEDS</b>	Non-Executive Directors
<b>NIOSH</b>	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
<b>NOHSC</b>	National Occupational Health and Safety Commission
<b>OHS</b>	Occupational Health and Safety
<b>OHSP</b>	Occupational Health and Safety Professional
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>SI</b>	Symbolic Interactionism
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>WRMC</b>	Workplace Relations Ministers' Council

## Chapter 1 Introduction to the Study

### *1.1 The problem and its significance*

At the commencement of this study in 2008, the most recently available statistics from the then National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) indicated that compensation claims for work-related injury and ill-health cost the Australian economy \$34 billion annually (NOHSC, 2004, p. 2).<sup>1, 2</sup> When the additional cost of pain, suffering and early death of more than 477,000 Australians injured during this period was added (ABS, 2003) the total cost of work-related injury and ill-health increased to \$82.8 billion dollars per annum (NOHSC, 2004, p. 3). Due to differences in scope and methodology, it is difficult to compare these statistics with those for other countries. However, for the same period, the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) (2008a, p. 4) placed Australia seventh in the world for work-related injury fatalities<sup>3</sup>. Australia's ranking improved to sixth place in 2004-05 (the latest available international data at the time) but this had more to do with a poorer performance by Finland and Norway than improvements in Australia. Thus, although the gap between Australia and the better performing countries had reduced, Australia still had a higher rate of work-related injury fatalities than the United Kingdom (UK), Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries.

In 2002, the rate of work-related injury and ill-health in Australia was considered unacceptable by the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council (WRMC)<sup>4</sup> who then endorsed the *National OHS Strategy* (NOHSC, 2002). This document set out the basis for nationally strategic interventions intended to foster safe and healthy work environments and significantly reduce the number of people hurt or killed at work (NOHSC, 2002). While in 2008 the ASCC

---

<sup>1</sup> This figure is based on statistics for 2000-2001.

<sup>2</sup> This is approximately 5% of Australia's GDP for the same period.

<sup>3</sup> This comparison does not consider work-related fatalities due to disease.

<sup>4</sup> The WRMC comprises all Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers with responsibility for occupational health and safety (OHS) policy, and also the heads of the peak bodies for the employers and trade unions

reported some improvement in injury rate and number of fatalities, the improvement was below the targets set and the rates, especially that for fatalities, were volatile (ASCC, 2008a).<sup>5</sup> Thus, Australia continued to have an unacceptably high level of work-related injury and ill-health and government-level strategies and actions had not achieved the desired improvement.

It could be assumed that improvement in occupational health and safety (OHS), and so achievement of the targets set in the National OHS strategy, would be influenced by the availability and quality of OHS professional advice in the workplace. The results of the *Safety Professionals' Task Questionnaire* (Borys et al., 2006) were used to evaluate the activities of the OHSP against each of the priorities set in the National OHS Strategy (Pryor, 2006). While there may be a range of interpretations of the results, the evaluation supported anecdotal information that the Australian Occupational Health and Safety Professional (OHSP) had little strategic influence at the senior management levels in organisations.

This author, together with Sawyer (Pryor & Sawyer, 2010), revisited the data from the *Safety Professionals' Task Questionnaire* to examine communication patterns and activities of OHSPs in an attempt to clarify whether their activities had a strategic influence on senior managers. Based on the assumption that, for OHSPs to be influential they must engage with senior managers and other decision makers in an organisation, and they must be involved in strategic activities, Pryor and Sawyer posed three questions:

Who do Australian OHS professionals communicate with in a workplace, and how often?

Are Australian OHS professionals involved in strategic activities?

Is this situation unique to Australia? (Pryor & Sawyer, 2010, p. 9)

Pryor and Sawyer found that the surveyed Australian OHSPs appeared to communicate with senior managers at least monthly, but they communicated more frequently with employees and line managers. They discussed risks and safety measures less frequently, with more than 20% not communicating with senior management on this topic even on a yearly basis. The finding that approximately half of the respondents did not communicate with the finance

---

<sup>5</sup> The extent of improvement is questionable as ABS statistics show an increase in total injuries and injury rate (ABS, 2006).

department was particularly concerning as strategic business decision-making is inextricably linked with financial analysis and planning. Activities of Australian OHSPs appeared to be task oriented and focused on low level solutions such as procedures, training and personal protective equipment. Less often, the focus was operational, such as developing the OHS management system, while a few of their activities may be considered as strategic. More than half of the OHSPs reported never having been involved in strategic business activities (such as setting budgets), and more than a quarter had never been involved in developing an annual plan or report. An examination of the frequency of attention to hazard types also indicated some gaps in the strategic approach, with only a quarter of the OHSPs dealing with hazards that cause occupational disease, and less than half dealing with high-consequence hazards at least monthly.

Pryor and Sawyer found that this situation was not unique to Australia. In fact, on several measures, the European, the Singaporean and, to a lesser extent, the UK OHSPs engaged less with senior managers and performed fewer strategic activities than the Australian OHSPs. However, the Australian OHSPs appeared to be less likely to be involved in business and planning activities than their international counterparts.

While survey results provide limited information that may be open to multiple interpretations, these questions, and their corresponding answers, indicated that Australian OHSPs may not be strategically influential with senior managers. The focus of their activities appeared to be contrary to the national OHS priorities and OHS legislation (which promotes addressing OHS hazards at their source). This lack of strategic influence and focus may have inhibited workplace health and safety improvements and, in turn, hindered the achievement of national OHS improvement strategies.

## ***1.2 The OHS professional***

As this research is about how advice provided by the OHSP is perceived, it is important to describe their role, nature of employment and level of education together with the social context as a basis for understanding the problem. This task was addressed in detail by this author together with Ruschena in their contribution to the *OHS Body of Knowledge for the generalist OHS Professional in Australia* (Pryor & Ruschena, 2012).

### 1.2.1 Perceptions of the OHS role and function

Major disasters have often stimulated changes in approach to managing OHS. For example three disasters (Flixborough UK, 1971; Beek Netherlands, 1975; Seveso Italy, 1976) provided the impetus for regulation of major hazard facilities known as the Seveso Directive (82/501/EEC) (Vernon, 2005). Australia was working towards legislation for major hazard facilities when the explosion at Esso Longford in 1998 accelerated changes to the way major hazard facilities were regulated in Australia. The Piper Alpha explosion in the North Sea highlighted the responsibility of management and led to a recognition of the need for a systematic approach to managing OHS supported by effective auditing (Appleton, 1993). During this period there were changes to the way OHS was regulated and managed; the predominant OHS paradigm changed from a technical/medical approach with elements of industrial psychology based on work methods and accident-proneness, through performance-based systems approaches, to the current paradigm of OHS organisational culture (Pryor & Ruschena, 2012).

While limited by the availability of relevant literature, it appears that, during this period of significant change, the role and profile of the OHSP had not changed in response. The OHSP continued to be seen as an advisor on OHS technical matters, with few being considered as part of the management team or even consulted on more strategic matters. This lack of change was highlighted in an editorial written in 2007 (Rittenberry, p. 60) summarising the 75-year history of the *Occupational Health and Safety* magazine<sup>6</sup>, which noted that subjects covered in the first issue (in 1932) were similar to material appearing in the late 2000s.

Australian OHS legislation is based on the tripartite model introduced to the UK in the 1970s following a report by Lord Robens. Robens saw the OHSP as part of the advisory service to line management. The report of the committee stated:

...we are equally clear that there is an important role for the specialist safety advisor or safety officer, standing in the same relationship to line management as do other specialists such as personnel officers...

---

<sup>6</sup> A commercial magazine that began in 1932 in the United States under the title "Industrial Medicine".

[R]aising the status of safety advisors cannot be achieved by artificial means, least of all by measures imposed on industry from outside. (Robens, 1972, p. 17)

This view contributed substantially to the OHSPs low profile with policy makers and regulators and was reflected in the Australian *National OHS Strategy 2002–2012* (ASCC, 2005). Whilst it could be expected that the quality of advice available to and accessed by governments, peak bodies and workplaces would be recognised as a key factor in identifying and implementing appropriate actions for effective change, and that OHSPs would play a key role in providing such advice, the role of the OHSP, however, was not mentioned in the National OHS Strategy.

Position titles and lines of reporting often give an indication of the profile of a particular role in an organisation. The ministerial inquiry following three incidents which led to workplace fatalities on sites owned or operated in Western Australia by BHP Billiton Iron Ore and Boodarie Iron (Ritter, 2004) noted that there were eleven vice-presidents covering functions such as commercial, external affairs, marketing and human resources who all reported directly to the president of Western Australia Iron Ore. However the most senior OHSP had the title ‘Divisional Manager Occupational Health and Safety’ and did not have a direct reporting line to the most senior manager, implying that OHS was less valued than commercial functions. OHS may also be seen as a simplistic function, even where the organisation carries out processes with hazards of high severity. This simplistic view of OHS was evident in the report on the BP Texas City refinery explosion where OHS was seen as:

...more directly related to individual workers...risks of various types of physical injuries, including slips, falls, struck-by incidents...Protection against a personal safety hazards is both relatively simple and, for the most part, at least nominally under the control of the potentially affected worker (BP Texas City refinery explosion as reported in Baker III et al., 2007, p. 21).

A review of the organisational literature (Pryor & Ruschena, 2012) suggests that the generalist OHSP role tends to be characterised by a low profile in the organisation; the position carries a modest social status, is outside the ‘management team,’ and its influence – often limited to technical matters – appears to be dependent on the style and approach of management, and external factors such as economic pressure and union involvement.

Anecdotal evidence suggested a lack of community awareness or understanding of the OHSP role and, indeed, a negative perception of the role as being trivial, bureaucratic or ‘fun police’.

The lack of visibility of OHS in the community was demonstrated during the emergence of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR); OHS did not feature prominently in the scales used to measure corporate responsibility, nor did it appear in media reports related to CSR (Pryor & Ruschena, 2012). Compounding the low awareness of the role of the OHSP, is the misalignment of professional practice and community perceptions where work-related injury and ill health are predominantly attributed to ‘person’ factors such as worker carelessness and lack of training (Cowley, 2006, p. 133).

### **1.2.2 The OHS role**

The right for workers to have a workplace that is, as far as is practicable, safe and without risk is enshrined in Australian OHS legislation and, internationally, in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 155 on *Occupational Safety and Health and the Working Environment* (ILO, 1983). This is supported by ILO Recommendation 171 on *Occupational Health Services* which calls for organisations to have access to “sufficient and appropriate expertise” as a basic right of all working people (ILO, 1985). In Australia OHS is recognised as a management responsibility but it is considered part of the due diligence of a manager to ensure that they do all that is reasonably practicable to obtain appropriate advice. This responsibility is noted in the Interpretive guideline published by Safe Work Australia on the duty of an Officer under the Model Work Health and Safety Act:

To the extent to which an officer will seek to rely on others, the officer must be able to demonstrate the reasonableness of that reliance, which may be demonstrated through the receipt of credible information and advice from appropriate people. (Safe Work Australia, p. 5)

Pryor and Ruschena (2012) summarised the role and focus of the OHS professional as lacking clarity with no recognised scope or approach, suggesting that:

There is no clear agreement on the scope of the role of the generalist OHS professional within Australia or internationally. This is reflected in the range of OHS-position titles, such as ‘advisor’, ‘coordinator’, ‘manager’ and ‘consultant.’ In 2005, an international survey indicated that although there was some commonality among core tasks related to technical issues and mechanical hazards, there was significant variation in the OHS professional role across Australian workplaces (Hale & Guldenmund, 2006). Compared with their international counterparts, Australian OHS professionals tended to deal with a broader spread of hazards, including stress and wellbeing, occupational disease and transport safety, and a greater workplace emphasis on safety management systems and safe design (Hale & Guldenmund, 2006). Unlike other countries, in Australia there was no differentiation between the task profiles of university-educated and vocationally educated professionals (Hale & Guldenmund, 2006). (Pryor & Ruschena, 2012, p. 9)

OHS in Australia is not a regulated profession; there are no education or experience requirements to practice. Excluding research qualifications, current OHS training and education ranges from certificate IV, diploma/advanced diploma through to undergraduate degree and graduate certificate/diploma, and masters with entry potentially being at any level. Generally, OHS is studied as a secondary discipline by mature age students on a part time fee-paying basis. While there has been an increasing demand for university level OHS qualifications, OHS is not a highly valued discipline within universities, resulting in the demise of some OHS bachelor-degree programs which has negatively impacted on the acceptance of OHS as a profession (Pryor, 2004; Toft et al., 2010). However, while small and medium sized organisations may not differentiate between university and vocational OHS qualifications, larger organisations are recognising the knowledge and skills of university qualified OHSPs, with OHSPs holding OHS qualifications at the graduate diploma and masters levels predominating at senior levels (Safesearch, 2008, 2011).

The *Safety Professionals' Task Questionnaire* (Borys et al., 2006) found that OHSPs tend to work in large organisations and across multiple sites. They most commonly work as an internal advisor, less often as an external consultant with external consultants potentially working with small, medium or large organisations. The OHSP is most likely to be a sole practitioner or work with only one other person in their field. The industries in which OHSPs most commonly work are, in descending order, manufacturing; mining, oil and gas; personal and other services; health and community services; transport, storage and communication; education; and construction. The OHS government inspectorates are also employers of OHS professionals (Borys et al., 2006).

OHS professionals are currently recognised through voluntary grading processes conducted by OHS professional organisations with five professional bodies recognising the four key disciplines of OHS: safety, ergonomics, occupational hygiene and occupational health.

### ***1.3 Existing studies and the position of this research***

In 1998, Hale and Hovden examined and categorised studies into the management of OHS reported in the previous 20 years to identify factors that may impact on OHS performance. They categorised the papers into 34 research streams and then examined the papers for



mention of 'structural topics'. One of the sixteen structural topics was 'specialist advisory service' which was mentioned in nine (9) research streams, the lowest number of mentions, with the average per topic being 17.7. On using an alternative classification of 'symbolic topics' a 'high status safety officer' received three (3) mentions, where the average number of mentions for the 13 symbolic topics was 7.1. It should be noted that these references are 'mentions'; they do not imply that the topic was addressed in any detail. Also, the majority of the studies related to the nuclear and chemical industries, which are usually large, bureaucratic organisations. Hale and Hovden commented that the articles reviewed reflected a relative immaturity of the field of research and lacked a theoretical underpinning (Hale & Hovden, 1998).

Review of a summary of research reports at the commencement of this study (2008) for the US National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH, 2006)<sup>7</sup>, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH, 2005) and the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC, 2008b) showed a different emphasis for research. Applying a medical/hygiene model of OHS, they focus on disease and injury, and work environment, with some attention to evaluation of interventions. For these institutes, the role of OHS management and organisational culture was not a priority for research. OHS research sponsored by the UK Health and Safety and Executive (HSE) had a similar focus but did include areas such as 'management and organisational factors' and 'economics of health and safety'. Under the category of 'management and organisational factors', one HSE study referred to OHS advisors but in a roving role in the agricultural industry, which is different to the topic of this research.

The literature was reviewed by this author to identify whether similar concerns had been raised regarding the profile and strategic influence of OHSPs by other researchers or writers in Australia, or internationally. Given that the parameters of the search included a 25 year timeframe (1983-2008), a notable feature was the lack of key articles, especially in peer-

---

<sup>7</sup> Additional review of national research agendas for six industry sectors found that only one (construction) had goals relating to management of OHS. These goals focus on more generic management issues rather than delving into details such as the role of the professional OHS advice (NIOSH, 2008).

reviewed journals. Five articles were located that provided first-hand reports of research (Borys et al., 2006; Brun & Loiselle, 2002; Dawson, Poynter, & Stevens, 1984; Hale & Guldenmund, 2006; MacIntosh & Gough, 1998). One further article was based on an extensive literature review (Dwyer, 1992), and there were two book excerpts (Mayhew & Peterson, 1999; Quinlan & Bohle, 1991). There were also several opinion pieces that included some literature review (Adams, 2000; Blewett & Shaw, 1996; Eckenfelder, 1998; Hill, 2002; Nelson, 1994).

As noted in Section 1.1, the lack of engagement of the OHSP at strategic levels has been known anecdotally for many years. It was first confirmed internationally by Brun and Loiselle (2002) in their study of roles, functions and activities of Canadian OHSPs. They found that approximately 59% of Canadian OHSPs reported that their advice was frequently sought on technical matters; however when more important issues, such as the purchase of equipment, was at stake, only 17% had their opinion sought regularly. When corporate issues with OHS elements were involved, the opinions of the OHSP were rarely requested or considered. This finding has not been specifically researched by other authors but was confirmed indirectly in the international comparison of the role and tasks of OHSPs undertaken by Hale and Guldenmund (2006). The Australian studies by Borys et al., (2006) and Pryor (2006) identified that the problem existed in Australia and, together with Hale and Guldenmund added the dimension of the OHSP focus being on low-consequence hazards and risk control actions low on the preferred priority of controls.

Pryor (2006) goes some way towards quantifying the nationally strategic implications of the lack of engagement of the OHSP with senior managers and the focus on hazards of high frequency and low level of risk controls. Cameron et al., (2007), who investigated the impact of the OHSP in the UK construction industry, is the only writer to examine the role of the OHSP and their impact on organisational strategic outcomes.

Thus, at commencement of this study, research into the role of the OHSP and their strategic influence, or on the engagement of the OHSP at strategic levels of management, was in the very early stages. The key papers on this topic were Brun and Loiselle (2002), Pryor (2006),

Cameron et al., (2007), and to a lesser extent Borys et al., (2006) and Hale and Guldenmund (2006).

Applying Hussey and Hussey's (1997) description of research levels, these papers are at the exploratory level of research, and answer the following questions as posed by Hussey and Hussey:

*Is there a problem?*            Yes

*What is the problem?*        In Australia, improvement in OHS in the workplace may be inhibited by the lack of specialist OHS advice at the senior management level and the focus of the OHSP on low-consequence hazards and low-level risk controls.

One of the papers (Pryor, 2006) is also at the descriptive level and begins to answer the question of the extent of the problem. There has not yet been any research that has gone as far as addressing Hussey and Hussey's questions at the analytical/explanatory or predictive levels.

Thus there is an identified need to further clarify the extent of the problem and to identify contributing factors and how they might interact. This research is at the descriptive and explanatory levels and, while it will not go as far as being predictive, the outcomes will provide a basis for predictive research (Table 1).

**Table 1: Research levels and the location of this research**

Research level <sup>a</sup>	Major question <sup>a</sup>	Research on the involvement of the OHSP with senior management and on strategic issues
Exploratory	Is there a problem?	Brun and Loiselle, 2002; Borys et al., 2006; Hale and Guldenmund, 2006; Pryor, 2006
	What is the problem?	Cameron et al., 2007; Pryor, 2006
Descriptive	What is the extent of the problem?	Pryor, 2006
	What things contribute to the problem?	<b><i>Focus of this research</i></b>
Analytical or explanatory	How do various factors affect the problem?	
	Do various factors interact with each other?	
Predictive	How will current conditions affect tomorrow's outcomes?	<i>This research will provide a basis for future predictive investigation.</i>
	What if we alter this variable?	

<sup>a</sup> As suggested by Hussey and Hussey, 1997.

## 1.4 This study

### 1.4.1 The aim of this research

The aim of this research is to develop an understanding of the factors impacting on the strategic influence of the OHSP with senior managers with a view to supporting improvement in OHS in Australian workplaces and hence achievement of the national OHS targets.

The objective is to understand the individual cognitive processes, interpersonal relationships and the social and organisational pressures that may act on senior managers and the OHSP, and by so doing, impact on the way in which OHS advice is perceived by the manager. Thus this research is about engaging with, and making sense of, the social reality constructed by people within the corporate organisational environment to develop an understanding of the relationships and the factors that may impact on how OHS professional advice is valued. The

knowledge developed through this study may provide guidance for policy makers, organisations, OHS educators, recruiters, OHS professional bodies and OHSPs themselves for developing strategies to enhance the acceptance of OHS professional advice at senior levels of management to optimise OHS in the workplace.

#### **1.4.2 Research question**

In order to achieve the above aim, the key research question has been formulated as:

*What factors impact on the strategic influence of OHS professionals with senior managers?*

Answering this question will provide an understanding of the factors potentially impacting on the way in which OHS professional advice is perceived and applied in making decisions which may impact on OHS.

#### **1.4.3 Research approach**

The focus of this study is the relationship between the OHSP and the senior manager and on 'OHS professional advice'. This advice may be provided in a range of ways: orally, in face-to-face informal conversation, a meeting, or a formal presentation; in written format, informally via email, or in more formal reports. The advice may be solicited by the manager or initiated by the OHSP. Understanding these exchanges, or communications, between the OHSP and the senior manager, and how the manager perceives and applies the advice, is a key step in this research.

The study is in two phases. The first phase is a literature review, the objective of which is two-fold. Initially, a model was identified which provides a framework for the research; second, the literature was used to generate 'sensitising concepts' to inform the data collection and analysis. The second phase is a qualitative analysis of data collected through interviews of senior managers and OHSPs (as matched dyads) and observation of interactions between senior managers. The analysis of this data was informed by methodology developed for grounded theory investigations.

## **1.5 Summary**

In this overview of the rationale for the study, the role and nature of the OHSP's function in Australia has been discussed in order to assist in understanding the problem. In essence, many Australian workplaces have access to OHS professional advice and this advice may be provided by people with a range of educational backgrounds and a variety of titles. However, it appears that most of the activity of the OHSP is focused on low-consequence hazards and low-level risk controls with the advice not being provided to, or not being accessed by, senior managers. Thus a lack of OHS professional advice is likely to be inhibiting improvement in OHS in Australian workplaces and so achievement of the national OHS objectives.

This study will begin to address this problem by identifying factors with a potential to impact on the strategic influence of the OHSP and so may provide guidance for policy makers, organisations, OHS educators, recruiters, OHS professional bodies and OHSPs themselves for developing strategies to enhance the acceptance of OHS professional advice at senior levels of management to optimise OHS in the workplace.

The research framework and research design is described in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents a model for considering the interaction between managers and OHSPs derived from the literature. Chapter 3 then provides a critical review of the literature relating to the components of the model as they might relate to the interaction of the manager and the OHSP. The research results and analysis are presented and discussed in Chapter 4 with the summary, conclusions and implications for OHS practice reported in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 2: Research framework and design**

Research, as a “diligent and systematic enquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover facts and principles”<sup>8</sup> has been described as a journey where the route and experience is as important as the destination; or as a culture with its customs, myths and rituals. Research can also be seen as a jigsaw where the methodology, literature review, collected data and conclusions have to be brought together to make an integrated whole, with the pieces that do not quite fit also being addressed (Sillitoe, 2008). For a researcher to place themselves, and their research, in the culture, and to manage their journey while putting the jigsaw together, requires a scaffold or point of reference. This chapter provides such a scaffold by describing the philosophical and theoretical framework for the research which sets the basis for the research design.

The chapter begins by describing the underpinning assumptions and intellectual paradigm that defines the work, and then constructs the research framework using Crotty’s four elements that inform one another: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods (Crotty, 1998). A Vee heuristic describing the research framework is provided as Attachment 1. The second part of the chapter describes the research design, including the role of the literature review and the important issues of: the researcher as an interpreter; validity and reliability; ethics; and the recruitment of participants. It finally outlines the methods of data collection and analysis.

### ***2.1 Research framework***

#### **2.1.1 Paradigm**

This study is based on the assumption that there is an evidence-informed approach to OHS that should underpin management decision-making. Without this evidence-base, OHS and risk

---

<sup>8</sup> Macquarie Dictionary (Macquarie University, 1986)

management decisions are often superficial and do not address underlying issues. A suitably qualified OHSP will have developed the conceptual basis, technical knowledge and skills to enable them to provide advice for effective OHS and risk management.

## **2.1.2 Philosophical framework**

### **2.1.2.1 Epistemology**

The epistemology selected for this research is *constructionism*, which is defined by Crotty (1998, p. 42) as “knowledge and meaningful reality being contingent upon human practices and constructed in and out of the interaction between human beings and the world, and developed and transmitted within a social context” (p.42). In constructionist research, meanings are uncovered as they have been constructed by human beings whilst they engage with the world and experience the reality of the world. Crotty emphasises that, when applying a constructionist epistemology, there is no ‘true’ interpretation, but there are useful interpretations which can be used as a basis of understanding complex social phenomena.

### **2.1.2.2 Theoretical perspective**

The theoretical perspective, or philosophical stance behind the methodology, is *interpretivism*, and is informed by a *symbolic interactionist (SI)* approach. Interpretivism is consistent with a constructionist epistemology as it seeks to understand social reality by looking at culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life of the world (Crotty, 1998). Crotty (p. 54) states that to apply a constructionist approach of engaging with the world in order to make sense of it, requires that the historical and social perspective also be understood.

Symbolic interactionism has been described as “a unique perspective that is part of social science which assists in understanding human action by focusing on the interaction with others, the history of action and the many decisions and choices people make”. (Charon, 2010, p. xi). Symbolic interactionism is particularly useful as it allows for the interaction and relationships occurring from a simple one-on-one interaction to more complex situations such as an OHSP operating within an organisation. Taking Blumer’s definition, such relationships have at least the beginnings of ‘society’. Blumer (in Charon, 2010, p. 154) considers society to



consist of people who are able to work together because they construct their actions together, and they are able to do this through communicating with one another and understanding one another's communication, thereby identifying what one must do in the interaction.

Charon considers that what goes on in the human world is always traceable to social interaction (2010, p. 137) which is the intersection of different people's streams of action, each altering their stream of action according, in part, to what others do; and over time such interaction leads to a shared view of reality, a perspective, which enters into their definition, decision-making and action (p. 125). Charon lists five central ideas to symbolic interactionism (p. 28). Firstly, the human being is a social person, what they do depends on interaction with others, both in the past and the present. Secondly, the human being is a thinking being with human interaction not only being the result of interaction among individuals but interaction within the individual through conversing with themselves as they interact with others (i.e. thinking). No two humans think alike as they create a reality that is uniquely their own through their internal conversations. Thirdly, humans interpret their current situation or environment through the 'lens' of their social interaction and thinking. Fourthly, human action is the result of what is occurring in the present situation, the present interaction and present thinking. The past impacts on the current actions mainly through how they think about the past and use the past to define the present situation. Fifthly, human beings are actively involved in what they do; they are not passive outcomes of their past.

The perspective of symbolic interactionism that has informed the data analysis for this study is that as described by Charon (2010). The components of symbolic interactionism and the determinants of behaviour in particular situations as described by Charon are represented in mind maps constructed by this author (Attachment 2).

### **2.1.3 Methodology**

This is a qualitative study using modified grounded theory methods to inform the analysis in order to develop an explanation for the social constructs that result in, or impact on, the strategic influence of the OHS professionals who were interviewed. Originally conceptualised by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967 and described in detail in their *The discovery of*

*grounded theory*, grounded theory is a method of qualitative research originally evolving through symbolic interactionism (Morse in Schreiber & Stern, 2001, Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). It focuses on using inductive analysis to develop categories, which are ‘grounded’ in the data, to create conceptual frameworks, or theories (Charmaz, 2006).

According to Glaser and Strauss (in Charmaz, 2006) the defining components of grounded theory include simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis and constructing analytic codes from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses. It uses the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis; advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis; memo writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties and the relationships between categories, and identifying gaps. In grounded theory, sampling is aimed at theory construction, not for population representativeness and the literature review is usually conducted after developing an independent analysis.

As with all research methods, the way in which grounded theory is applied has been evolving since first introduced by Glaser and Strauss; and there have been disagreements and criticisms among researchers. Orton (1997) refers to one of these debates agreeing that part of the basis for criticism is that the research methodology underlying grounded theory studies needs to be made explicit. There is also some debate on the validity of the inductive processes leading to grounded theories. Orton believes that the traditional concept of grounded theory should be modified to one of ‘iterative grounded theory’ which falls between inductive and deductive processes. Validity of the created theory is then optimised by numerous ‘iterations’, or frequently revisiting the data as the theory develops.

Grounded theory is considered to be particularly useful for research in situations that have not been previously studied, or where existing research has left major gaps (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986, p. 9; Schreiber & Stern, 2001, p. xvii). Thus it is suitable for this research which is at the descriptive and explanatory level (refer Section 1.3).

This study examines the factors impacting on the relationship between the OHSP and the manager and thus to an understanding of the influence of the OHSP. The suitability of grounded theory as a methodology for such a study has been demonstrated by a number of

authors. Turner (1983) considers that grounded theory is well suited to the analysis of data collected within organisations by means of participant observation, direct observations, semi or unstructured interviews and certain kinds of documents. He describes the application of grounded theory to three case studies. One of the case studies involves repeated interactions of individuals in an organisational environment (nurse and patient-relative); one involves the pattern of organisational inter-relationships across a number of work roles (in small batch production companies) and the third applies grounded theory techniques in examining documents to identify pre-conditions of large-scale man-made disasters which included psychological, organisational and inter-organisational elements.

Covey (2001) applies grounded theory in her study of perception of risk, where she uses both structured questionnaire and free text. She found that the qualitative data was particularly useful in identifying the full range of factors affecting preference compared with questionnaires. In some cases, respondents did not seem to be answering the question posed while others seemed to misinterpret or neglect some of the information provided in the questions. Walls, Pidgeon, Weyman and Horlick-Jones (2004) also used grounded theory in a study examining perceptions among the lay public of trust toward government regulatory bodies<sup>9</sup>. They support Covey's findings of obtaining significantly richer data and a much deeper understanding of the factors impacting on perceptions of trust using qualitative analysis techniques than with quantitative analysis of questionnaires.

An example of the application of grounded theory to factors influencing safety behaviour is found in Mullen's study identifying the possible organisational and social factors that precede a workplace incident/injury and influence safety behavior (Mullen, 2004). In his in-depth analysis of the shoot-down of U.S. Black Hawk helicopters by friendly fire, Snook (2000) shows how grounded theory can be applied in complex organisational and technical situations to develop explanations for actions where more traditional processes could only provide superficial, generic analysis.

---

<sup>9</sup> *UK Health and Safety Executive* and one of its constituent divisions *Her Majesty's Railways Inspectorate*.

#### **2.1.4 Theoretical framework**

A theoretical framework is developed through a literature review that enables concepts, constructs and models relevant to the topic to be described (Leggett, 2005). The role of the literature review is a topic of much controversy and discussion among grounded theorists. According to Glaser and Strauss (in Charmaz, 2006, p. 6) one of the defining components of grounded theory is that the literature review is conducted after developing an independent analysis. Morse (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001) notes that Glaser specifically warns against exploring the literature before commencing data collection as he thought it may move the researcher too quickly toward completing the analysis. However, Morse considers this a naïve perspective, and not possible for any except the most experienced social science researchers, as without a theoretical context to draw on, investigators may find themselves mired in the data. Also, ignoring the work of others may result in researchers developing their own set of concept labels, thus making comparison difficult or research being published without linking to previous work. Stern and Covan (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001) warn that without reference to the literature, grounded theories become sterile and the research does not contribute to the body of knowledge.

Morse considers that when using grounded theory the literature should be used for comparison with emerging categories while Stern and Covan recommend that a researcher should refer to the literature when they are fairly confident that a variable or process has relevance. Strauss and Corbin (1998) show how the methodology of grounded theory has evolved in their discussion of the use of literature. While cautioning that seeking validation of emerging theory by reference to the literature may hinder progress and stifle creativity, they suggest that the literature can assist in: theoretical sampling; in formulating questions during initial observations and interviews; enhancing sensitivity to subtle nuances in the data or in identifying gaps or discrepancies in the data; enabling greater specificity in emerging concepts; confirming findings; and may be treated as another form of field notes or a secondary source of data.

This research takes a similar position to that of Mc Donald and Schreiber (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001), recognising that the researcher brings their own theoretical perspectives to the

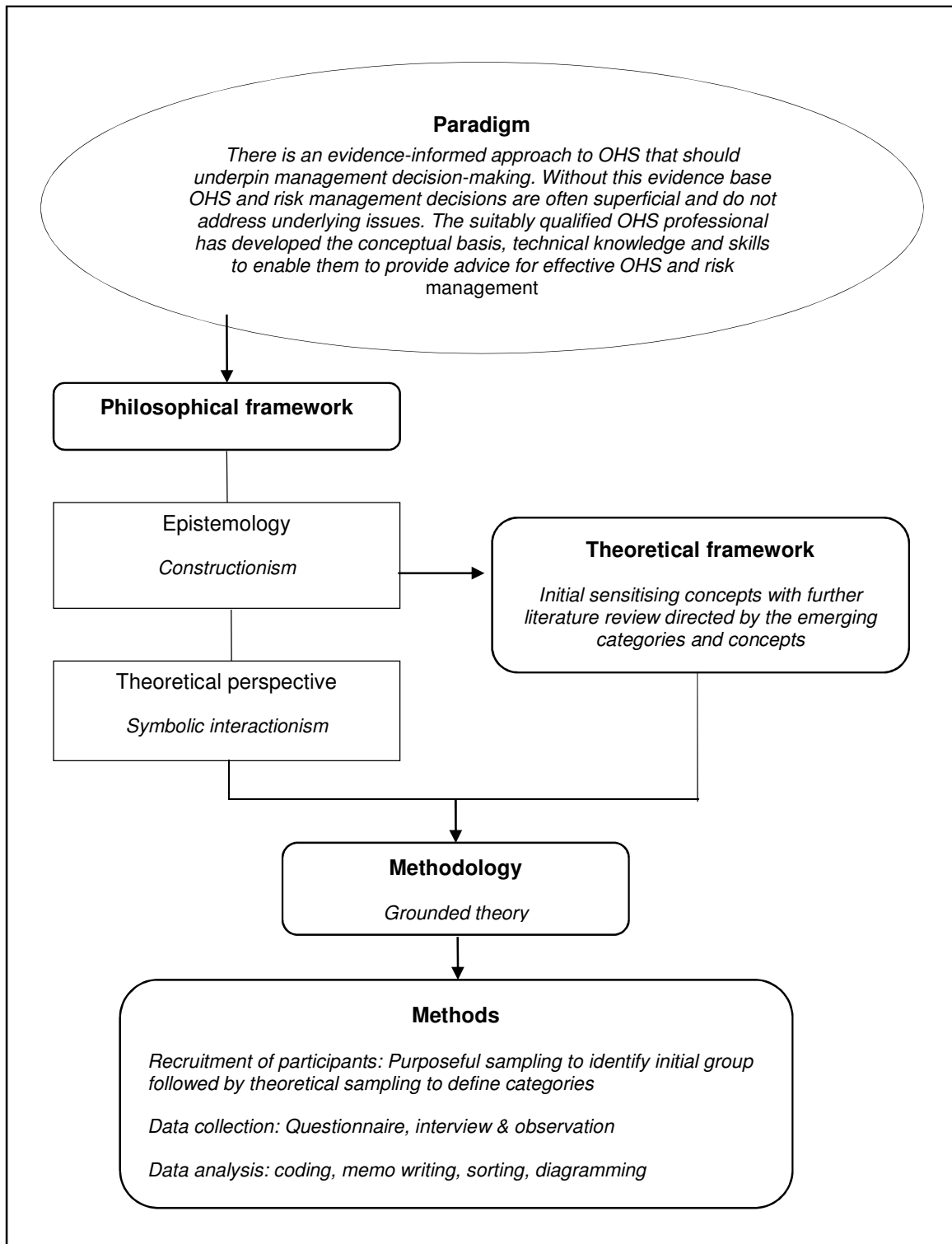
project and that the theoretical perspective should be informed by the current and historical literature to ensure that the work is able to be interpreted by others and that, where appropriate, the work of others is considered. In this modification of the original ideas, these perspectives have been called 'sensitising concepts'. Stern (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001) defines a sensitising concept as "an idea or understanding the researcher has in his or her head about the phenomenon of study". A sensitising concept may also be one "identified from the research, popular literature or practice literature that, in the researcher's mind, seems salient". Charmaz (2006, p. 17) recommends that sensitising concepts provide a starting point for forming interview questions, looking at data, listening to interviews and for thinking analytically about the data.

With this in mind, this author conducted a limited literature review to provide a frame of reference for thinking about the constructs of: relationships; communication and perception; and decision-making; together with the possible sensitising concepts underpinning these constructs. This theoretical framework informed the design of the data gathering tools and assisted in beginning to think about the data. As potential influencing factors were identified and examined more extensive literature reviews were conducted.

### **2.1.5 Summary**

Having asserted that specialist advice provided by suitably qualified OHSPs is important in management decision-making, and that improvement in OHS in the workplace may be inhibited by the lack of specialist advice at the senior management level, understanding of this situation will be deepened by qualitative data. Sensitising concepts developed from the literature review will inform the data collection and subsequent analysis. The qualitative analysis will be informed by grounded theory methodology which has been demonstrated as being appropriate for research at the descriptive and explanatory levels.

Figure 1 provides a diagrammatic representation of the framework for this research modified from Leggett (2005, p. 63). The theoretical framework described in this chapter provides the basis for the development of the research design and methodology described in the following section.



**Figure 1: The framework underpinning this research**

## **2.2 Research design**

The aim of this research is to develop an understanding of the factors likely to impact on the strategic influence of OHSPs with senior managers. The research has three components. As described in Sections 1.1 and 1.2, quantitative analysis of questionnaire data was used to define the problem. The second stage involved a literature review to identify sensitising concepts. The third stage was a qualitative investigation of the relationship between the OHSP and the senior manager in order to illuminate the factors affecting the relationship that may impact on the strategic influence of OHSPs. The objective of this research was to answer the question:

*What factors impact on the strategic influence of OHS professionals with senior managers?*

Whilst Chapter 1 was intended to provide an overview of the study, this section builds on the research framework described in Section 2.1 to discuss the issue of the researcher as an interpreter and the role of the literature review. The important issues of validity and reliability of data, and ethics are firstly considered, and this is followed by details of the methods of data collection and analysis, and the development of theory.

### **2.2.1 The researcher as an interpreter**

It is recognised that the researcher brings perceptions and constructs to all research with this being more pervasive in qualitative research. Glaser and Strauss talk about discovering the theory as emerging from the data separate from the scientific observer. However, as noted by Charmaz (2006, p. 10), the researcher is part of the world being studied and the data collected. The researcher constructs their grounded theories through their past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices. Charmaz (p. 15) notes that researchers are not passive receptacles into which data are poured while Schreiber (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001, p. 61) is of the view that grounded theorists should recognise that the researcher, and his or her experience, cannot be removed from the process; some would argue personal experience with the phenomenon being studied is vital to the analytical process (See for example Charmaz, 2006; Schreiber & Stern, 2001). Schreiber recommends that the

researcher should clarify their background knowledge, not to isolate it from the study, but with the specific intention of bringing it into the analysis to see if the data are supportive or not. While recognising that both researcher and participant make assumptions, possess knowledge, occupy social statuses and pursue purposes that influence their perspective. Charmaz reminds us that it is the researcher, not the participant, that is obliged to be reflexive about what they bring to the scene, what they see and how they see it.

This author brings to the research topic more than 20 year's experience as an OHSP with extensive involvement in OHS professional and education matters, and a passion to improve the professional recognition and influence of the role. Thus the concept of a researcher starting with a 'blank page' is anathema to this research. However, in designing the methods of data collection and analysis, and in their implementation, the researcher considered the risk of this background forcing the data into unconsciously preconceived categories or of superficial analysis and was mindful of the potential for such data distortion. (See section 2.2.7.1 for strategies employed during coding to minimise such data distortion.)

## **2.2.2 The role of the literature review**

The role of the literature review is a topic of much controversy and discussion among grounded theorists. This study recognises that the researcher brings their own theoretical perspectives to the project which influences the process. These perspectives arise from the researcher's knowledge of the topic and personal experience but are also informed by the research and practice literature. Such perspectives have been called 'sensitising concepts' and play an important role in grounded theory research by providing a starting point for forming interview questions, looking at data, listening to interviews and for thinking analytically about the data. Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 37) list some of the uses of the literature review as: a source for making comparisons; enhancing sensitivity; providing a cache of descriptive data with very little interpretation; providing questions for initial observations and interviews; stimulating questions during the analysis; suggesting areas for theoretical sampling; and confirming findings or illustrating where the literature is incorrect, simplistic or only partially explains phenomenon.



A literature review contributed to defining the parameters of the problem (Section 1.1) and was the basis for the social and historical perspective described in Section 1.2. A limited literature review was initially conducted to explore concepts potentially relevant to this grounded theory investigation into the factors that may impact on the strategic influence with senior managers, particularly the nature of the relationship. A model describing these interactions and perceptions was identified which provided a structure for further literature review and informed the data collection and analysis. In-depth literature reviews were conducted as the input factors were considered and codes and categories emerged.

### **2.2.3 Validity and reliability**

Rigour and validity is the subject of much discussion in the literature on qualitative research methods (Hall & Callery, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002; Sandowski, 1993; Silverman, 2006; Sparkes, 2001; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). There is an ongoing tension between qualitative and quantitative researchers with qualitative researchers either denying a need for validity in qualitative research (Sparkes, 2001) or attempting to derive criteria for validity in qualitative research from that used for quantitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2006; Whittemore et al., 2001). The discussion is further clouded by the lack of universal acceptance of criteria by researchers within the qualitative genre, with writers on different qualitative methodologies espousing different criteria for validity (Whittemore et al., 2001).

To resolve these tensions and address the challenge of developing a rigorous methodology to underpin the grounded theory component of this study, this writer authored a paper titled *Rigour and credibility as it applies to a qualitative study investigating the influence of OHS professionals* (unpublished). While this analysis of criteria for rigour and credibility was developed for a research study leading to a Doctor of Philosophy, the principles apply to this study. Table 2 describes the four key criteria derived from this used to ensure rigour of the research.

**Table 2: Criteria underpinning rigour of this study**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Method of addressing criterion</b>
Credibility	Basis for believing the results of the research.	<p>Attention to sampling and adequacy of data collected.</p> <p>Constant comparison between data and theory.</p> <p>Application of categories checked against a number of cases.</p> <p>Search for and analysis and explanation of deviant or negative cases.</p> <p>Outcomes are vivid in that the descriptions highlight salient features and themes portray essence of data.</p> <p>Outcomes are explicit in that results are auditable.</p>
Authenticity	Reflects the meanings and experiences lived and perceived by the participants.	<p>Researcher perspective and biases acknowledged.</p> <p>Actual words of participants used.</p>
Criticality	Dependability and transferability of the research.	<p>Theoretical transparency through a clear statement of theoretical stance and how it produces the explanation.</p> <p>Transparent process through documentation of methods and analysis with audit trail of analytical decisions; memoing; field notes and journal.</p>
Integrity	Reflexivity acknowledging researcher impact.	<p>Taping and verbatim transcription.</p> <p>Consideration of the effects of the research process and outcomes on participants and the larger community.</p>

(Pryor, 2010b)

#### **2.2.4 Ethical issues**

Ethical issues are important considerations in qualitative research (Orb, 2000). They may arise in: negotiating access to participants; social interactions between researcher and participant; and unexpected issues encountered in the field (Orb, 2000). Ramos (in Orb, 2000) describes three types of ethical problems in qualitative studies: the researcher/participant relationship; the researcher's subjective interpretations of the data; and the design of the research itself.

Orb describes three principles that should underpin ethical qualitative research to address these issues: autonomy; beneficence; and justice. Autonomy requires informed consent and the right to freely decide whether to be involved in the study and the right to withdraw at any stage. Beneficence is about doing good for others and preventing harm. This may particularly

relate to possible identification of participants or the effects on the participants of being involved in interviews. The third ethical principle is that of justice; avoiding exploitation and abuse of participants.

It is recognised that, as the researcher is an OHSP of some years experience and with considerable professional networks, there is a potential for participants to feel coerced; that the researcher identifies with the OHSP rather than the manager; and that the researcher may impose preconceived ideas on the data. These issues have been addressed in the research design and data collection as per procedures approved by the University of Ballarat's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Attachment 3). As per the University of Ballarat's HREC procedures, each organisation and each participant were provided with an approved Plain Language Statement describing the project, their participation and the implications of their participation. Signed Informed Consent Forms were obtained before any data was collected. (Attachments 3A -3E: Plain Language Statement and Informed Consent forms). At the time of ethics approval and data collection this research was described as leading to a Doctor of Philosophy qualification.

All data items were identified using a coding system with only the researcher having access to the coding key and all data collected in both hard copy and electronic format protected from unauthorised access. At the completion of the research raw data will be destroyed after a minimum period following accepted standards to maintain confidentiality.

## **2.2.5 Recruitment of participants for qualitative component**

As noted in Table 2, the sampling technique and the informants selected may impact on the quality of the data. Sampling also needs to address subject bias and should be directed towards saturation of categories. Recruitment of informants also has ethical considerations.

### **2.2.5.1 Sampling**

Sampling is the process for identifying sources of data which then become the core of the research. Thus the strategies used to identify the sources of data will have a major impact on the quality of the research (Coyne, 1997). This is especially so in grounded theory where the

theory arises from the data through constant comparison between the data and the emerging theory. However there is confusion over the terms used and a concern that writers rarely explain the criteria for the sampling and how the sampling evolved through the study (Coyne, 1997; Draucker, Martsof, Ross, & Rusk, 2007) which lead to criticisms of lack of rigour and, according to Coyne, weak methodology.

According to Chenitz and Swanson (1986), “all sampling procedures rest on the notion of representativeness” (p.9). However, this representativeness is a characteristic of probability sampling, and usually refers to critical variables of the population and development of a sampling frame to ensure that the variables in the sample reflect those of the population. In grounded theory, the sample is a non-probability sample, and is not selected from the population based on certain pre-set variables; but as the categories emerge the researcher targets certain groups or subgroups to test and refine the emerging categories, and then elaborates and refines them in the emerging theory. A fully developed grounded theory will account for broad variations in experience and perspectives; thus variation in the participants contributes to the validity of the theory. Coyne exhorts qualitative researchers to be adaptable and creative in designing sampling strategies that are aimed at being responsive to real-world conditions and meet the requirements of the study.

In grounded theory, **concepts** are being sampled; not people, organisations or situations (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Participants provide the data that gives information about the concepts. Data collection is an iterative, circular process that continues until categories are well developed and relationships and inter-relationships apparent and collection of new data does not result in any further emerging properties (i.e. the data becomes saturated).

Review of the literature reveals a range of terminology: ‘purposeful sampling’; ‘theoretical sampling’; ‘selective sampling’ (with some writers offering a range of sub-sets of these) and interpretations of what each sampling strategy entails. Many writers use the terms purposeful and theoretical sampling interchangeably. Coyne (1997) gives a detailed analysis of the various uses of the terms which, together with comments by Corbin and Strauss (2008) and Draucker et al., (2007) provide a basis for the sampling applied in this study.

*Purposeful sampling* involves strategies for purposefully selecting information-rich cases to fit the needs of the study.

*Selective sampling* refers to decisions made prior to the beginning of a study to sample subjects according to a preconceived, but reasonable, initial set of criteria (Sandowski in Coyne, 1997).

*Theoretical sampling* originated with Glaser and Strauss and is a central tenet of grounded theory (Coyne, 1997). It is a method of data collection based on concepts and themes derived from the data where data is collected from people, places and events that will maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of properties and dimensions, uncover variations and identify relationships between concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Theoretical sampling is cumulative, with each data collection event building on the previous data collection and analysis; it becomes more specific with time as the questions become more specific and categories become saturated. Coyne describes theoretical sampling as “analysis-driven purposeful sampling”. Draucker et al., emphasise the importance of keeping an audit trail of how the sampling criteria are developed for each sampling iteration.

According to these definitions, theoretical sampling and selective sampling are variations of purposeful sampling but not all purposeful sampling is theoretical (Coyne, 1997).

Triangulation is frequently cited as a useful technique for strengthening research rigour through combining multiple methods, measures, researchers, theories and perspectives (Perlesz & Lindsay, 2003). The concept of triangulation arises from navigation, where obtaining an accurate location of a particular position requires three ‘readings’. In research, triangulation is most strongly related to the positivist epistemology that there is a truth to be discovered and that data from a number of sources is required to be sure of the ‘truth’ or reality. In qualitative research triangulation refers to using a number of approaches (not necessarily three) to add richness to the data collection and depth and complexity to the resultant theory. Richardson (in Perlesz & Lindsay, 2003) argues that ‘crystallisation’ is a more useful term as it implies an “infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionality and angles of approach”.

Denzin (in Perlesz & Lindsay, 2003) refers to four types of triangulation: data triangulation (the use of a variety of data sources); investigator triangulation (the use of more than one researcher); theory triangulation (using multiple perspectives on a single data set); and methodological triangulation (the use of multiple methods to study the one problem).

Different types of triangulation suit different research problems and research designs. Perlesz and Lindsay describe outcomes of triangulation through use of questionnaire, individual interview and interviews of couples which gave both congruent and divergent data, but resulted in a richer understanding of family relationships.

The sample in this study may be considered an initial sample where *purposeful/selective sampling* (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Coyne, 1997) was used to select a small group of OHSPs and senior managers who were likely to be information-rich informants (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986, p. 9). The sample was limited to male dyads where the OHSP held the most senior OHS role in the organisations and the manager held one of the highest decision making roles in the organisation [Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the one of the direct reports to the CEO.] Limited triangulation was achieved by triangulating interview data with observations.

#### **2.2.5.2 Recruitment**

The key participants in this study are the OHSP and relevant senior managers. These people operate in an organisation. Required access and commitment included personal time with these people for interview(s) and opportunity(ies) to observe interactions in situations such as informal communication, meetings and presentations. Organisations, and the OHSP and manager participants, were identified by personal reference. The approach and confirmation of agreement to participate were in line with procedures approved by the University of Ballarat HREC. The demographics of the resultant sample are given in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

**Table 3: Demographics of organisations in sample**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Employees and contractors</b>	<b>Multi-site</b>	<b>Multi state</b>	<b>International</b>
Construction	<1000	Yes	Yes	No
Construction	<1000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Construction/mining	>20,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Logistics	1000-5000	Yes	Yes	No
Infrastructure	>20,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Science/technology	5000-10,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Government body	>100,000	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Table 4: Demographics of managers in sample<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Age</b>	<b>General education</b>	<b>OHS qualifications</b>	<b>Finance/business qualifications</b>	<b>Years experience in senior management</b>	<b>Years in organisation</b>	<b>Job title<sup>b</sup></b>
31-40	PG	Cert IV	--	<2	2-5	Operations Manager
41-50	PG	--	PG	>10	6-10	Deputy CEO
41-50	PG	--	--	>10	>10	GM HR Resources
41-50	UG	--	--	>10	<2	Managing Director
51-60	Trade	5 day	--	>10	2 to 5	Operations Director
51-60	UG	--	--	>10	2-5	CEO
>60	UG	Cert III	--	>10	>10	Managing Director

<sup>a</sup> Note all managers were male.

<sup>b</sup> Generic indicative titles used for confidentiality reasons.

**Table 5: Demographics of OHSPs in sample<sup>a</sup>**

Age	General education	OHS qualification	Finance/business qualification	Years experience in OHS	Years in organisation	Job title <sup>b</sup>	Reporting to <sup>b</sup>
41-50	PG	PG	PG	2 to 5	<2	GM HSE	Managing Director
41-50	PG	PG	Short course	<10	2-5	OHSE Manager	Operations manager
41-50	UG	UG	Short course	>10	<2	GM OHS	Managing Director
51-60	Trade	VET	Short course	>10	2 to 5	OHSE Manager	Operations Director
51-60	PG	--	PG	>10	2-5	GM HSE	Deputy CEO
51-60	PG	--	PG	2-5	>10	GM OHS	GM HR
51-60	PG	PG	Short course	>10	<2	GM HSE	CEO

<sup>a</sup> Note all OHSPs were male.

<sup>b</sup> Generic indicative titles used for confidentiality reasons.

### 2.2.6 Data collection

Data collection in grounded theory methodology should focus on actions, experiences, events or issues, not individuals (Charmaz, 2006, p. 109). While interviews are considered by many authors to be the basis of grounded theory, according to Milliken & Schreiber (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001, p. 185) a good grounded theorist will use multiple data sources to actively seek a wide range of perspectives and understandings to synthesise and construct a model that reflects a consensual view of reality. Swanson (in Chenitz & Swanson, 1986, p. 68) notes that, in grounded theory, formal intensive interviews are usually done in conjunction with participant observation and informal interview. Extant and elicited text can also be a fruitful source of data (Charmaz, 2006) and many grounded theory writers (Charmaz, 2006; Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Schreiber & Stern, 2001) make frequent reference to the role of the researcher's field notes as a source of data.



While interviews were the major source of data for this research, data was also collected through questionnaire (for demographic details), field observations and field notes. The following section describes the theoretical basis and the application of these data collection techniques. As there is an inter-relationship between theory and method (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995, p. 9) the following discussion places the data collection methods in the constructionist epistemological framework and the interpretivist symbolic interactionist theoretical context as described in Section 2.1. Also, while these sources of data are considered individually, it is recognised that this is an artificial separation since data may be collected from more than one source at any one time.

### **2.2.6.1 Interview**

In line with Charmaz (2006, p. 25) and Morse (Schreiber & Stern, 2001, p. 4), the main source of data was through interviews of matched dyads of a senior manager and an OHSP. As interviews enable open-ended exploration of a participant's interpretations of experienced events and actions, they are also consistent with a symbolic interactionist perspective.

Minichiello et al., (1995) create the link between a constructivist/interpretivist/symbolic interactionist framework and data collection through interview in the following comment.

Therefore, if we believe that ...social reality exists as meaningful interaction between individuals then it can only be known through understanding others' points of view, interpretations and meanings. If meaningful human interaction depends on language, then the words people use and the interpretation they make are of central interest to the researcher. ...interviewing is an appropriate method to gain access to the individual's words and interpretations. (Minichiello et al., 1995, p. 73)

Holstein and Gubrium (2004) also place interviews squarely in the purview of the constructivist/interpretist researcher by describing interviews as social encounters in which knowledge is actively constructed. Kvale (1996, p. 5) follows this theme using the metaphor of the qualitative interviewer as a 'traveller' who constructs stories from what they hear and see, with these stories being told in the interviewer's own land and possibly also to those with whom the interviewer travelled. (This is compared to an interviewer as a 'miner' who seeks objective facts or 'nuggets' of essential meaning.) Kvale takes the metaphor further into the constructivist/interpretist framework in saying that through the traveller's interpretations the meanings in the original stories are differentiated and remoulded into new narratives which

are convincing, and validated through their impact upon the listeners. Kvale also notes that the journey of interviewing may not only lead to new knowledge but, through reflection, the interviewer may be led to new ways of self-understanding and previously taken-for-granted customs and values in the traveller's country may be uncovered.

Charmaz (2001) supports this position of the interview being a constructivist/symbolic interactionist's tool for providing an interpretive portrayal of the social world of the interviewee in describing how grounded theory methodology complements such a framework. The grounded theory interviewer's questions define and explore processes. In grounded theory, the data collection is driven by the analysis and the emerging theory; thus grounded theory methods require that researchers take control of their data collection and analysis. In turn, these methods give researchers more analytical control over their material. Grounded theory interviewing differs from in-depth interviewing in that as the research process proceeds grounded theorists narrow the range of interview topics to gather specific data for their developing theory (Charmaz, 2001).

The traveller metaphor assists in clarifying the role of the researcher/interviewer. Kvale describes the research interview as a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. Rubin and Rubin (2005) see the interviewees as partners in the research, rather than subjects to be tested or examined, where the direction of the interview may be shaped by both researcher's and the interviewee's concerns. However Kvale points out that it is not an equal relationship as the researcher defines and controls the conversation, not only introducing the topic but critically following up on the subject's answers to the questions; this is especially applicable in grounded theory interviews where the researcher's questions are framed taking account of the analysis to date and the emerging theory.

The interviews of the senior manager and the OHSP were conducted separately, in a venue of the interviewee's choice, that was comfortable and where the likelihood of interruption was minimised. There was a guarantee of privacy in that any topics or content discussed in one interview would not be raised in another interview without written approval by the first informant. The interviews were conducted as directed conversations enabling in-depth

exploration of, and reflection on, the topic and the participant's experiences, with the intention of going beneath the surface of ordinary conversation to examine events, views and feelings.

In line with grounded theory, the role of the interviewer was seen to be one of listening, observing with sensitivity, encouraging the interviewee to respond. The interviewer provided a focus by posing a few open-ended, non-judgmental questions then following up threads to seek clarification or elaboration. Most of the talking was done by the interviewee (Charmaz, 2006, p. 26). As recommended by Charmaz and others (Swanson in Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Patton, 1980; Schreiber & Stern, 2001), an interview guide was used to assist in framing questions that were truly open, provided some structure while still being flexible, and to give reminders of the key questions or topics. The interview guide was not rigidly adhered to by the interviewer as the phrasing of questions was frequently altered in response to comments made by the interviewee (Swanson in Chenitz & Swanson, 1986, p. 67). Also, while the phrasing of the core questions remained similar the statement of the questions was modified as the interview process progressed and analysis identified categories and themes. This evolution of interview questions is an accepted approach in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Coyne, 1997) (Attachments 4A and 4B: interview guides.)

Some grounded theorists do not recommend recording and transcription as it "allows one to collect and analyse useless data" (Stern & Covan in Schreiber & Stern, 2001). However this researcher took the position of Patton (1980), that a tape recorder is an essential tool as it enables the actual quotations spoken by the interviewees to be collected as the raw data, enabling subsequent in-depth analysis and verification. Using a tape recorder also allowed the interviewer to give full attention to the interviewee.

In line with recommendations by Charmaz (2006) and Chenitz and Swanson (1986), transcriptions were done as soon as possible after the interview. Initially the transcriptions were done by the researcher but as the researcher became familiar with the process a commercial transcription service was used. Protocols for privacy were a key requirement in selecting the transcription service. Notes were made during the interview where they did not distract the interviewer or the participant. Such note taking was useful in pacing the interview and providing reminders for the researcher to return to earlier points or to provide suggestions

in framing follow-up questions. Note taking also provided feedback to the interviewee that what they were saying was important.

According to Charmaz (2006, p. 32) the threats to gaining rich data from interviews are: the interviewer bringing their own assumptions and perspectives to the interview; language and terminology used by the interviewer that is not understood by the interviewee or is interpreted differently; the interviewer understanding the words used by the interviewee but not getting to the underlying meaning. In this study the researcher is familiar with the context and language of managers and of OHS and was cognizant of the need to resist bringing her own assumptions and perspectives to the interview. Taping and transcribing of the interviews not only ensured that the actual words of the interviewees were preserved for analysis but allowed checking for any researcher-bias in framing the interview questions.

#### **2.2.6.2 Field observations**

The purpose of grounded theory, and this research, is to enable the researcher to engage with the world of the participants, to make sense of that world and so identify factors potentially impacting on the strategic influence of OHSPs. Field observations are considered an integral part of research based on a constructionist epistemology where knowledge is constructed in and out of the interaction of human beings and their social context. Such interactions should provide the researcher with a perspective of that world which would not be available through formal interviews. They enable access to information, interpretations and perspectives not otherwise available and conjoint use of these methods also enables data to be checked. Body language, facial expressions and the surroundings all provide information without which the spoken words may be interpreted quite differently. What participants say they do, or what they believe they do, is not always an accurate representation of the actual situation. The researcher may be able to learn things that people are unwilling to talk about in interview; to move beyond the perceptions of others and so use their personal knowledge, experience and inductive thinking to aid in understanding and interpreting data.

For these reasons observations of the interaction between the OHSP and the manager were used to optimise the quality of the data collected, add richness to the analysis and to enhance

the credibility of the outcomes. Attachment 5 provides an example of the record sheet for observations and the guidelines developed for recording the observations. While observation sheets were recorded for six of the seven dyads, the data was not as rich as expected. One organisation provided an extremely rich source where the researcher observed a management meeting involving the manager, the OHSP and other managers. For practical reasons the other observations only included the dyad members. In one case no observations were made for logistical reasons.

### **2.2.6.3 Demographic questionnaire**

A demographic questionnaire completed by each participant prior to the interview set a context for the interview and enabled some analysis of the personal factors of both managers and OHSPs that might impact on the strategic influence of the OHSP (Attachments 6A and 6B). The demographic questionnaire was piloted in a limited trial with two people.

### **2.2.6.4 Text analysis**

This study investigates the way in which OHS professional advice is perceived by the senior manager. As this advice is often written, text analysis was considered an important component in understanding the factors impacting on the perception of advice and to provide insights not otherwise obtainable. Text may be *extant*, which is archival material produced for a range of purposes and audiences; or *elicited* which is produced where participants generate text in response to the researcher's request.

Extant text relevant to this research included letters, memos, emails, formal reports, and performance appraisals as well as organisational documents such as OHS responsibility statements and policy documents on OHS. Initially OHSPs were requested to provide examples of emails where they had provided advice and managers where they had requested advice. Without exception, both managers and OHSPs advised that they could not provide such examples as this was not a common method of communication for what might be considered important matters. The common and preferred method of communication was face to face discussion or via telephone. After receiving a consistent response from the first four dyads, this request for an email exchange was removed from the protocol.

Participating organisations were requested to provide examples of key policy statements and OHS reports which were provided in three cases. However in some organisations this request appeared to create logistical difficulties or impose a commitment of time or resources inconsistent with the potential contribution to the richness of the data. Thus organisation specific documentation was not considered in the analysis.

As the theoretical perspective for this study is interpretivism and symbolic interactionism, the participants' perspective and self-understanding was considered important. Initially it was thought that participants might be requested to provide reflective writings to obtain data not available through other sources. However this was considered an excessive impost on participants and it was judged that interviews would give appropriate insights in this area. Thus this written source of data was not pursued.

#### **2.2.6.5 Field notes/research journal**

In grounded theory, field notes and journal recordings of feelings, reflections and interpretations by the researcher are considered to add a useful perspective to other sources of data as they encourage the researcher to be reflective and to document notes as part of the analysis. This researcher made notes of immediate impressions after each interview or observation (Attachment 7).

#### **2.2.7 Data analysis**

In qualitative research, data interpretation and analysis involves making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, putting together what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said (Patton, 1980, p. 246). In grounded theory, data analysis is about making comparisons within and across data sets to find similarities or differences (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54). The most productive approach was found to be initial analysis of each individual dataset followed by analysis across data sets for firstly managers and then OHSPs looking for common themes. Where available the field observations provided another 'view' of their interaction and relationship.

In grounded theory, this comparative analysis is done through coding of themes and memo writing to develop theoretical categories. The categories are then sorted and compared to give logical links and refine categories which are then represented diagrammatically.

Coding, in grounded theory, requires asking analytical questions of the data to form a skeleton of the analysis. The questions are the pivotal link between collecting the data and developing an emergent theory. Charmaz (2006, p. 42) defines coding as: “categorising segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarises and accounts for each piece of data. [These] codes show how [to] select, separate and sort data to begin an analytic accounting of them”.

Coding is just one of the analytical techniques of grounded theory but much has been written about coding and grounded theory with there being significant differences between some authors that relate back to the two schools of Glaser compared with Strauss, and later Corbin. Glaser considered that Strauss’s use of theoretical questions overconceptualised and preconceived the data which led to an unwieldy number of codes (MacDonald in Schreiber & Stern, 2001). Later Strauss and Corbin’s use of a set of techniques for enhancing theoretical sensitivity, such as word-by-word coding and the ‘flip flop’ technique, added further layers of complexity that are inappropriate and awkward to use in first level coding. A number of authors agree with Glaser, either explicitly (MacDonald and also Melia in Schreiber & Stern, 2001) or implicitly (Charmaz, 2006).

Coding is usually done at different levels. Schreiber (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001) writes of three levels of coding that correspond to concepts, categories and relationships while Charmaz describes two phases; initial and focused coding. MacDonald (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001), as did Glaser, refers to open and axial coding. Most writers also refer to *in-vivo* codes which may appear on the first level of coding. Some writers refer to the first level of coding as being *in-vivo*, as at this level, the codes assigned to the data reflect as closely as possible the language of the participants (Millikan and Schreiber in Schreiber & Stern, 2001). Other writers (such as Charmaz, 2006, p. 55) retain *in-vivo* codes for special situations where the coded text refers to a participant’s innovative term that captures meaning or experience; insider shorthand terms specific to a particular group that reflects their perspective; or general terms that everyone

'knows' that flag condensed but specific meanings. Charmaz warns that *in-vivo* codes do not stand on their own; they need to be treated like other codes and scrutinised for integration into the theory.

To avoid any confusion arising from the varied terminology used by authors writing on grounded theory, this researcher refers to 'first level' and 'second level' coding. Where *in-vivo* codes are created, they fit one or more of the three types of *in-vivo* code referred to by Charmaz.

### **2.2.7.1 The analytical process applied in the research**

The analytical process applied in this research, including the methods of coding, memo writing, developing categories, and sorting and diagramming, were informed by the writing of Charmaz together with that of Corbin (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986) and Schreiber (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001) and Corbin and Strauss (2008). While the following description implies a linear process, in reality the steps were iterative, especially between Steps 3 and 5.

#### *Step 1 Transcription*

While the majority of interviews were commercially transcribed, the interviewer reviewed each transcription while listening to the interview and formatting the transcription into the tabular form used for analysis. This not only minimised any transcription error, but provided the researcher with the first opportunity to reflect on the words of the interviewee and what they might mean.

#### *Step 2 First reading*

Following transcription, a hard copy of the transcript was read and key words, phrases and sentences highlighted. No attempt was made at this stage to attach labels to the highlighted text; the purpose of the highlighting was for the researcher to become familiar with the content and to note any text that 'leapt out'. Brief summary notes of 'general impressions' were made after this first reading. These summary notes were an important aspect of the analysis as common features and differences began to emerge even at this early stage of analysis. (See Attachment 7 for an example of the summary notes from an interview.)



### *Step 3 First level coding*

Once the researcher felt familiar with the content of the interview, the text was then reviewed in detail. This involved asking questions that provided information on the main research question “What factors impact on the strategic influence of the OHS professionals with senior managers?” As the analysis progressed two sub research questions emerged:

*How does the nature of the relationship between the manager and the OHSP impact on the strategic influence of the OHSP?*

*What are the factors defining this relationship?*

The questions focused on actions and processes (Charmaz, 2006, p. 69). Table 6 gives examples of such questions.

**Table 6: Examples of first level coding questions for manager analysis**

<p>What do the words/actions of the participant indicate about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the level of influence of the OHSP</li><li>• how they see the relationship</li><li>• the actual nature of the relationship</li><li>• how OHS advice is perceived</li><li>• how OHS advice is applied</li><li>• the factors that might impact on the relationship, the perception or application of the advice</li><li>• how the senior manager sees the role of the OHSP</li><li>• the ‘value’ the senior manager places on the OHSP.</li></ul> <p>As the analysis progressed further questions were added including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does the manager see their role in OHS?</li><li>• What has been the impact of OHS or other education?</li><li>• What is the manager’s view of OHS as a function?</li><li>• What does the manager want from an OHS professional?</li></ul>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

While some writers recommend that analysis is initially done line-by-line or phrase by phrase with subsequent analysis being word-by-word analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), this researcher did not find such a micro approach fruitful. This researcher also found that taking

such a micro approach increased the tendency for coding to be influenced by preconceived concepts. Rather the initial analysis took the form of a 'text dump' of quotes that appeared to provide some insight into answering the analysis questions such as "How does the manager see the relationship?" (See Attachment 8 for an example of such 'text dumps'). As the 'text dumps' accumulated for each analytical question, key words or phrases began to appear. Each text dump was reviewed and labelled with a key word or phrase. In some cases, these labels reflected words or phrases from the text dump; in others the label summarised the emerging concept. The outcomes of this process resulted in first level codes. In some cases annotations were added to the text dumps. The annotations included notes to refer to other parts of the dataset, or other datasets, and also included analytical notes. While every effort was made to minimise preconceived concepts at this stage, it is recognised that the coding was influenced by the background and experience of the researcher and that this is a vital part of the analytical process (Charmaz, 2006, p. 15; Schreiber & Stern, 2001).

#### *Step 4 Memo writing*

According to Charmaz (2006, p. 84), memos provide the basis for developing the grounded theory and should occur throughout the analysis. Charmaz (2006), and Corbin (in Chenitz & Swanson, 1986), describe these memos as informal and unofficial records that are generated for personal use. However they are an essential component of grounded theory methodology as they enable the researcher to distinguish between major and minor categories, thus refining ideas which are used to begin to frame the categories into a theoretical statement.

Charmaz (p. 85) describes memo writing in descriptive terms such as: 'sparking' ideas to check out in the field; finding novel relationships; demonstrating connections between categories; discovering gaps in data collection; and linking data-gathering with data analysis and report writing. Schreiber (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001) is more traditional in adhering to the purposes of memo writing originally defined by Glaser and Strauss: that is (1) to make explicit and thus open for examination the researcher's pre-existing assumptions; (2) to record methodological decisions regarding the conduct of the study; and (3) to speculate on and analyse the data.

Memos were written to record the raising of first level codes to second level codes and to document the links between codes and the emergence of the major category (See Attachment 9 for an example of a memo).

#### *Step 5 Second level coding*

Once each manager dataset was coded at the first level, the resultant codes were then compared across other datasets for the manager cohort through 'second level' coding. Charmaz (2006, p. 57) defines second level coding (focused) as "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data. [It] requires decisions about which [first level] codes make the analytical sense to categorise the data incisively and completely". Schreiber (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001, p. 70) advises that when doing second level coding "the researcher constantly compares the first-level codes against existing and incoming data and identifies categories that are then compared with data and codes". Thus the researcher goes from specific incidents to abstractions which are then checked against the data in an iterative process. Glaser (Schreiber in Schreiber & Stern, 2001, p. 70) also describes the goal of second level coding as moving from the specific to the abstract; in his words it is the generation of "an emergent set of categories and their properties which fit the data, work, and are relevant for integrating into a theory" (See Attachment 10 for an example of a second level code). The OHSP cohort was treated in the same way through first level coding of individual data sets followed by second level coding informed by considering the cohort as a whole. Observation records were examined at this stage to verify and give richness to the second level codes. (See Attachment 11 for an example of an observation record.) Each second level code was accompanied by a memo to record the rationale for the creation of the code and to provide an audit trail for the development of the theory.

#### *Step 6 Developing conceptual and theoretical categories*

Glaser and Strauss (in Charmaz, 2006) define a category as a "conceptual element in a theory", while Charmaz (2006, p. 91) is more expansive in describing categories 'as subsuming common themes and patterns in several codes to clarify ideas, events or processes in the data'. Swanson (in Chenitz & Swanson, 1986) develops categories by grouping codes into clusters reflecting similarities and differences while Charmaz (p. 91) advises that

categories can be developed by assessing second level codes to identify which codes best represent what is happening in the data. A memo is then used to raise the second level codes to conceptual categories that will form the developing analytical framework. Schreiber (in Schreiber & Stern, 2001) describes a core category as the central phenomenon or main concern for the people involved that encapsulates the substance of a pattern of behaviour seen in the data and summarises what is happening.

In this research one core category emerged to which all the other factors related – this will be detailed in Chapter 4.

#### *Step 7 Sorting and diagramming and integrating*

Having developed categories and continued to record notes through memoing, the researcher has to integrate the information to arrive at an abstract theory that explains the data and predicts the phenomenon. While sorting and diagramming, the analysis may seem like basic processes to any researcher, but writers on grounded theory methodology explain that these processes are integral to developing the emergent theory. Sorting memos gives a logic for organising the analysis and a way of creating and refining theoretical links that prompts the researcher to make comparisons between categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 115). Both Charmaz and Swanson (in Chenitz & Swanson, 1986) describe sorting as a physical process of arranging memos based on comparisons across categories and identifying logical links. Sorting also offers an opportunity to refine the categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 117).

It is at this stage that properties and dimensions emerge. Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 159) define ‘properties’ as the characteristics that define and describe categories, while dimensions are variations within properties that give specificity and range to the concepts or categories. The literature can then be integrated to provide a rich description of the category, its properties and dimensions.

Diagrams are used to provide a visual representation of the categories and their relationships. These diagrams may be situational maps, concept maps, matrices or other representations. They sharpen the relationship between the theoretical categories and so assist in identifying where codes or categories may have been “forced” (Charmaz, 2006; Schreiber & Stern, 2001).

In this research diagrams were invaluable in visualising the emergence of the factors impacting on the influence of the OHSP as well as depicting the final concept.

#### **2.2.7.2 Use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software**

Some authors, such as Stern and Covan in Schreiber & Stern (2001) and Charmaz (2006) consider that using text management software programs such as *QSR Nvivo* to assist in analysis of qualitative data is time consuming; that the researcher's eye is more sensitive and the use of such software may lead to superficial theory. However others (Bringer, Johnston, & Brackenridge, 2004, 2006; Macdonald and Schreiber in Schreiber & Stern, 2001; Welsh, 2002) are of the alternative position. They emphasise that the software does not do the analysis; the researcher must still ask the questions, interpret the data and decide what to code. The software adds efficiency to the process and extends the researcher's cognitive processes resulting in deeper analysis.

A major benefit in using such software is that it increases the demonstrated rigour of the research by providing an audit trail of the analysis, which is something often missing in qualitative research (Welsh, 2002). Glaser and Strauss (in Bringer et al., 2004) argue that a grounded theory should be assessed on the detailed description of the process of the theory generation, not its verification; software such as *Nvivo* have a number of features that enable such transparency to be built into the research report (Bringer et al., 2004; Welsh, 2002)

This researcher takes the position of Welsh that both manual and electronic analysis processes have good features and that the best features of both processes should be combined to analyse the data to obtain a theory that fits, has 'grab', works, and is modifiable as social or other conditions change over time. *QSR NVivo 8* was used to manage documents and facilitate the recording codes, memos and other analytical tools. Interview transcripts and observation records were prepared in *MS Word*. Following initial reading and familiarisation these documents together with the interview recording were uploaded to *NVivo 8*. Project notes, interview summaries and memos were written within *NVivo*. First and second level coding was done within *NVivo* with hard copy record kept as the codes and categories emerged.

While *NVivo* has a diagramming facility, it was found that more descriptive information diagrams could be developed manually.

### **2.2.8 Summary**

This research is about investigating how the interviewee interprets social interaction with their dyad member, and others, to construct their own perception of the relationship. The preceding sections have drawn on the literature to demonstrate the appropriateness of semi-structured interviews supported by observation as a valid methodology with the potential to provide a rich understanding and insight to the question “What factors impact on the influence of OHS professionals with senior managers?” Other strategies for assuring veracity and trustworthiness of the developing outcomes, such as purposeful sampling, the role of the researcher, and ethical issues were described and justified.

This study examined data collected from a purposeful sample of seven dyads each comprising a senior manager and a senior OHSP. Analysis of interviews began with transcription followed by reading for familiarisation and drafting an initial summary of the interview. First level and second level coding was conducted initially of the manager data followed by the OHSP data. Coding involved asking a series of questions of the data which initially resulted in ‘text dumps’ from which common key words and phrases gradually appeared. Second level coding was conducted by analysing the data across each cohort which resulted in the properties and dimensions of the theme or category.

The data was analysed using grounded theory methodology informed by a constructivist theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. In line with this methodology the researcher is recognised as an interpreter bringing her own perceptions and constructs to the data collection and analysis. The literature had a number of roles including: enhancing sensitivity, informing questions for interviews and observations, and informing the analysis once a theme or category emerged.

### **2.3**    *Summary*

This chapter has described the philosophic and theoretical frame work and the research design informed by that framework. Chapter 3 provides a literature review that led to ‘sensitising concepts’ that informed the data collection.

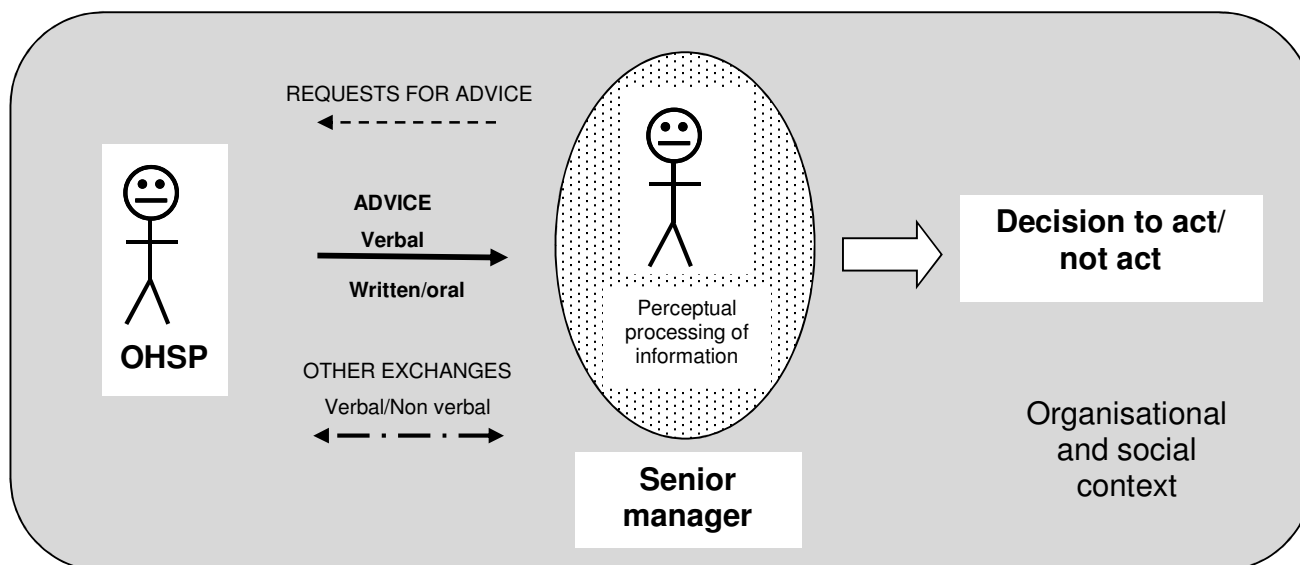
## **Chapter 3: Literature review: A model for studying interaction**

Chapter 1 introduced the problem and discussed the role of the OHSP. Chapter 2 described the theoretical framework and research design. This chapter begins by presenting a model describing the interaction of managers and OHSPs and the interactive model of social cognition developed by Klimoski and Donahue (2001) which provides a scaffold for considering the literature. These models suggest that the characteristics of the perceiver (the manager) together with the attributes of the perceived (the OHSP) influence social cognition and perception and so the judgments and behaviours of the manager. The second part of the chapter explores the literature on the potential contextual factors, characteristics of the manager and the OHSP that may impact on the interactions of the managers and the OHSP and the core of the interaction – the relationship between the OHSP and the manager.

### ***3.1 A model for investigating the strategic influence of OHS professionals***

A model for the interaction of the OHSP and the senior manager was developed to describe the nature of the interaction between the manager and the OHSP to provide a preliminary framework for beginning to think about the interaction between the manager and the OHSP (Figure 2). In this model, OHS professional advice may be specifically solicited by the manager or may be initiated by the OHSP. The advice provided may be in oral or written form, or both. There are also likely to be other interactions between the OHSP and the senior manager that are peripheral to the content of the advice; these interactions may be verbal or non-verbal. Verbal interactions may include the social preliminaries to meetings or discussions, while non-verbal interactions may include ‘looks’, tone of voice and body language. Writing style and tone may also be considered non-verbal parts of written exchanges. The information is then perceptually processed by the manager to arrive at their interpretation of the advice which they then apply, as they consider appropriate, in making management decisions. The interactions between the OHSP and the senior manager, the manager’s processing of the information and the decision-making occur within a social and organisational context.



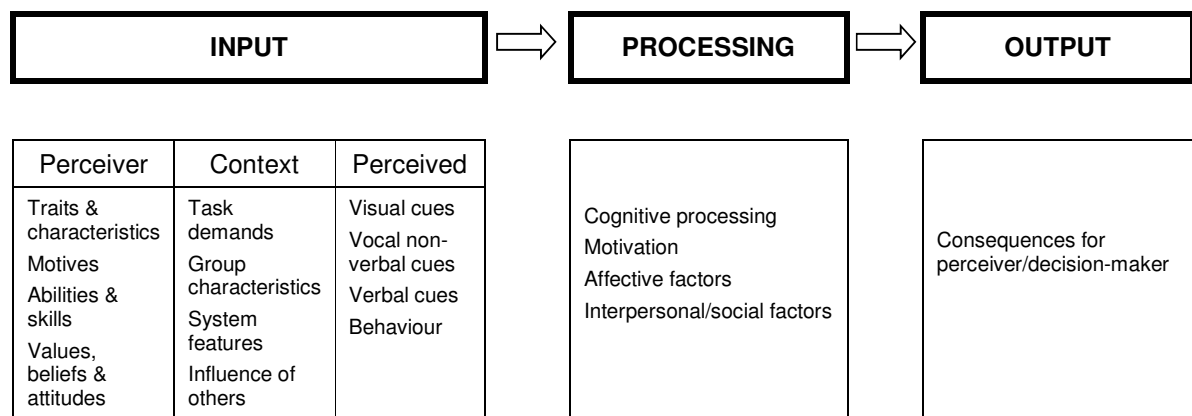


**Figure 2: A model describing the interaction between the OHSP and the senior manager**

OHSPs are frequently exhorted to develop communication skills as part of their role in providing advice (See for example Blair, 1997; Drebinger Jr, 1998; IBSA (Innovation and Business Skills Australia), 2012; NOHSC (National Occupational Health and Safety Commission), 1994). However this advice to OHSPs is usually simplistic and does not consider the role of the perceptual processes employed by the manager to construct an interpretation of the advice that is meaningful to them. This study recognises that a ‘social reality’ is constructed by people within the corporate organisational environment and that this reality is the result of interpreting information which is filtered by their perceptions. Thus identifying the factors impacting on how the senior manager perceives OHS professional advice requires an examination of the role of perception in interpretation of information.

Perception of information has been the topic of much research over the years with more recent research investigating social cognition and how it impacts on organisational behaviour. Klimoski and Donohue (2001) reviewed the literature with the objective of developing a model to assist human resource managers in their decision-making. They define perception as “a process by which individuals form impressions and make inferences about other people”

(p. 7); it involves interaction of cognitive processes and motivational, affective and social factors. These factors are described using the headings ‘input-processing-output’ (Figure 3).



(Modified from Klimoski & Donahue, 2001, p. 6)

**Figure 3: Factors impacting on social perception**

Processing of information is often treated as a rational process. However, in synthesising information from their literature review, Klimoski and Donohue demonstrate that rationality is limited. The cognitive processes of the perceiver are affected by factors that impact either directly on their interpretation of the information or, indirectly, by influencing the cognitive effort applied, leading to the use of perceptual ‘short cuts’.

Long-term goals determine the decision to allocate cognitive effort and resources to a particular task, but it is short-term goals that affect allocation of resources through to completion of the task<sup>10</sup>. Use of cognitive short cuts increases when there is a cost to being indecisive such as when decisions are made in a time of limited resources; there is time pressure; or cognitive ‘busyness’ (other demanding tasks). The nature and severity of the

---

<sup>10</sup> OHS decisions are usually related to long-term goals.

consequences for the decision-maker also influence the cognitive effort applied by the decision-maker. (Klimoski & Donahue, 2001).

Cognitive short cuts include applying 'schema' or representations to assist understanding when there are gaps in the information. Perceptual schema most commonly relate to traits and goals of the person, their role, or social position; or to describe an appropriate sequence of events for particular situations. Inferences or attributions are also related to the schema. Inferences may be made about an individual's knowledge, goals or behavior based on assumptions about factors such as race, gender, occupation or membership of a social group. Other types of cognitive short cut include generalisations based on most recent information (availability); the extent to which something is similar to a typical case (representativeness); similarity with the perceiver's own experience or behavior, attributes of others or other situations (anchoring); or inferences already made (priming).

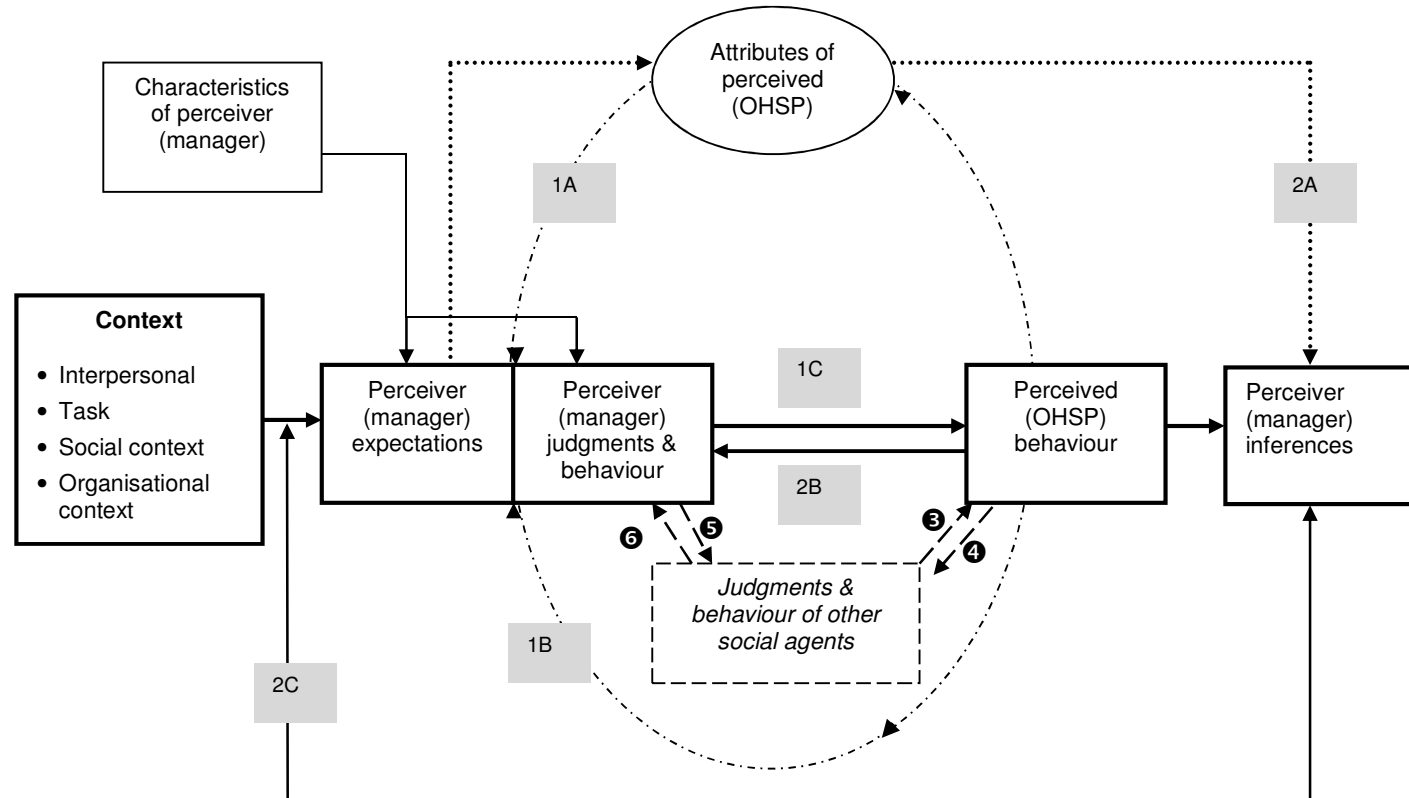
Processing of information for perception is also influenced by the history and nature of the relationship; the similarity between the perceiver and the perceived; co-dependency such as in work teams; and relative status, power and hierarchy with subordinates usually applying more cognitive effort for accuracy. Cognition and interpretation of information is also known to be influenced by moods and emotions. This might be why decisions made during business lunches or after-work socialising may be different to those made in formal meetings.

This discussion of the cognitive processes and short cuts in processing information shows how the inputs of the perceiver; the perceived; and the work, task and social context: might all impact on how OHS advice is perceived. Klimoski and Donahue propose that these factors interact in a non-linear fashion and offer a model to assist in analysing social perception in organisations and to inform the design of intervention or the management of organisational change. A modified version of this model is given in Figure 4 where, to assist clarity, labels have been added to indicate manager and OHSP.

This model suggests that effectiveness of communication is determined by factors impacting on perception. Based on this model it may be that perception of OHS professional advice by the senior manager is influenced by (1) their own characteristics (motives, abilities, skills, values, beliefs and attitudes); (2) the attributes and verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the

OHSP; (3) the relationship between the manager and the OHSP; (4) the reason for the communication (the task); (5) the social environment (eg: informal one-to-one meeting, formal meeting with others, meeting in the workplace); (6) the reaction of others in the social environment; and (7) the larger organisational environment as it might impact on the consequences of decision-making.

This study focuses on the relationship between the manager and the OHSP which is the core of the interactive model. To assist in forming an understanding of the model a literature review was conducted to explore potential factors in the various components: the context; characteristics of the perceiver (manager); and attributes of the perceived (OHSP) on the relationship. Literature relating to potential contextual factors is reported in Section 3.2; the manager in Section 3.3; and the OHSP in Section 3.4. Section 3.5 reviews the literature potentially relating to the relationship between the OHSP and the manager.



- 1:** Cues used by the perceiver (manager) in understanding the perceived (OHSP)  
**1A:** surface traits; **1B:** relationship factors; **1C:** perceived (manager) behavioural responses to the perceiver's (OHSP) initial judgments.  
**2:** Cues representing behaviour of the perceiver (manager) in response to the perceived (OHSP)  
**2A:** perceiver's (manager) inferences made directly on the basis of the perceived (OHSP) attributes; **2B:** inferences made indirectly through interactions with the perceived (OHSP); **2C:** perceiver's (manager) expectations resulting from earlier interactions.  
**3:** Perceived (OHSP) behaviour towards other people.  
**4:** Others behaviour towards perceived (OHSP).  
**5:** Cues from perceiver's (manager) behaviour towards others.  
**6:** Other people's behaviour toward perceiver (manager) ie: social proof.

(Modified from Klimoski & Donahue, 2001 p. 35)

**Figure 4: Interactive model of social cognition and perception**

### **3.2 Context as a component impacting on influence**

According to Klimoski and Donahue's model, the context of an interaction impacts on social cognition and perception and so the judgments and behaviours of those interacting. Klimoski and Donohue list contextual factors including: interpersonal; task; social and organisational contexts. This section explores the literature to examine factors relating to organisational context (industry, organisational size and reporting arrangements) and social context (organisational and occupational culture) that may impact on the perception of information and so the strategic influence of OHSPs.

#### **3.2.1 Organisational context**

##### **3.2.1.1 Industry**

The potential impact of a specific industry on the strategic influence of OHS professionals may be considered by examining the risk level of the industry. The national OHS improvement strategy (2002 -2012) identified the priority industries for attention as: agriculture, forestry and fishing; construction; health and community services; manufacturing; mining; and transport and storage (ASCC, 2008a). However, based on the responses from the *Safety Professionals Task Survey*, most OHSPs are employed in manufacturing (18.2%), mining (15.5%) and health and community services (13%). The other industries of transport and storage, construction, retail and wholesale trade, and agriculture, forestry and fishing (combined) only attract a total of 18% of the OHSPs (Pryor, 2006).

This author (Pryor, 2010a) found that OHSPs working in mining and construction may be more likely to be involved in strategic activities than those working in other industries and those working in priority industries (such as transport and storage, and manufacturing) were only as likely, or less likely, to be involved in strategic activities as those in industries grouped as 'other' and considered to be lower risk. It is interesting to note that, in a 2007 remuneration survey conducted in the same period, the mining, construction and resources (oil and gas) industries registered the highest salaries, followed by professional, consulting and retail services, and telecommunications, transport, manufacturing and industrial (Safesearch, 2008).

This salary differential by industry may be because OHSPs are particularly valued in these industries; it may also be related to supply and demand or the remote location of the work.

### **3.2.1.2 Size of organisation**

The OHSPs who work in large organisations, across multiple sites, and in more than one Australian state appear more likely to be involved in strategic activities. (Pryor, 2010a) The size of an organisation may impact on the level of strategic influence of OHSPs in two ways. It may be that OHSPs working in medium-sized organisations have greater access to strategic decision-makers, while large organisations may be more likely to have strategic management processes in place.

### **3.2.1.3 Title and reporting arrangements**

Job factors such as title, line of reporting and scope of OHS position may impact on the way the senior manager perceives the OHS professional advice. As noted in Section 1.1.2 the OHSP may go by a number of titles: 'advisor', 'coordinator', 'manager' or 'consultant'. Marchant (2004) argues that some titles, such as advisor and coordinator, dilute the importance of the managerial aspects of the OHSP role and ignore the range of knowledge and skills needed for the role. She considers this to be a hangover from the 1970s when to call an OHSP a 'manager' implied individual responsibility for OHS rather than at the corporate or line management level. A salary survey (Safesearch, 2008, 2011, 2013) that allocates titles based on position descriptions found significant difference in functions, and remuneration, for the OHS titles: officer, coordinator, manager, national manager, general manager.

Marchant (2004) noted that the role of the OHSP may be made more difficult by confused lines of reporting or reporting through functions that are not directly related to OHS, such as HR or Quality. In their investigation in the construction industry, Cameron et al., (2007) comment that most OHSPs do not have line management responsibility and so have little direct influence over the production process which is where the risk exposure is the greatest. Thus, rather than through lines of reporting, the effectiveness of the OHSP depends on the level of support from senior management.

In his discussion of the outcomes of the Gretley mine collapse, Hopkins (2007) warns that the voices of people, such as safety managers, who can provide information that mindful managers wish to hear, may be muted by organisational structures that create layers of management that effectively filter or muffle the safety manager's voice. For this reason, he recommends that OHSPs should report directly to the most senior decision-maker at each level, not via the HR manager or some other intermediary. Similarly, in their safety maturity scale, Parker, Laurie and Hudson (2006) note that in proactive organisations the OHSP reports directly to top management and in generative organisations the OHS department is small but powerful. These observations are reinforced by Cameron et al., (2007) who found that in the UK construction industry, organisations with OHSPs who had authority to give orders had an accident frequency rate significantly lower than organisations where the OHSP merely gave advice. Cameron et al. (2007), also found that in the UK construction industry the scope of the role of the OHSP impacted on the OHS performance of the organisation. They found that organisations where the OHSP undertook training and vetting of sub-contractors had a significantly lower accident frequency rate than those who did not.

### **3.2.2 Social context**

This section considers culture as a social contextual factor impacting on the interaction between the manager and OHSP. Edgar Schein (1996) defined 'culture' as "a set of basic tacit assumptions about how the world is and ought to be that a group of people share and that determines their perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and, to some degree, their overt behavior" (p. 11). This section considers culture from two perspectives: the first where the group of people are those in the organisation; the second where the group have similar work roles.

#### **3.2.2.1 Organisation culture**

OHS is often considered to be an operational, or even human resources issue rather than a strategic matter. Decisions about OHS-related matters are often seen to involve conflicting goals of OHS and production or safety and cost-containment. The prevailing culture, and view on where OHS 'fits', will impact on the extent to which OHS is considered in management decision-making. Culture, as described by Schein (2004), manifests itself at three levels: (1)



artifacts which are easy to observe, but difficult to understand (what groups do such as their language, stories, visible behavior); (2) espoused beliefs and values (what they believe or say they believe) that predict behaviour; and (3) basic underlying assumptions (the ‘rules of behaviour’). Once a set of assumptions is formed, it can act as a cognitive defence mechanism, both for individual members and for the group as a whole, where it is easier to distort new data by denial, projection, rationalisation or various other processes than to change the basic assumption. Thus the organisational culture, with its artifacts, espoused beliefs and underlying assumptions, is relevant to understanding how a manager might perceive OHS advice.

Much as has been written, and debated, about organisational culture and OHS. (Refer to Borys, 2007, pp. 28-44 for a summary). Reason (1997) described the desired organisational objective as an ‘informed culture’ which has four underpinning cultures – a reporting culture, a just culture, a flexible culture and a learning culture. The presence or absence of ‘organisational mindfulness’ (of danger) (Hopkins, 2004) introduces another element into the concept of organisational culture as the features of a mindful organisation reflect Reason’s informed culture.

The extent that organisations achieve the above sub-cultures, and so an informed mindful culture, may impact on how managers attend to, perceive, and act upon advice provided by the OHSP. Through their work with oil company executives Parker, Laurie and Hudson (Parker et al., 2006) developed a framework for understanding how an organisational culture develops or ‘matures’. Their descriptions of the maturational changes in the way a company balances OHS with profitability, and the developing profile and status of the OHS function, highlights the potential impact of organisational culture on the perception and application of OHS professional advice.

### **3.2.2.2 Occupational cultures**

Schein (1996) proposes three occupationally-based sub-cultures, two of which have their roots outside the organisation (the ‘executive culture’ and the ‘engineering culture’); and one internally-based culture (the ‘operator culture’).

The ‘operator’ culture is based on human interaction and evolves locally in organisations and within operational units. It arises from high levels of communication, trust and teamwork, and is related to production. In comparison, the executive culture is built around the necessity to maintain the organisation’s financial health; they are preoccupied with boards, investors and capital markets; and they have an externally located point of reference as this group tends to seek out their ‘own type’. The ‘engineering’ culture is based on common education, work experience and work requirements, and so is also externally based. While Section 1.2.2 discussed the variations in education and a lack of clarity in work role for the OHSP, there is significant anecdotal information to suggest that there is a strong occupationally-based culture of OHSPs that is externally based and could be equated with Schein’s engineering culture.

As noted in the discussion on organisational culture, while a culture has artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, it is the underlying assumptions (which are difficult to see) which may create the greatest divides between occupational sub-cultures. With the manager likely to be part of the ‘executive’ culture and the OHSP part of the ‘engineering’ culture there is potential for the different underlying assumptions to impact on their interaction.

Another aspect in the role of sub-cultures is shown in Klimoski and Donohue’s Interactive model of social cognition and perception (Figure 4) which shows that the judgments and behaviour of other people towards the OHSP (interactions ③ and ④) and towards the manager (interactions ⑤ and ⑥) act as social reinforcement to provide a frame of reference that might impact on the manager’s perception of the information provided by the OHSP.

### ***3.3 Characteristics of managers that may impact on how they perceive OHS professional advice***

While managers have carried the legal responsibility for OHS since the introduction of Robens-style OHS legislation<sup>11</sup> (1980s in Australia), with regulators and standards and writers

---

<sup>11</sup> A report by Lord Robens in the UK (Robens, 1972) led to a reframing of OHS legislation in the UK, Australia and other countries with British-based law systems.

on OHS citing 'management commitment' as a key factor in OHS performance, a study of managers of off-shore oil platforms (O'Dea & Flin, 2001) found that there was a contrast between what the managers knew to be best practice and how they preferred to behave. They also had a strong bias to attributing the cause of events to individual characteristics such as failing to follow rules and underestimating situational factors. This raises the question as to how the characteristics of managers might impact on how they perceive and apply OHS professional advice. This section examines the literature relating to factors potentially impacting on the manager as the perceiver of OHS advice under the two headings of OHS motivators for senior managers and personal characteristics.

### **3.3.1 OHS motivators for senior managers**

Chusmuir and Azevado (in Gunningham, 1999) summarised the research on the relationship between corporate strategies and motivation of managers, and identified three main drivers: (1) the need for achievement - defined as competition with a standard of excellence; (2) the need for affiliation - defined as a concern for maintaining a positive relationship with others; and (3) the need for power - defined as desire to coach, influence or encourage others. McClelland (in Bailey, Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osburn, 1991) noted that high level managers seem to have high power needs and less need for affiliation. Wright (in Gunningham, 1999) considered that while the profit motive is always present in corporations, the strategy and pattern of decision-making is organisation-specific and may be tempered depending on whether there is a desire for growth, control or for profit alone.

While prosecution and other 'punishments' have a major influence on those directly affected (Gunningham, Thornton, & Kagan, 2004) for others hearing about prosecutions encourages managers to review their own health and safety strategies but relatively few actually make changes as a direct result of fear of prosecution (Sweeney Research, 2003a). The major factors motivating managers to address OHS are fear of individual liability (Gunningham, 1999); the existence of regulations *per se* (not the enforcement) which are seen to set a standard of what is required (Gunningham, 1999; Gunningham et al., 2004); and, to some extent, industry

programs such as 'Responsible Care'<sup>12</sup> (Gunningham et al., 2004). Organisational reporting and accountability processes are reported to have some effect, but the outcomes depend on the measurement criteria (Gunningham, 1999). While there has been little research on the use of prohibition and improvement notices<sup>13</sup>, it is likely that these have an impact on specific OHS issues but have little broad effect. Similarly, infringement notices are likely to apply to non-complex issues and so have little strategic impact (Bluff, 2004).

To some extent managers in small to medium enterprises have different motivators to those in larger organisations, with enforcement strategies such as inspections and notices more likely to have an impact, and supply-chain pressure likely to be a major motivator for OHS change (Gunningham, 1999).

Commonly touted reasons for addressing OHS, such as 'safety pays', fear of legal action or corporate reputation, were not found to have any significant impact on behaviour (Clayton, 2002; Gunningham, 1999; Haefeli, Haslam, & Haslam, 2005; Shaw et al., 2006). While there has been some reports of long-term financial benefits of good OHS (Kim, 2005; Mather & Finkel, 2003) this may not be generally known and so not act as a motivator. It should be noted that recognition of the need for change is a necessary precursor to action, but senior managers are often unaware of the real situation concerning OHS in their organisations (Sweeney Research, 2003b).

### **3.3.2 Personal characteristics of managers**

Klimoski and Donohue (2001) propose that the features of the perceiver that might impact on their perception include traits and characteristics, motives, abilities and skills, values, beliefs, and attitudes. Also, senior managers have to be open to change and innovation before they will act on OHS advice. Young, Charns and Shortell (2001) comment that the study of strategic management has long been concerned with understanding the factors that promote an

---

<sup>12</sup> A program operating internationally in the chemical industry.

<sup>13</sup> Prohibition and improvement notices are enforcement tools available to inspectors employed by OHS regulatory bodies to require organisations, or persons, to take action to address OHS issues.

organisation's (or manager's) openness to innovation and change. This section discusses some of the literature relevant to a manager's characteristics, their openness to change, and their approach to OHS. This discussion is structured under the headings of age and experience; education; and values, beliefs and attitudes.

### **3.3.2.1 Age and experience**

Young et al. (2001) found that younger managers were more likely to be early adopters of innovation (Total Quality Management (TQM)), but length of tenure did not have any significant effect on adoption. Similarly a study of site managers on off-shore oil rigs (O'Dea & Flin, 2001) found no correlation between length of experience and OHS leadership style, a finding supported in a study involving senior managers of a Norwegian Hydro company (Rundmo & Hale, 2003). There was also no correlation between age or experience and the managers' behavioural intention with regard to time spent on safety and operational tasks (Rundmo & Hale, 2003).

Taking a slightly different perspective on experience, Young et al. found a significant correlation between adoption of TQM and the manager's previous experience with TQM. Hearing about the experience of others through professional and organisational networks encouraged later adopters to take up the innovation through normative processes. It is likely that a similar relationship with previous experience and networks with others may exist for OHS.

### **3.3.2.2 Education**

Young et al. (2001) found a graduate degree significantly influenced a manager's early adoption of innovation (TQM). More specifically, while their findings were limited by the extent of data, Cameron et al. (2007) found that, in the construction industry, there was a significant relationship between the level of OHS training for line managers and accident frequency rate. It may be that the impact of the training is two-fold: managers are more knowledgeable about OHS and also more open to advice provided by the OHSP.

### **3.3.2.3 Values, beliefs and attitudes**

Fu et al. (2004, p. 301) comment on the importance for those attempting to influence managers to understand the cultural values and social beliefs of those they want to influence, suggesting that “People tend to react negatively to behaviour that appears to deviate from their own norms and standards, and accurate perception is often impaired because of people’s tendencies to interpret others’ behaviour from their own perspective”.

The effect of beliefs on perception is taken up by Myers (2008). He summarises the situation as “The bottom line: we view our social world through the spectacles of our beliefs, attitudes, and values. That is one reason why our beliefs are so important; they shape our interpretation of everything else” (p. 79). Beliefs are also durable, even in the face of contrary evidence. Research (as quoted by Myers) indicates that the more we examine our theories and explain how they might be true, the more closed we become to information that challenges our belief. That is not to say that beliefs cannot be changed, but changes occur slowly and it requires more compelling evidence to alter a belief than to create it (Ross & Lepper in Myers, 2008).

Attitude as a precursor to behaviour is taken up by Rudmo and Hale (1999 in Rudmo and Hale 2003) who found that attitude may be a causal factor in a manager’s behavioural intent and their actual behaviour towards OHS; with certain attitudes (high commitment, high safety priority, low fatalism and high risk awareness) being predictors of behaviour. In turn their attitudes towards safety may be influenced by organisational factors, the managers’ working conditions, and their influence on the company safety policy

## ***3.4 Characteristics of the OHS professional***

Having discussed the attributes and motivations of managers as inputs to perception, it is important to examine the characteristics of the OHSP (as they perceive them) and how these might impact on the manager’s perception of information. According to Klimoski and Donohue (2001) the characteristics of the ‘perceived’ that impact on how they, or their message, are accepted include surface traits and visual cues such as their physical characteristics and body language; vocal non-verbal cues such as pitch and speech rate; verbal

cues; interpersonal cues and behavioural cues such as work performance, past performance and reputation.

There are very few references in peer-reviewed literature on the characteristics of OHSP. This author revisited the data from the Australian component of the *Safety Professionals Task Survey* to investigate the potential links between the personal (gender) and professional (education and experience) characteristics of OHSPs, and their involvement in strategic activities. (Pryor, 2010a). The article posed two questions relevant to this discussion:

1. Is there a link between the personal characteristics of OHS professionals and their strategic influence?
2. Is there a link between the professional characteristics of OHS professionals and their strategic influence? (Pryor, 2010a)

The findings of the questionnaire analysis together with the literature review are summarised in the following two sections with a third section examining some literature on social attributes of the OHSP.

### **3.4.1 Personal characteristics**

While it is likely that a number of personal characteristics may impact on the perception and strategic influence of OHSPs, the survey did not address personal factors other than gender and there is similarly little information on characteristics other than gender in the literature.

The surveyed OHSPS were predominantly male (71%), and appeared to be slightly more likely to be involved in strategic activities and to communicate with senior managers than their female counterparts. The strategic influence of female OHSPs may be limited by the perceptions of senior managers and by the networking practices of female OHSPS who, in the absence of high-ranking female professionals, tend to seek support from colleagues. (Pryor, 2010a)

## **3.4.2 Professional characteristics**

### **3.4.2.1 Education**

Analysis of the survey data (Pryor, 2010a) indicated that OHSPs with vocational-level general education and diploma-level OHS education were more likely to be involved in strategic activities. This apparently anomalous result should be interpreted with caution, as it might be that the activity descriptors were interpreted differently by those who have experienced higher levels of general education and/or OHS education. Also this finding is contrary to the outcome of a salary survey of OHSPs that showed a direct link between OHS qualification and level of position (Safesearch, 2008, 2013). The apparently contradictory outcomes of the survey and the salary survey point to the limitations of questionnaires as a tool for understanding the impact of factors such as education on the strategic influence of OHS professionals.

### **3.4.2.2 Experience**

Survey data (Pryor, 2010a) indicated that more experienced OHSPs were generally found to be more likely to be involved in strategic activities or to be in more senior positions. However, most OHSPs undertake their education as mature-age students, so there may be a link between experience and education.

## **3.4.3 Social skills**

Research supports a link between social skills and general ability to be persuasive. It also suggests that messages are more likely to be persuasive when they match the mood of the receiver (Byron, 2007). More specifically, a number of studies have found a positive relationship between employees' accuracy in non-verbal, emotional perception and workplace outcomes such as job performance, particularly for occupations that require a high level of interpersonal interactions (Byron, 2007).

Personal behaviour typology and emotional intelligence, especially as it might relate to workplace performance, has been an emerging topic among sociologists and psychologists in recent years (Law & Wong, 2004). Behavioural typology assessments tend to describe behaviour based on how people see themselves in the environment (eg: *Personal Profile*



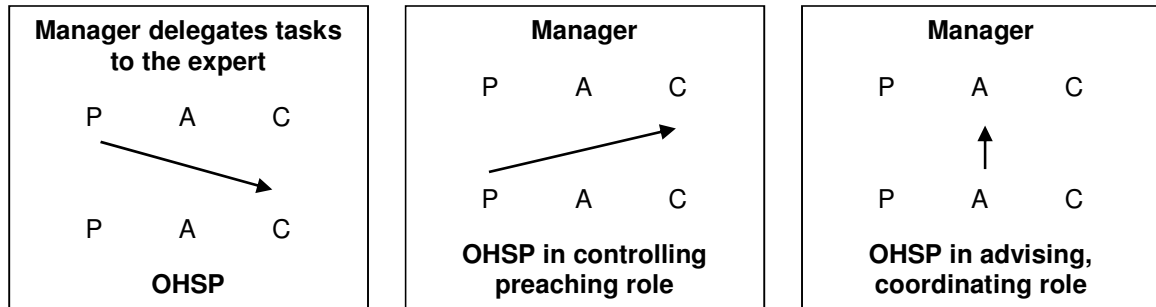
*System*) or how they approach the environment intellectually and attitudinally and how they process information (eg: *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*). Emotional intelligence is different from behaviour typology in that it is considered a competence, rather than a personality trait, and so can be learned. Emotional intelligence is considered to be made up of four unique skills: self-awareness; self-management; social awareness and relationship management (Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007). Interestingly, emotional intelligence has been found to positively correlate with both age and experience (Law & Wong, 2004).

### ***3.5 The relationship between the manager and the OHSP***

This section focuses on the core of the interaction between the manager and the OHSP, which is the nature of their interactions and the relationship. It reviews three relationship descriptors that have resonance with the types of relationship that might exist between an OHSP and a senior manager. As a result some literature on power and on influence is examined to differentiate between the two and to identify characteristics of the two qualities. While not identified in the literature, there are significant overlaps between each type of relationship descriptor which have been mapped to correlate their similarities.

#### **3.5.1 Parent-Adult-Child relationship metaphor**

Hale is one of the few writers to examine the relationship between the OHSP and the senior manager (Hale, 1995). He suggests that there are three types of role-relationships between the OHSP and the manager: expert; controller; or coordinator; with the type of relationship depending on the locus of power and control. He compares these relationships to the transactional analysis metaphor of Parent-Adult-Child as described by Harris (1969). Applying this metaphor describes the relationships as depicted in Figure 5.



(Developed from Hale, 1995)

**Figure 5: Three types of manager-OHS professional relationship**

Transactional analysis as described by Harris (1969) is an intellectual tool that can be used to assist in understanding the basis for behaviour and feelings. In this case a transaction consists of a stimulus by one person and a response by another, which in turn becomes a new stimulus for the other person to respond. Transactional analysis is based on the supposition that every person has psychological realities, any of which may be expressed at certain times, which have developed as a result of past experience. These psychological realities may be labelled as Parent, Adult or Child. Parent-like behaviours are developed externally through demonstration. They are judgmental in an imitative way and seek to enforce through a borrowed set of standards. Child-like behaviours occur when the response is the result of internalised feelings based on pre-logical thinking and poorly differentiated and distorted perceptions, they are often seeking approbation. Adult behaviour is based on data acquired and computed through exploration and testing (Harris, 1969). The transactional analysis concept of relationships is consistent with symbolic interactionism, which provides the theoretical perspective for this research, and according to Chenitz and Swanson (1986, p. 4) and Charon (2010, pp. 73-77), is based on the concept that the child develops a sense of ‘self’ through play and games and taking on the role of others. Clues for identifying the type of relationship, as given by Harris, are summarised in Table 8 and correlated with the criteria for other relationship descriptors.

### **3.5.2 Consultant relationship: expert, 'doctor' or process consultant**

The OHSP often acts as a consultant; either internal to the organisation or on a fee-for-service basis. Schein (1978) describes three types of relationship between a consultant and the client where the consultant is either a: supplier of expertise; a 'doctor'; or process consultant. When the consultant acts as a supplier of expertise the client is actually in control. They determine the problem and decide the nature of the help required and who to go to; the consultant accepts the definition of the problem and provides a solution. In a doctor-patient type of relationship the consultant is in control; they elicit information to diagnose the problem then provide a prescription to treat the problem. The client then has to implement the treatment. When the consultant acts as a process facilitator the relationship is a partnership with the client involved in the diagnosis, in charge of finding a solution and, as a result of the support provided by the consultant, the client develops skills to apply now and in the future.

It is interesting to note the similarities with the Parent-Adult-Child metaphor described in the previous section. The supplier of expertise could be equated with a Child-Parent relationship with the OHSP being the Child; in the Doctor-Patient relationship, the consultant is acting as a Parent; while when the consultant is facilitating a process, it is an Adult-Adult relationship. This comparison is taken further in Table 8 where these consultant roles are mapped against other relationship descriptors.

### **3.5.3 Social exchange theory and reciprocity in relationships**

The principle of reciprocity, or give and take, has engaged many sociological writers over the last 80 years, Malinowski, Honan and Levi Strauss being three writers analysed in depth by Coser and Rosenberg (1969) and Ekeh (1974). Reciprocity is clearly shown in studies of primitive societies where the giving of reciprocal gifts is not so much an economic activity as a part of social engagement. While less relevant in modern western society, this non-economic reciprocity is apparent in activities such as exchange of presents at Christmas and the return of invitations to dinner parties. Often no one gains and no one loses, but there is more to the exchange itself than the things exchanged (Levi-Strauss in Coser & Rosenberg, 1969).

Parsons and Shills (Cosser & Rosenberg, 1969, p. 87) bring a symbolic interactionist perspective to the concept of reciprocity by proposing that communication through a common system of symbols is a precondition of reciprocity or complementarity of expectations. These actions, gestures or symbols have more or less the same meaning for both, thus a common culture exists through which their interaction is mediated. In the organisational environment, this could be interpreted as the OHSP and the manager needing shared understandings. Cohen and Bradford (1989, p. 9) consider that reciprocity is the basic principle behind all organisational transactions, including those between an employee and his or her supervisor or higher level managers. They note that whatever form the exchanges take, unless they are roughly equivalent over time, hard feelings result.

Thus people are influential only insofar as they can offer something that others need. Cohen and Bradford use the metaphor of 'currencies'. They provide a list of commonly traded organisational currencies (Table 8) which show striking correlations with the taxonomy of influencing tactics discussed in the following section and the other relationship descriptors.

#### **3.5.4 Power and influence**

The preceding discussion of the type of relationship which might exist between the OHSP and the senior manager and the descriptors mapped in Table 8, indicates that the nature of the relationship is likely to involve a balance between influence, power, and possibly dependence, with the relative balance depending on the relationship. Standard texts on organisational behavior (Bailey et al., 1991; Dawson, 1986; Dunford, 1992) define 'power' and 'influence' in the following general terms:

*Power:* the capacity to get decisions made, actions taken and situations created which are in line with one's interests.

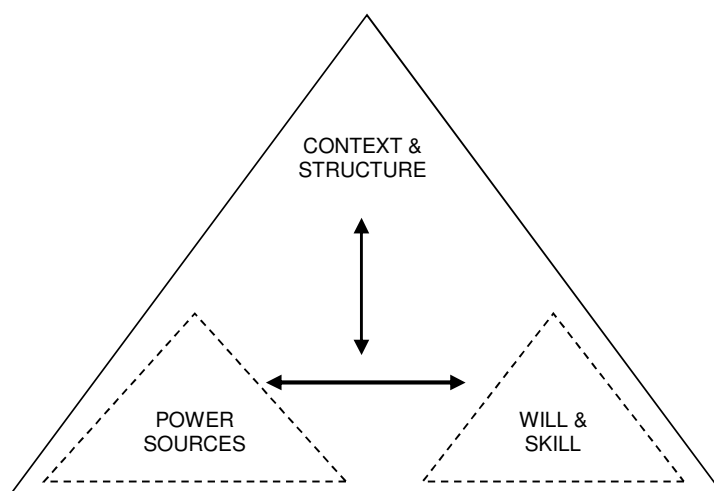
*Influence:* the process whereby one party changes the views or preferences of another so that they conform to their own.

The key difference is that in a power relationship the person does not have to agree with the idea, they just have to act.

### 3.5.4.1 Power

Two possibly contrary views are offered on the link between influence and power. According to Bailey (1991, p. 427) influence may be achieved through the exercise of power, whereas Dawson (1986, p. 147) states that influence may make the exercise of power unnecessary. Latour (1986, p. 265) assists in clarifying this apparently contrary view by differentiating between power 'in potentia' (having power) and power 'in actu' (exerting power to get others to take action). Latour proposes that power is an effect not a cause and justifies this position by suggesting a 'translational' model for describing power (p.267). In this model, power is like passing a ball in rugby; it changes as it moves from hand to hand. Power requires action to pass it on, and those who are powerful are not those who hold power in principle, but those who practically define or redefine what 'holds' everyone together. This suggests that power is practice rather than principle, and it thus follows that power is not a cause of people's behaviour, but a consequence of the intense activity of enrolling, convincing and enlisting. Power is actually obtained from those who do the acting (Latour, 1986, p. 273).

Pettigrew and Mc Nulty (1995) also draw attention to the dynamics of power. They consider that power is not possessed in isolation. It may be generated, maintained, and lost in the context of relationships with others. They give an example of this variability of power in their study based on interviews with non-executive directors (NEDs) from some of the top 200 companies in the UK. In this study, the NEDs found it easier to exert negative power (ie: to say no) and that their power peaked at times of crisis and transition. The 'tripartite' model proposed by Pettigrew and Mc Nulty highlights the multi-factorial sources of power at senior levels of organisations, with power deriving from attributes of the individual, links with others and the organisational context (Figure 6).



Sources of power for Non Executive Directors		
Power sources	Context & structure	Will & skill
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge, expertise &amp; confidence</li> <li>• Experience in business, industry &amp; the company</li> <li>• Power derived from internal &amp; external figures (eg: other NEDS, the chairman)</li> <li>• Networking inside &amp; outside the boardroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude &amp; behaviour of the CEO &amp; chairman</li> <li>• Norms of conduct on Board</li> <li>• Guiding rule of the political 'game'</li> <li>• Criteria for selection (eg 'old boys' network or expertise)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing how &amp; when to intervene</li> <li>• Tact &amp; diplomacy, respecting people</li> <li>• Logical argument</li> </ul>

(Modified from Pettigrew & Mc Nulty, 1995, p. 854)

**Figure 6: Sources of power for non-executive board members**

The question arises as to whether the OHSP is likely to be in a position of power in their relationship with a senior manager. Dunford (1992, p. 197) lists the sources of power as described by various writers. These sources, as summarised by Dunford, together with a comment based on this author's experience on the relevance to the OHSP, are given in Table 7.

**Table 7: Sources of power and the relevance to the occupational health and safety professional**

Source of power <sup>a</sup>	Explanation/comment <sup>a</sup>	Possible relevance to role of OHSP <sup>b</sup>
Formal authority	Due to position.	Low to medium level of power. Variable depending on organisational OHS culture.
Reward power	Ability to award/withhold pay or rewards.	Nil.
Control of scarce resources	Labour, finance, equipment.	Nil.
Control of uncertainty	Environmental (markets, supply of raw materials).	Nil.
	Operational (breakdowns).	Nil.
	Ability to cope with uncertainty on behalf of other parts of the organisation.	May have low level of power.
Expert power	Power of the expert depends on the recognition of the legitimacy of the profession and the range of people who have the knowledge, or think they have the knowledge. Expert power is not present if the validity of the knowledge is questioned.	Greatest source of power for the OHSP. Low to high depending on the organisational OHS culture.
Informational power	Ability to control access, content and timing of information	Low to medium.
Organisational rules and regulations	Derived from following rules and regulations or due to having one's interpretations of the rules accepted.	Low to high depending on the organisational OHS culture.
Control of decision-making		No direct power but may be derived from expert power or rules and regulations requiring OHS sign-off.

<sup>a</sup> Derived from Dunford (1992).

<sup>b</sup> Comment by this author.

#### **3.5.4.2 Influence**

While the OHSP may have some power in their relationship with the senior manager, Table 7 and the relationship descriptors in Table 8 indicate that the situation is more likely to be one of influence. Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) note that study of interpersonal influence processes in organisations is not a new research topic and that one of the landmark works in the area is that of Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson in 1980. Since then, the taxonomy of interpersonal influence processes developed by Kipnis et al., has been tested and refined by several authors (Fu et al., 2004; Leong, Bond, & Fu, 2007; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990). These writers mainly used questionnaires to investigate the perceptions of managers, and of subordinates, in Hong Kong and also in the United States. They also examined the impact of national cultural values and social beliefs on managers' perceptions of the effectiveness of various influencing strategies. While the outcomes of the research are unlikely to be transferable to Australian OHSPs, the taxonomy of influencing tactics they developed provides useful concepts in beginning to think about analysing the data. The taxonomy of influencing tactics is presented in Table 8 and is mapped against the characteristics of the various types of relationship discussed above. It is interesting that the potential sources of power identified in Table 7 can be juxtaposed with the category of 'hard' tactics in this taxonomy.

#### **3.5.5 A taxonomy of relationship descriptors**

While the literature treats the concepts of power and influence and the various relationship descriptors separately, mapping of the criteria and examples of each descriptor (Table 8) shows that there is considerable correlation, and so provides a useful tool for the researcher in designing the data collection tools as well as providing a 'lens' through which to analyse the data.

In Table 8 the sources of power and the taxonomy of influencing tactics are presented in the two left hand columns (<sup>a</sup> and <sup>b</sup>) and these are the 'anchor' points for the other relationship descriptors.



**Table 8: Correlation of concepts related to influencing tactics and interpersonal relationships**

Sources of power <sup>a</sup>	Influencing tactics <sup>b</sup>			Transactional analysis <sup>c</sup>		Consultant role <sup>d</sup>		Reciprocal relationship <sup>e</sup> Commonly traded organisational currencies	
	Category	Sub category	Example	Role	Clues	Role	Description	Category	Description
<p><i>Formal authority:</i> due to position.</p> <p><i>Reward power:</i> ability to award/withhold pay or rewards.</p> <p><i>Control of scarce resources:</i> related to labour, finance, &amp; equipment.</p> <p><i>Control of uncertainty:</i> related to environment (markets, supply of raw materials); operations (breakdowns); ability to cope with uncertainty on behalf of other parts of the organisation.</p> <p><i>Expert power:</i> depending on recognition of the legitimacy of the profession and the range of people who have the knowledge, or think they have the knowledge.</p> <p><i>Informational power:</i> ability to control access, content and timing of information.</p>	<b>Hard</b>	Authority	Pointing out the rules required that it be done.	<b>Parent</b>	<p><i>Body language</i></p> <p>Furrowed brow</p> <p>Pursed lips</p> <p>Pointing index finger</p> <p>Head wagging</p> <p>“Horrorified” look</p> <p>Foot tapping</p> <p>Hands on hips</p> <p>Arms folded across chest</p> <p>Wringing hands</p> <p>Tongue-clucking</p> <p>Signing</p> <p>Patting another on the head</p>	<b>Doctor</b>	<p>Client experiences problem but does not know what is wrong; comes to consultant to diagnose problem.</p> <p>Doctor elicits information and may refer client to specialist or provide a prescription or treatment.</p> <p>Client has to be willing to accept and implement treatment.</p> <p><i>Client dependent</i></p>	<b>Position-related</b>	<p><i>Advancement:</i> giving a task or assignment that can aid in promotion.</p> <p><i>Recognition:</i> acknowledging effort, accomplishment or abilities.</p> <p><i>Visibility:</i> providing a chance to be known by higher-ups or significant others in the organisation.</p>
		<p>Position</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Threat</p> <p>Demands</p>	<p>Have a show down.</p> <p>Expresses anger verbally.</p>						
	<b>Assertive</b>	Upward appeal	<p>Obtaining the informal support of higher up.</p> <p>Making a formal appeal to higher up.</p> <p>Filing a report with those higher up.</p>						

Sources of power <sup>a</sup>	Influencing tactics <sup>b</sup>			Transactional analysis <sup>c</sup>		Consultant role <sup>d</sup>		Reciprocal relationship <sup>e</sup> Commonly traded organisational currencies	
	Category	Sub category	Example	Role	Clues	Role	Description	Category	Description
<i>Organisational rules and regulations:</i> following rules and regulations or having one's interpretations of the rules accepted. Control of decision-making.					Evaluative words such as stupid, ridiculous, disgusting, shocking, lazy, nonsense, absurd, cute  Labeling terms such as poor thing, dear, honey.				
	<b>Rational</b>	Rational persuasion Written explanation Appraising	Used logic to convince. Explained reasons. Presented information to support view. Wrote a detailed report justifying position.	<b>Adult</b>	<i>Body language</i> Similar to active listening; tilted head and body with eye movement indicating attention.  <i>Verbal</i> Words indicating data processing such as: Asking Why? What? When? Who? How? ... How much? In what way? I think .. I see. In my opinion... Use of words such as comparative, true, false, probable, possible, unknown, objective.	<b>Process consultant</b> Client involved in diagnosis and continues to own problem, while consultant facilitates diagnosis by knowing what questions to ask, what to look for and how to separate facts from feelings. Client is in charge of finding the solution with the assistance of the consultant. Consultant supports client to develop skills to apply in the future.  <i>Partnership</i>			
	<b>Persuasive</b>	Inspirational appeal Consultation Collaboration	Mobilised other people in the organisation to help in influencing (co-workers, subordinates).					<b>Inspirational</b>	<i>Vision:</i> being involved in a task that has larger significance.  <i>Excellence:</i> having a chance to do important things really well.  <i>Moral/ethical correctness:</i> doing what is "right" by a higher standard than efficiency.
	<b>Soft/relational</b>	Gifting Informal engagement Personal appeal Socialising						<b>Relationship</b>	<i>Acceptance/inclusion:</i> providing closeness and friendship  <i>Personal support:</i> giving personal and emotional backing.

Sources of power <sup>a</sup>	Influencing tactics <sup>b</sup>			Transactional analysis <sup>c</sup>		Consultant role <sup>d</sup>		Reciprocal relationship <sup>e</sup> Commonly traded organisational currencies	
	Category	Sub category	Example	Role	Clues	Role	Description	Category	Description
									<i>Understanding:</i> listening to others' concerns and issues.
								<b>Personal-related</b>	<i>Self-concept:</i> affirming one's values, self esteem & identity. <i>Challenge/learning:</i> sharing tasks that increase skills and abilities. <i>Ownership/involvement:</i> letting others have ownership and influence.
	Exchanges of benefit		Offered to help if they would do what I wanted. Reminded of past favours that I had done for them. Offered an exchange (if you do this I will do that). Offered personal sacrifice (eg work late).	<b>Child</b>	<b>Body language</b> Tears Quivering lip Pouting Temper tantrums High pitched, whining voice Rolling eyes Shrugging shoulders Downcast eyes Teasing Delight Laughter, giggling Hand raising for permission to speak Nail biting, nose thumbing Squirming	<b>Supplier of expertise</b>	Client identifies problem; selects who to go to to solve problem then temporarily gives away the problem to the consultant. Client expects a solution but may not like the solution and may not act. <i>Client-controlled</i>	<b>Task-related</b>	<i>Resources:</i> lending or giving money, budget increases, personnel, space. <i>Assistance:</i> helping with existing projects or undertaking unwanted tasks. <i>Cooperation:</i> giving task support, providing quicker response times, approving a project, aiding implementation. <i>Information:</i> providing organisational & technical knowledge.
								<b>Position-related</b>	<i>Importance:</i> offering a sense of importance or belonging. <i>Network/contacts:</i> providing opportunities to link with others.

Sources of power <sup>a</sup>	Influencing tactics <sup>b</sup>			Transactional analysis <sup>c</sup>		Consultant role <sup>d</sup>		Reciprocal relationship <sup>e</sup> Commonly traded organisational currencies	
	Category	Sub category	Example	Role	Clues	Role	Description	Category	Description
		Ingratiation	Sympathised about the added problems my request caused. Acted humbly. Made them, feel good about me before making request. Acted in a friendly manner before asking what I wanted. Made them feel important before asking what I wanted.		<b>Verbal</b> I wish... I 'want... I dunno... I gonna... I don't care I guess Words relating to the "mine is bigger/better" game			<b>Personal-related</b>	<i>Gratitude</i> : expressing appreciation or indebtedness

<sup>a</sup> Sources of power as per Dunford (1992).

<sup>b</sup> Influencing tactics based on Kipnis and later refinements (Fu et al., 2004; Leong et al., 2007; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990).

<sup>c</sup> Transactional analysis as per Harris 1969.

<sup>d</sup> Consultant role as per Schein 1978.

<sup>e</sup> Reciprocal relationship description as per Cohen and Bradford, 1989.

### **3.6 Summary**

Consistent with modern views of grounded theory methodology, this chapter sets a framework for the research, informs the development of the research questions and informs the analysis. The literature review also ensures that, while looking to develop theory, the research outcomes are positioned in the context of current thinking and not developed in isolation.

This chapter begins by identifying that investigation of the factors impacting on the influence of the OHSP requires an understanding of how the manager perceives and processes information. The Klimoski and Donahue Interactive model of social cognition and perception is introduced as a scaffold for the literature review.

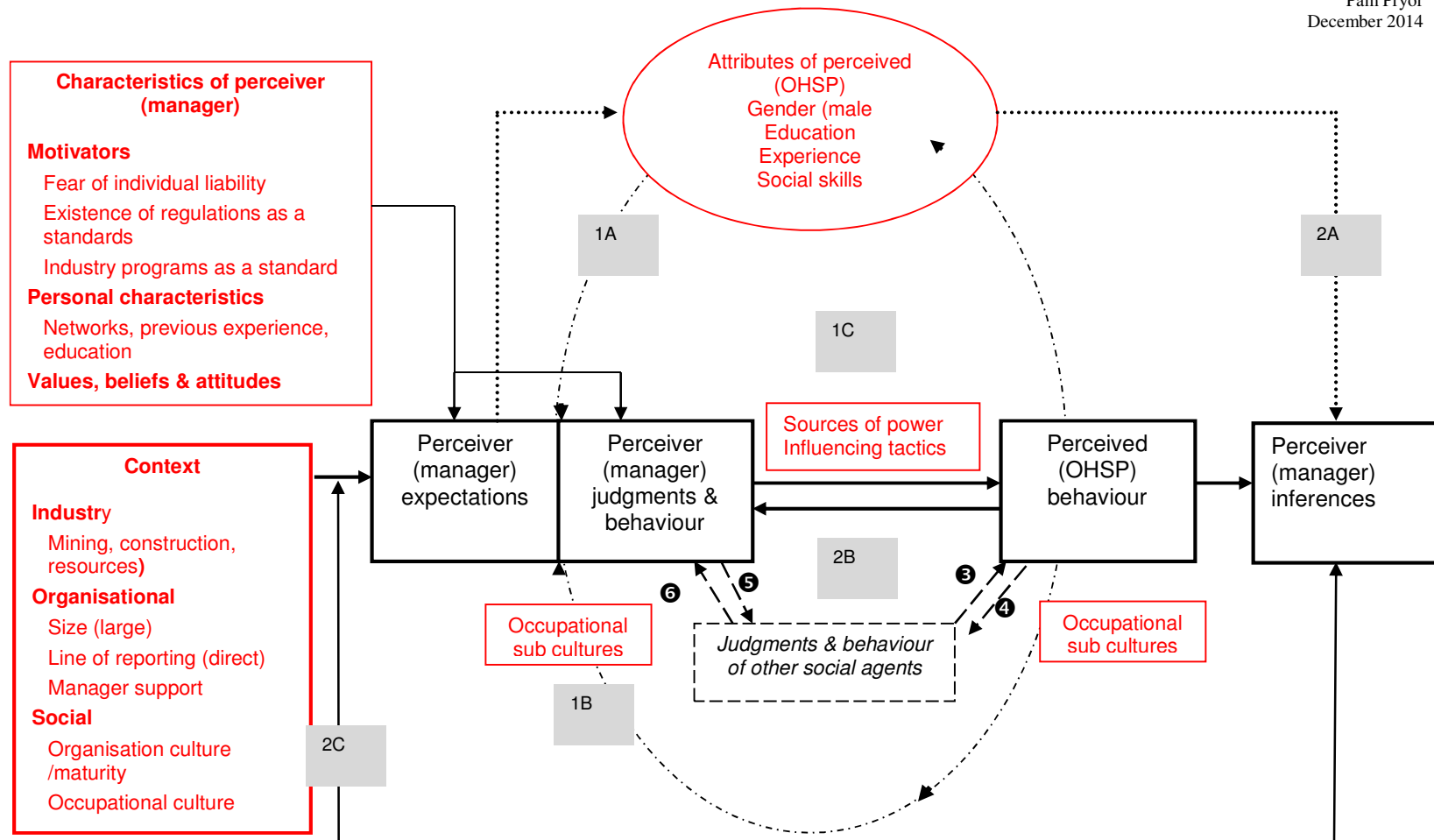
The literature suggests that the potential organisational contextual factors impacting on the manager's perception of the OHS professional advice include: industry (with those in mining construction and possibly resources being the most influential); size of organisation (larger and multiple sites); line of reporting (with the most influential having the most direct line to senior management); and level of authority. Social context is also likely to impact on the manager's perception of OHS advice with OHSPs working in more mature and mindful organisations likely to be more influential. The different 'occupational' cultures, and so different espoused beliefs and values, but particularly underlying assumptions of the manager and the OHSP may impact on the interaction between the manager and the OHSP.

Characteristics of the perceiver or manager are a second set of inputs. The literature suggests that motivators for managers to attend to OHS vary with the size of the organisation and organisational objectives such as profit, growth or control. High level managers are most likely to have a need for achievement and power (including mentoring and coaching others) and are less motivated by desire for positive relationships. The most important factor in a manager's perception of OHS advice is likely to be whether they recognise a need for change. The strongest motivating factors appear to be fear of individual liability; the existence of a recognised benchmark (and how they compare to the benchmark) and organisational reporting and accountability processes. Values, beliefs and attitudes appear to be the strongest personal factor impacting on a manager's perception of advice, with education being a significant

factor in early adoption of change. Age and experience appear to have no impact. As a third input to the perception model, characteristics of the OHSP that may impact on the perception of information are gender (male); level of education; experience; and possibly social skills.

The relationship between the manager and the OHSP will be the core of the interaction. The literature offers a range of constructs for considering such relationships with three being considered in this chapter: the parent-adult-child metaphor; the consultant relationship; and social exchange and reciprocity. The difference between power and influence is clarified with reference to the literature. The chapter concludes with a taxonomy of influencing tactics synthesised from the literature.

The relevance of these outcomes from the literature review for the Interactive Model of Social Cognition and Perception are mapped in Figure 7



- 1: Cues used by the perceiver (manager) in understanding the perceived (OHSP)  
**1A:** surface traits; **1B:** relationship factors; **1C:** perceived (manager) behavioural responses to the perceiver's (OHSP) initial judgments.
- 2: Cues representing behaviour of the perceiver (manager) in response to the perceived (OHSP)  
**2A:** perceiver's (manager) inferences made directly on the basis of the perceived (OHSP) attributes; **2B:** inferences made indirectly through interactions with the perceived (OHSP); **2C:** perceiver's (manager) expectations resulting from earlier interactions.
- 3: Perceived (OHSP) behaviour towards other people.  
 4: Others behaviour 'towards perceived (OHSP).  
 5: Cues from perceiver's (manager) behaviour towards others.  
 6: Other people's behaviour toward perceiver (manager) ie: social proof.

**Figure 7: Klimoski and Donahue Interactive model of social cognition and perception noting literature review**

## Chapter 4 Analysis and findings

Having defined the problem in Chapter 1, described the research framework and design in Chapter 2 and considered the literature in Chapter 3, this chapter presents the analysis and findings.

This research is about the relationship between the manager and the OHSP. As described in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.7) the analysis commenced with examination of the individual manager interviews and then considered the content across the manager cohort. This was followed by individual analysis of the OHSP interviews and then across the OHSP cohort. The observations were then examined to add richness to the interview analysis.

‘Trust’ by the manager of the OHSP quickly emerged as the key category in the relationship between the OHSP and the manager. This chapter begins by examining trust from the managers’ perspective and then from the OHSPs’ perspective. Trust and the perceptions of trust in the relationship by the manager and the OHSP are then discussed applying the constructivist, symbolic interactionist perspective underpinning this research. Trust in the relationship is then described as a theoretical category together with the dimensions and properties.

### ***4.1 Trust in the relationship***

‘Trust’ by the manager of the OHS professional emerged as the most significant high level category which had the potential to impact on the manager’s decision-making and so the influence of the OHSP. While ‘trust’ was frequently mentioned by the managers, the OHSPs tended to focus on factors contributing to trust rather than trust *per se*. While there was consistency between the managers and OHSPs in their perceptions of the key components of trust there were some differences in how the OHSPs perceived the factors contributing to these components compared with the managers.



Looking to the literature 'trust' is defined as "the willingness to make oneself vulnerable to another person despite uncertainty regarding motives and prospective actions" (Kramer, 1999; Mayer et al 1995; McAllister, 1995; Rotter, 1967 in Chua, Ingram, & Morris, 2008). There are two types of trust: cognitive and affective (Weigert, 1985 and McAllister, 1995 in Moustafa-Leonard, 2007) and these two types have different antecedents and consequences (Drolet and Morris, 2000; Kramer, 1999; Mc Allister 1995 in Chua et al., 2008). Cognitive trust is based on evidence of trustworthiness (Moustafa-Leonard, 2007) and involves some objectivity in assessment (Chua et al., 2008; Moustafa-Leonard, 2007). Affective trust is a deep emotional attachment during a relationship (Moustafa-Leonard, 2007) and involves empathy, rapport and self-disclosure, and individuals expressing care and concern for the welfare of the other (Chua et al., 2008). Affective trust is considered to be more enduring and generalisable over situations than cognitive-based trust (Chua et al., 2008). While Chua et al. (2008) consider that trusting relationships between managers and subordinates are more likely to be built on cognitive rather than affective bases, little research has actually been conducted examining the role or the development of manager-subordinate trust and the types of trust involved (Chua et al., 2008; Moustafa-Leonard, 2007). Trust is considered to be the framework on which any relationship is built (Blau, 1964, Rempel et al. 1985, Zand, 1972 in Moustafa-Leonard, 2007).

The following analysis is in two parts. It initially draws on the interviews of managers to explore the role of trust in the relationship between the senior manager and the OHSP. The OHSP interviews are then examined to construct the OHSP perception of the strategic relationship and the role of trust in that relationship. The observations of the interactions between the manager and the OHS professional are then examined to add richness to the interview analysis. Tables of illustrative quotes are provided for each component and diagrams summarise the components of trust as perceived by managers and by OHSPs.

## 4.2 *Trust from the managers' perspective*

Four of seven managers specifically mention that they trust their OHSP 'totally', 'implicitly' with another manager strongly implying it without mentioning the word.<sup>14</sup> Managers consider trust as part of a professional relationship ("like trusting an accountant not to jib you"). That managers benefit by a level of comfort or reassurance is indicated by the manager who said:

"It just gives that ... sort of sleep soundly at night feeling that you have got that side of it looked at." (M 0109)

This trust may extend to the manager making themselves vulnerable to the OHSP, trusting the OHSP with the manager's wellbeing as well as that of the organisation. This vulnerability is expressed in the comment:

"I would have ...probably four people ... that I totally trust ... that they've got my interests and the business interests at heart .... and (OHSP) would be one of those ..." (M 1014)

A number of comments indicated that the development of trust takes time, is not easily won, and requires continual reinforcement:

"... and then trust would come over time ..." (M 0109)

"... prove yourself that you can win the trust of the manager" (M 1014)

"... We worked very, very closely early on .... I've pulled back now I have full confidence." (M 1014)

"... so he has to keep working at that trust ... if he ... he would soon become ineffective and you would stop using him..." (M 0109)

From the managers' perspective the category of 'trust' is considered to have two components: 'cognitive trust' and 'affective trust'. Cognitive trust by the manager appears to have three components: 'confidence', 'credibility' and a 'shared understanding' with confidence being the outcome of a shared understanding and credibility. Affective trust appears to derive from a shared understanding together with the manager being involved in recruitment of the OHSP and a factor that, in this research, derived from a code 'like me'.

---

<sup>14</sup> In the one relationship where trust did not seem to exist there were a number of relationship factors operating including the line of reporting for the OHS professional being changed to bring in the manager and the manager seeing himself as fixing a problem. The leadership style of the manager may also have impacted on the relationship.

The components of credibility, shared understanding, confidence and affective trust are presented in the following two sections. Illustrative quotes are provided in associated tables with each section being summarised in a diagram depicting the perceptions of the managers and of the OHSP regarding trust in the relationship.

#### **4.2.1 Credibility from the managers' perspective**

In indicating their reasons for trusting the OHSP managers specifically mentioned: upfront and honest (M 0109); not playing politics (M 0109); professional knowledge (M 1014; M 1066); professional judgment (M 0109); professional skill (M 0109; M 1014) and track record (M 0109; M 1014). As the analysis progressed it became clear that these and other factors were actually properties of 'credibility' which was a pre-cursor to cognitive trust. Credibility has been defined as "the quality or power of inspiring belief" (Merriam-Webster, 2009) or "qualities that someone has that makes people believe or trust them" (Macmillan Dictionary). From the interview analysis, credibility appears to have four properties or contributing factors: track record; technical knowledge; interaction with others especially the senior leaders; together with certain personal attributes.

##### **4.2.1.1 Track record**

The questions informing initial coding included "What does the manager look for in an OHS professional?" which resulted in a unanimous 'track record' which became an initial code which was then linked with credibility. The importance of track record in developing credibility, confidence and trust is highlighted by the 'shared background' of the managers and the OHS professionals with four of the seven OHSPs being actively recruited by the manager due to a previous work relationship (M 0109; M1014; M 1035; M1066).

##### **4.2.1.2 OHS knowledge**

While the managers' interpretations of the level of OHS knowledge the OHSP required varied from legislative knowledge, currency with what is happening in the industry, to a centre of

expertise; nearly all managers considered OHS knowledge ‘a given’.<sup>15</sup> However they did note that the nature of the knowledge required differed with the level at which the OHS professional operated in the organisation.

#### 4.2.1.3 Interaction with others

The importance of the OHS professional’s interaction with others, especially the senior management team, became apparent in two contexts. Firstly, the positive attributes of the current OHS professional. Secondly, in five cases there had been a restructure or recruitment as the then incumbent was seen as ‘not suitable for growth’ at least in part because of their perceived limited ability to interact with higher level executive management.

Of the seven dyads interviewed five OHSPs were members of the executive management group with the role being explained in one case as :

“We concluded that the executive needed somebody like (OHSP) sitting at the table with us as part of the team, part of what was going to drive the company”. (M 1035)

The sixth OHSP held a senior position and interacted with the senior management team while not being part of it. In comparison, five managers commented that the main reason previous incumbents were relocated or that the present incumbent was brought in at a higher level was the limitation of the previous incumbent in interacting with senior executive personnel. There were similarities in the perceived deficiencies of previous incumbents with a common thread as described by the managers below being a lack of skills to operate at the strategic level:

“He’s of a character that has quite good ... knowledge of safety, but was less influential in his confidence and his ability to actually influence managers. ... He did a great job taking us from where we were at that time, ... [but] I felt that whilst he was right for that time of the business, and when we got to this level we really needed somebody, what I would call at a high level of executive general manager or general manager of a large organisation and that’s a different skill set and it’s a difference experience” (M 1035)

“We knew that the journey ... had taken us on as the OHS manager at the time was an important one and he probably lifted us from two to three on that maturity model. But certainly I and others formed the view that he wasn’t the right person to take us from three to four, we needed someone with a broader tool kit of skills”. (M 1038)

---

<sup>15</sup> In the one case where technical OHS knowledge was not considered a key requirement the OHS professional managed a large team of OHS specialists.

It was not possible to tease out from the manager interviews what this “broader tool kit of skills’ entailed but some insight is gained from OHSP 2019, who commented that:

“...for example some people would struggle sitting down at a table with a bunch of senior managers and be able to successfully argue a position and persuade people around the table to that position ...because they don’t have the experience in that type of environment ...” (OHSP 2019)

#### **4.2.1.4 Personal attributes**

A range of what might be termed ‘personal attributes’ were mentioned by managers as being key requirements for an OHS professional that impacted on the levels of trust: upfront and honest, not playing politics (M 0109); straight talking, ‘sort the wheat from the chaff’ (M 1014, M1035); able to handle pressure, take control in a crisis, show initiative, call the shots, ‘personal grunt’ (M 0109, M1035); proactive, positive, ‘can do’ approach (not negative, complaining) (M 0109); good communicator (M 0109); and high emotional intelligence (M1066). While some of these personal attributes relate to approach to work and communication skills, some refer to an ‘ethical’ approach to work and relationships and so would be a requirement for a trusting relationship.

**Table 9: Manager quotes illustrating 'credibility'**

<p><b>Credibility</b></p> <p>“The most important skill set that these people [OHS professionals] need is to be able to, with credibility, and almost from the back seat .....” (M 1066)</p> <p>“To me someone in (OHSP)’s role needed to pass that critique and he passes in spades in my view, that test where he’s got credibility with the community” (M 1038)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Personal attributes</b></p> <p>Straight talking, ‘sort the wheat from the chaff’ (M 1014, M1035)</p> <p>Able to handle pressure, take control in a crisis, show initiative, call the shots, ‘personal grunt’ (M 0109, M1035)</p> <p>Proactive, positive, ‘can do’ approach (not negative, complaining) (M 0109)</p> <p>Good communicator (M 0109)</p> <p>High emotional intelligence (M1066).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Track record</b></p> <p>“You would have to have a good track record. ... It’s the track record and then trust would come over time” (M 0109)</p> <p>“I’d want someone that ... proven ... themselves in the field of play” (M 1014)</p> <p>“I had spoken to our people previously, ... they were reporting back to me how positive he was and how passionate ...” (M 1035)</p> <p>“ (OHSP) is respected in the industry, so I think that has a lot of weight, so we would like to employ someone who has respect in the industry.” (M 1057)</p> <p>“ So I suppose I’d just look for track record of having done something similar for other leaders around the place.” (M 1066)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Technical knowledge</b></p> <p>“You need to have the confidence of the manager that you know more than the manager about the piece of work ... because the manager will be looking to you to be the OHS expert in the organisation,” (M 0104)</p> <p>“a smart operator who knows his (sic) stuff”. (M 1014)</p> <p>“(OHSP) is intellectually on top of the safety topic, way beyond anybody I have ever known. Because of his enthusiasm on that topic he stretches my intellect on that topic.” (M1066).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Interaction with others (executive)</b></p> <p>“When we got to this level we really needed somebody, what I would call at a high level of executive general manager or general manager of a large organisation and that’s a different skill set and it’s a difference experience” (M 1035)</p> <p>‘... sitting at the table with us as part of the team, part of what was going to drive the company’. (M 1035)</p> <p>“...his ability to interact with senior leaders across the organisation of the executive team.” (M 1066)</p>

#### 4.2.2 Shared understanding from the managers’ perspective

Initial reading of the interview transcripts was an important part of the analysis. Two predominating and consistent characteristics of the relationship quickly appeared: informality of the relationship; and a shared understanding. While a shared background and the manager acting as a mentor appear to contribute to a shared understanding, it is not clear whether the

informal relationship derives from the shared understanding and is a factor in trust or whether the informal relationship is a characterisation of the shared understanding.

#### **4.2.2.1 Shared background**

A shared background<sup>16</sup> is a feature of four of the dyads. In three cases these relationships have been over extended periods of time, across different roles and different organisations.

However Manager 1035 identified that a shared background in terms of a previous work relationship is not necessary for a shared understanding:

“Well, just close, we just clicked, and he fitted in with the EMT [Executive Management Team] very well.” (M 1035)

One manager employed other strategies to assist the development of shared understanding:

“I wanted an understanding as to where his strengths, weaknesses and preferences were in terms of work style. That [psychometric] testing ... has actually turned out to be quite accurate in terms in its findings ... and has certainly helped in the management of him.”<sup>17</sup> (M1038)

#### **4.2.2.2 Manager as a mentor**

One factor which may facilitate a shared understanding is the manager acting as a mentor, or seeing themselves as a mentor to the OHSP. One manager noted his role in steering the OHSP in their career; another manager who did not have a shared relationship specifically discusses a mentoring role that he sees he has with the OHSP; while another manager does not specifically mention mentoring the OHSP but describes his role in mentoring younger personnel.

#### **4.2.2.3 Informal relationship**

The informality of the relationship is characterised by: ready informal access on a regular basis supported by more formal scheduled meetings; few emails in favour of phone or face-to-

---

<sup>16</sup> This finding could be interpreted as a ‘boys club’ being active in recruitment and development of influential relationships.

<sup>17</sup> This may be seen as giving the manager power in the relationship but this did not seem to be borne out in the further discussion or on the interview of the matched dyad.

face discussion; and “straight talking, up front and honest” interactions. The informality of the relationship is also reflected in some of the personal attributes as listed in section 4.2.1.4 especially those of the nature of ‘upfront and honest’, ‘not playing politics’, ‘straight talking’.

The observations gave further insight to the informal nature of the relationship. Of the six observations conducted, five were one on-one-one routine ‘catch up’ sessions. These sessions may be weekly, fortnightly or monthly, some scheduled others on an as-needs basis; all had an agenda, some formal and written others less formal. While the details varied there was a consistency in approach. Table 10 gives some common features observed during manager-OHSP interactions.

**Table 10: Common features observed during manager-OHS interactions**

<b>Common features of manager – OHSP interactions</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commenced with a ‘social exchange’ such as a comment on the football or a mutual acquaintance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OHSP provided status reports on key activities/projects
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OHSP raised items for manager’s information (“You need to know this”)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manager gave supportive utterances, (yep, yep) and offered support (“Do you want me to intervene?”)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manager may seek clarification or offer suggestions
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manager provided relevant information on broader organisational activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Usually OHSP, sometimes manager, recapped by summarising actions from meetings.



**Table 11: Manager quotes illustrating 'shared understanding'**

<b>Manager as mentor</b>	<b>Informal relationship</b>	<b>Shared background</b>
<p>“I was part of the decision process that we should try OHSP in the health and safety role ... which ... I dare say he took to like the proverbial duck to water ..” (M 1014)</p> <p>“... he’s set up his part of the business under my sort of stewardship.” (M 1014)</p> <p>“I’m pushing him fairly hard at the moment. It’s around ... that’s the next part of his evolution. ... I’m starting to pull the elastic band a little bit on that at the moment. ...” “I suppose the people who ... I am responsible for leading, I try and keep pushing them into the productive uncomfortable zone to test and grow them. I think I’m someone who provides a pretty solid framework around what the priorities are and then allow the person to get on with delivering against those priorities.” (M 1038)</p> <p>“I have this sort of coaching role, development role ... I am very much looking after the motivation and inspiration of the young people and the staff and as whole .. I like growing people’s careers, I like training people.” (M 0109)</p>	<p>“Always informal, he’ll pop in or I’ll ring him or chuff up to see him and say what about this?” (M 1035)</p> <p>“There would not be a day when one of us isn’t in each other’s office talking about something ... also formal monthly meetings and a quarterly deep drill ...” (M 1014)</p> <p>“He rang me at home on Saturday ... he said I’m going in you don’t need to go and he went and managed it.” (M 0109)</p> <p>“(OHSP) spends more time in my door than probably any other executive without invite, he has ready access at any time.” (M 1066)</p>	<p>“I’ve brought in my range of lieutenants ... from my history knowing that those people can do the job that I ask them to do” (M 1014)</p> <p>“And so when I arrived here, I could see a very similar task, ... [and so recruited OHSP who I’ve worked with before]” (M 1066)</p> <p>“OHSP has worked for me several times in various jobs ... so we have grown up generally ... he’s built his career moving through ... as I did ...” (M1014)</p> <p>“That just came purely from the fact that OHSP and I have worked together for 15 years so he automatically rang me without thinking ...” (M 0109)</p> <p>“We’ve been working this way for a long time now [in different roles and organisations]; we’ve pretty well got all bases covered.” (M 1066)</p>

### 4.2.3 Confidence from the managers’ perspective

Confidence by the manager in the OHSP was initially seen to be synonymous with credibility but as the analysis progressed it appeared that confidence was operating at a higher level and that credibility was actually one of the factors leading to confidence. One manager (M 1066) refers to himself as “a leader with world-class coach”, and therefore it could be assumed that by allowing himself to be coached a leader must have confidence in a coach.

The discussion in the previous section indicates that managers develop confidence in the OHSP as a result of credibility of the OHSP and a shared understanding. There are indications

that these factors contributing to confidence may be mediated by the leadership style of the manager themselves. The one relationship where the manager did not specifically state that trust existed was instructive.<sup>18</sup> While the relationship was relatively new and the manager saw himself as being brought into solve a problem the manager himself states that he likes “to be in control”. When an actual problem presents the manager is personally involved in the resolution. This may be seen as supportive or could have other interpretations such as he does not have confidence in the OHSP, perhaps because his need for control makes it difficult for him to have the confidence to delegate. In comparison most managers set the framework and then leave the OHSP to manage the function.

**Table 12: Manager quotes illustrating confidence**

<b>Confidence</b>
“I think that having (OHSP) certainly facilitates me making a decision faster, and it enables me to have the confidence that ... I’ve got safety considered as part of the decision-making process” (M 0109)
“.. I would have total confidence in his ability to do what I need a health and safety manager to do in this organisation” (M 0109)
“I’ve now pulled back now that I have full confidence in (OHSP) ...” (M 1038)

<b>Managers’ leadership style</b>
<i>Controlling</i>
“.. Probably I would take the lead and (OHSP) would chip in as he needed to ... ahm .. probably that is just my style, I like to take control of the meeting and understand who’s doing what .. and then (OHSP) can chip in as he needs to.” (M 1057)
“So if (OHSP) comes in and says “hey I saw this ... I’ll be straight on the phone and say listen you’ve got to fix this so let’s organise a meeting, or lets go and have a look at it ....” (M 1057)

---

<sup>18</sup> This relationship was instructive in a number of ways but is not analysed in detail here due to confidentiality reasons (being a single example it may be recognisable).

#### **4.2.4 ‘Affective trust’**

While trusting relationships between managers and subordinates are thought to more likely be built on cognitive rather than affective bases (Chua et al., 2008), this study indicates that affective trust existed between at least some of the managers and the OHSPs. Affective trust is defined as a deep emotional attachment (Moustafa-Leonard, 2007) and involves empathy, rapport and self-disclosure, and individuals expressing care and concern for the welfare of the other (Chua et al., 2008). Affective trust is considered to be more enduring and generalisable over situations than cognitive-based trust.

The empathy, rapport and self-disclosure that may occur as part of the social interaction that contributes to and is part of a shared understanding as described for cognitive trust is an important property of affective trust. Analysis of the manager interviews indicated additional properties of affective trust as being a perceived similarity between the manager and the OHSP (‘like me’) and the manager’s involvement in recruiting the OHSP.

##### **4.2.4.1 ‘Like me’**

The previous sections describe the development of cognitive trust by the manager of the OHSP. In comparison the comments of 4 managers’ indicates a less rational factor in the development of trust which in the coding process was labelled ‘like me’.

##### **4.2.4.2 Involvement in recruitment**

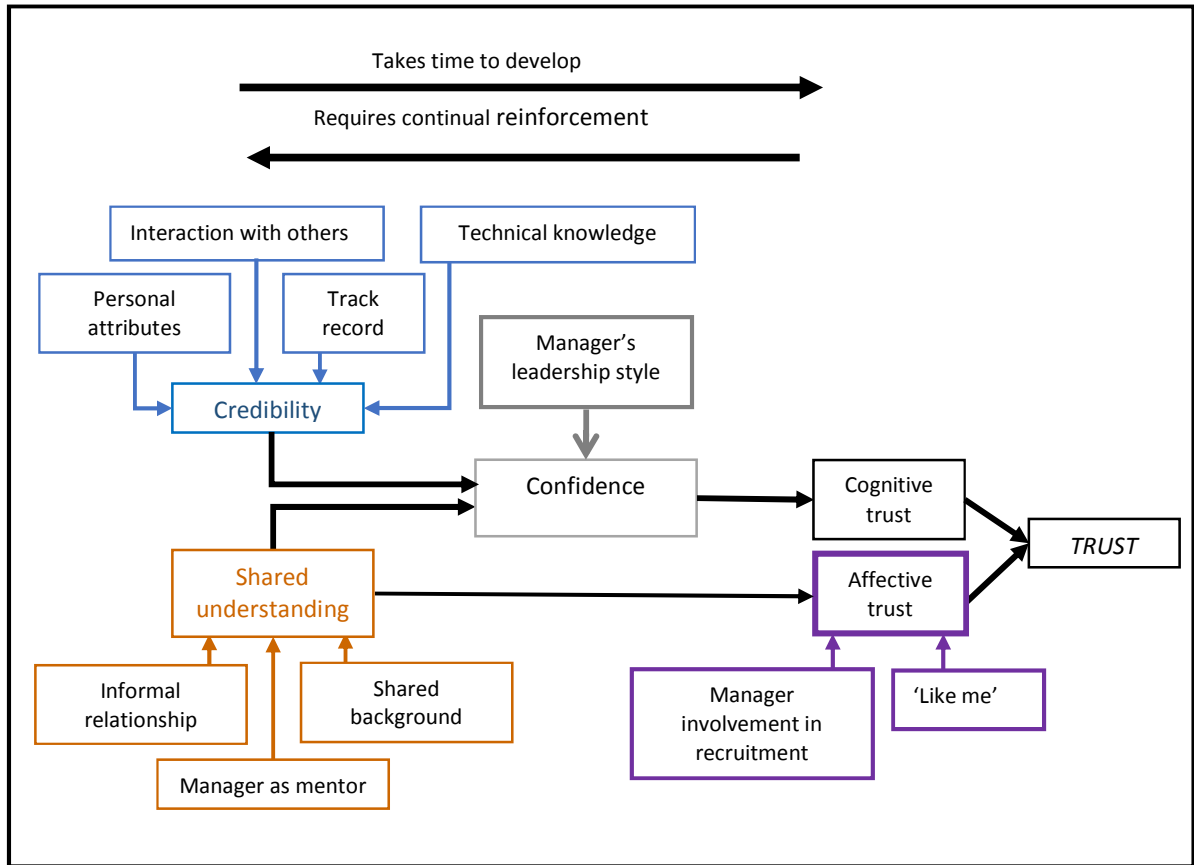
Analysis of the interviews also revealed congruence with the level of influence exerted by the manager in recruitment of the OHSP and their trust. Five managers who demonstrated high levels of trust having been actively involved in the recruitment of the OHSP.

**Table 13: Manager quotes illustrating affective trust**

<b>Shared understanding</b> <i>See Table 11</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Like me</b></p> <p>“(OHSP) built his career moving through (company) as I did” (M 1014)</p> <p>“I guess he shared the same background I had in terms of what’s important and what’s not so important” (M1014)</p> <p>“He’s broadened the scope of the business in exactly the same logic as I’ve used ....” (M 1014)</p> <p>“ In his first year, same as in my first year...” (M 1066)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Manager involvement in recruitment</b></p> <p>“I said to the guys, why don’t we employ him, right, and get him in the company... I got hold of (OHSP) and asked him if he’d be prepared to leave his company and join us, which I managed to do ...” (M 1035)</p> <p>“Pretty much the very first thing I did as soon as .... was recruit him here” (M 1035)</p> <p>“I went through a head hunting company ....” (M 1038)</p> <p>“..so when I arrived here, I could see a very similar task ...[and so recruited OHSP]”(M 1066)</p>

#### **4.2.5 Diagram summarising managers’ perception of trust**

Figure 8 shows the components of trust in the relationship between the manager and the OHSP as perceived by the manager.



**Figure 8: Managers' perception of trust in the relationship**

### 4.3 Trust from the OHSPs' perspective

While there were similarities between the managers' view and the OHSP's view of the relationship in that both featured 'trust', 'confidence', a 'shared understanding' and 'credibility' there were differences between the two perspectives on the components of these features. The OHSP appeared to focus on what has been defined under the manager analysis as 'cognitive trust'.

While 'trust' was specifically mentioned by three OHSPs the predominating focus was a 'shared understanding' and 'credibility' as the precursors of trust. While these components of

trust are the same as those perceived by the managers, the OHSPs perceived different factors in the development of trust.

#### **4.3.1 Shared understanding from the OHSPs' perspective**

In addition to the informal relationship as identified by the managers, three very strong factors appear to contribute to a shared understanding from the OHSPs' perspective: what has been termed in this research 'bringing the manager along'; an understanding of the personality and drivers of the individual manager; and of the corporate business environment. While the latter factors are linked there is a subtle and important difference with both factors a requirement for a shared understanding.

##### **4.3.1.1 Informal relationship**

As with the managers, the OHSPs described the relationship as informal, some with an element of mentoring by the manager, some as coaching the manager. Observations revealed that while the OHSPs label the relationship as 'informal' this does not equate to an equal relationship. The OHSPs clearly respected the authority and position of the manager without being deferential.

##### **4.3.1.2 'Bringing the manager along'**

The need to provide the manager with an opportunity to develop their own thinking and for the manager to contribute to the strategy or project was considered essential in developing a shared understanding as a basis for trust. "It's the journey they have to go through" (OHSP 2099). 'Bringing the manager along' was also observed in the manager-OHSP observations. The routine updating and the approach of "you should be aware of ..."; "I am dealing with it but just keeping you informed" was a strong theme in the observations. This engaged developmental approach contrasts with the 'do it my way' approach that has high potential for failure which is identified by this OHSP:

"Remember that it is the relationship that steers the matter because we've seen guys come and go, we've got one in here now that is a relationship breaker, and he's wondering why he's not getting the support and all those sorts of things. He's more, "This is the way you'll do it." He's in that brigade. So it's just

remembering that it is the relationship that steers the matter. Without the relationship you won't achieve anything." (OHSP 2042)

#### **4.3.1.3 Understanding the manager**

A lack of understanding of the drivers for managers by OHSPs was acknowledged as an issue:

"Often HSE folks all you know are bright eyed, bushy tailed that's terrific but can't understand why everyone's not as passionate or jumping up and down at their recommendations or have seen the problems that they can see. And that's because people who are running businesses have got lots and lots of things competing for their attention, lots of noise and you're trying to rise above that noise." (OHSP 2019)

All OHSPs interviewed had a general feeling for the needs of managers and particularly noted the importance of being direct in both written and oral communication:

"They don't want to read wordy reports .... and those sorts of things. You've got to be short sharp and out of there." (OHSP 2042)

As with the managers a shared background assisted in achieving a shared understanding but the OHSPs' efforts went beyond the understanding obtained through a shared background to actively consider the style, personality and individual drivers of their managers:

"But essentially they're all different and you have to work out what that difference is and you become a chameleon, or whatever, to get what you're trying to achieve out of that." (OHSP 2042)

#### **4.3.1.4 Understanding the organisational business environment**

The OHSPs were unanimous on the need for the OHSP to understand and work within the organisational business environment with this quality being seen as a deficiency in many OHSPs:

"Safety people are not commercially astute. They look at the legislation, they look at their part of it and they don't see the big picture." (OHSP 2024)

This understanding of the corporate business environment is much broader and deeper than an understanding of business finance and budgeting as is recommended for aspiring OHSPs by the popular OHS literature. It is more about understanding the corporate landscape and the

environment that people are operating in (OHSP 0206); the nature of the business and the business pressures (OHSP 2042); and how organisations work (OHSP 2042).



**Table 14: OHSP illustrative quotes for components of 'shared understanding'**

<p><b>Shared understanding</b></p> <p>“It's not exclusive, it's just that we've got a common understanding of where we're trying to go. So if you're trying to get somewhere and we're trying to support each other in doing it.” (OHSP 2099)</p>
<p><b>Informal relationship</b></p> <p>“It depends on who they are. Some individuals, ... he'll wander here and say I've got this issue, what are we doing about X, Y or Z? ... That open access.” (OHSP 2099)</p> <p>“Oh, well I probably would see him at least twice a week, face to face and we'd talk, I don't know probably every other day. ... I'll often say, “oh well I'll call in” and do things, catch him up on different things ... So we do try to make a time, particularly if there's something in particular to talk about. But if I'm over there for some other reason, I'll often just call in, catch him up on things or let him know what's happening about something.” (OHSP 0206)</p> <p>“Yeah. I can walk into his office at any time. I can pick up the phone any time and get to (manager) and that's the way I prefer to operate anyway. And, with him, he seems to be the same. Yep (wander in and have chat). And usually around EMT's, if there's EMT issues that we need to see what the position is before the meeting, there's that side of it. I would say once a fortnight probably. Just trying to think back, yeah, I'd probably say once a fortnight.” (OHSP 2042)</p>
<p><b>Bringing the manager along</b></p> <p>“You've got to be careful you don't set yourself up to fail ... so what I do is, I put something, a diagram on a page, go and give it to (manager) and he comes back and says, don't like that, don't like this, but I like that and I like that and maybe that's actually what we need to do there, but we need to do this. Have I got what I want, yeah.” (OHSP 2099)</p> <p>“Let's just apply some logic to the problem and have a discussion about it and then we'll go away and put something on paper and build, build, build, build until we come up with the final..... We've been through it, we've discussed the concept first, worked it up to first draft and then by the time we get to the point where we consider that it's pretty right, he'd be right on board with it.” (OHSP 0206)</p>
<p><b>Understanding managers</b></p> <p>“...and that's because people who are running businesses have got lots and lots of things competing for their attention, lots of noise and you're trying to rise above that noise”. (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“In the main I can (win him over). I'll know what he's looking for ....” (OHSP 0206)</p> <p>“If you walk in and try to do everything at once without understanding their issues, they are going to sit there and go ... go away. It's a hard skill to learn.” (OHSP 2024)</p> <p>“It comes down to understanding the personality of the guy more than anything ... Some you've really got to ... what's the best way of saying ... some you're quite direct and you need to be direct, others you really need to coerce and spend more time with getting their heads around what this is all about and you need to do the sell two or three times over before they can get their heads around it. So it's very much based on being able to tune into how the individual manager thinks and operates to adopt a tactic to get them to the objective. ... But essentially they're all different and you have to work out what that difference is and you become a chameleon, or whatever, to get what you're trying to achieve out of that.” (OHSP 2042)</p>
<p><b>Understanding the organisational business environment</b></p> <p>“What happens so often is we get health and safety people who this is all they've done or it is something that they are very passionate about but don't realise it is one part of a whole when it comes to business and can sometimes struggle to understand why they're not having the impact and people aren't listening to them. ... To understand the business and the issues of the business and understand where the value add from HSE is in that, in supporting ... you know the business achieving its outcomes. HSE is not an end in itself it's a support for the business.” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“...understanding the corporate landscape and the environment that people are operating in ...” (OHSP 0206)</p> <p>“...the nature of the business and the business pressures ... and how organisations work” (OHSP 2042)</p> <p>“... to understand the business and the issues of the business and where the value add from OHS is in that in supporting the business achieving it's outcomes HSE is not end in itself, it's a support for the business. ... Being able to differentiate in their mind between things that impact on the business's ability to do business and things that enable people to do their job safely. Both very important ... but ...(for example) if we don't do a risk assessment for this particular job that doesn't stop the business necessarily, depending on what it is, but the other stuff that may stop us doing our business unless we understand up front ....”(OHSP 2019)</p>

### **4.3.2 Credibility from the OHSP perspective**

As defined in section 4.2.1 credibility is the “qualities that someone has that makes people believe or trust them” (Macmillan Dictionary). Credibility is one of the key requirements for an OHSP.

“There’s got to be credibility in what you are saying. You’ve got to know your stuff. You’ve got to know your background. You do not open your mouth unless you’ve got the facts ...” (OHSP 2042)

Analysis of the interviews showed that credibility is much more complex than just knowing the facts. The components of credibility are: the nature of the advice given; the ability to know when to ‘speak plainly’ or to take control which in this analysis has been titled ‘call the shots’; and a track record on managing change.

#### **4.3.2.1 Advice**

While the OHSPs interviewed offered comments on the nature of their advice it emerged that there were two key features of the advice: a focus on critical risk; and the advice was informed by education and mental models consciously referred to by the OHSP.

Safety people are often criticised for focusing on what some people consider trivial or unimportant (especially when the senior managers are dealing with multi-million dollar projects.). However, by focusing on critical risks that could kill people, the OHSPs considered they were more credible in engaging the senior managers.

While the managers identified the need for OHS knowledge as ‘a given’ the OHSPs took this further in that they referred to understanding models of organisational learning (OHSP 2099), models of change management (OHSP 2099, OHSP 2019, OHSP 0206); and OHS maturity models (OHSP 2099, OHSP 2024). Other references to providing informed advice indicated that in addition to education it was important to maintain currency with progressive OHS thinking and research which went beyond the usual continuing professional development undertaken by most OHSPs.

OHSPs perceived that technical competence, human relationship competence and business acumen are key requirements for effective OHSPs operating at senior levels. OHS qualifications are considered a minimum requirement but the OHSP expressed reservations that while university qualifications addressed technical competence they did not address leadership, influence and 'business acumen'. Experience, especially at senior levels is also a vital element "... the qualification without the experience is no good, the experience without the qualification is less ... relevant." (2019)

#### **4.3.2.2 Call the shots**

Under 'personal attributes' managers identified key requirements as: upfront and honest, straight talking, take control in a crisis, show initiative, and calling the shots. The OHSP interviews gave further insight to this factor contributing to credibility. 'Calling the shots' appears to have two components: one that could be labelled 'plain speaking' the other is knowing when to take control. Both these components are demonstrated by OHSP 0206:

"I read the riot act a couple of times in some areas where we were absolutely head to head and basically just said, "look this is unacceptable that we operate like this around this important issue." (OHSP 0206)

This quality of the OHSP was summed up by one OHSP as "you've got to have a strong personality, you've got to have a really strong personality" (OHSP 2041) but also know when to be 'strong' as compared to 'bringing the manager along'. (See section 4.3.1.3)

#### **4.3.2.3 Change through 'supported empowerment'**

Management of change quickly emerged as a code in the initial analysis with most OHSPs having well developed concepts of change management and their role in change. This initial code took on greater depth than might be conceived through the common usage of 'change management'. Rather, these OHSPs were describing a process of change through supported empowerment. While different strategies might be used at the senior executive level and 'down the line' there are nine consistent features in the process of change through supported empowerment as described by the OHSPs: 1) provide leadership with a clear vision to bring people along; 2) create an imperative for change; 3) de-personalise the problem; 4) engage

people in the process; 5) base change on learning; 6) set an example; 7) provide support and make people comfortable; 8) enable people to have ownership of the outcome; and 9) recognise that change takes time and there will be resistance so have the patience to persevere. These features together with illustrative quotes are given in Table 15.

**Table 15: Change through supported empowerment**

<p><b>Provide leadership with a clear vision to bring people along</b></p>	<p>“There’s the leadership requirement, how do you engage people and bring them along ... in their hearts and minds and set a clear direction ... that’s the leadership part. ... You’ve got to be very clear on where this is meant to go and why ... and then get people involved ...you can’t afford to be wishy-washy you know, you’ve got to say this is what we’ve got to do you know” (OHSP 2019).</p> <p>“A lot of it is about making sure that everybody understands how it all meshes together; what the priorities are and that we’re on schedule to deliver on various things.” (OHSP 0206)</p>
<p><b>Create an imperative for change</b></p>	<p>“... often the message that ‘look change needs to occur for these reasons’ ” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“I think the view was we needed something and somebody to break that ... knock the walls down a little bit ... have another look, and rejuvenate the way that we were negotiating things. (OHSP 0206)</p> <p>“Unfortunately, or fortunately, whichever way you look at it, it was a client driver that got the ball rolling.” (OHSP 2042)</p> <p>“So what we ended up doing was, saying righty oh, there’s the mess, there’s the problem, let’s now deal with it. ‘Cause once you articulate it and get it out of people’s heads onto the table, then you can start talking about it.” (OHSP 2099)</p> <p>“It was pretty hard news for them to take because they were in this denial, ... they thought what they were doing was pretty good and so you had to peel all that back at the risk of turning them off pretty quickly, but then building them back around to the strategy. ... [Now] they’re [the executive managers] unanimous in terms of an understanding that things need to change. What we’re working ourselves through now is an understanding of what that actually means in practice.” (OHSP 2042)</p> <p>“So the status quo is not an option, here’s all the reasons why it’s not an option, and what does the future look like.” (OHSP 2019)</p>
<p><b>De-personalise the problem</b></p>	<p>“ ... this other language, it changed from, <u>you</u> to how are <u>we</u> ...and I think it’s the concept again, these little models where it’s the marriage counsel guidance, you know you’re the problem as opposed to, here’s the problem, how are <u>we</u> going to solve the problem” (OHSP 2099)</p>
<p><b>Engage people in the process</b></p>	<p>“I came up with .... and shopped that around with the individuals .. got people on board, massaged it a bit ...” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“It’s just if you’ve got any contentious issue in a group that size you get 1 or 2 who will stand up and hold the table and use up your half hour and it’s gone so you’re better off doing one-on-one that’s where you have some influence.” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“ ...we’ll kick it around a bit further ...” (OHSP 0206)</p> <p>“I think that in the main people are happy if they can see that their comments have been taken, ... into account and even if it then it doesn’t appear in the final, then we’ll try and explain why it doesn’t fit with the whole picture; people tend to be happy with that arrangement.” (OHSP 0206)</p> <p>“I thought if I get some of these people who are arguing on side they are going to be my movers and shakers; and sure enough that is the way it turned out.” (OHSP 2041)</p> <p><i>See also ‘bringing the manager along’</i></p>

<b>Base change on learning</b>	<p>“To achieve that, you've actually got to get people to learn and to work outside the system. ... you're keeping it in the context of, how do I help the organisation learn and change and achieve the goals that we want and I think and it is embodied here ... in understanding these learning models and the change models ...” (2099)</p>
<b>Set an example</b>	<p>“I'm finding though, in this early stage, that I have to initiate the subject matter all the time, although it's interesting now that they are moving into more ownership off the back of the normal process ... So, they're the practices that we're starting to see, we see in practice. And ... I believe it comes about from the discussion that goes on at those senior management meetings. They know they have to talk about it, they're starting to be able to articulate it better than they have before, and therefore in a position to ask questions of their own people a hell of a lot better ...”(OHSP 2042)</p>
<b>Provide support, make people comfortable</b>	<p>“What we try and do is have regular sessions, one on one ... they have a monthly Operations meeting and I would probably go to every second one.” (OHSP 2099)</p> <p>“What is it about this way that we are going that you're worried about? Where are the risks, let's talk about how we can really mitigate those risks going forward.” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“It's also because we're now all talking the same language and we've got rid of a lot of the background anxiety, tensions about the way we're doing things.” (OHSP 0206)</p> <p>“This is what's happening right. How can I make sure it doesn't create problems for you?. What are the issues you have?” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“Someone will have raised something that we haven't done enough on and I'll take that away and say “yes I understand what your problem is, yes I see your problem, we'll see what we can do”. (OHSP 0206)</p> <p>“Initially they came to me, but now we've got the support network in there and they've got their own person for the first time and this is all out of this discussion. (OHSP 2042)</p>
<b>Enable people to have ownership of the outcome</b>	<p>“So all it took was me stopping and saying what do you think of that? It's triggered a whole lot of conversations, a whole lot of things and to me that adds value.” (OHSP 2099)</p> <p>“What I got out of that was you'd be surprised if you give people the opportunity what they can produce.” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>I think they thought, well, I would turn up and tell them what's been going on within their own business. So we stopped that pretty quickly whereas now they report to the Executive”. (OHSP 2042)</p> <p>“Each of the group managers leads an Improvement Initiative.” (OHSP 2099).</p> <p>“ ... we start with, well, what have they been up to as leaders in the previous month, what have you been practicing in the previous month?” (OHSP 2042)</p> <p>And these are out there being worked and reworked as we speak to get the ownership right. (OHSP 2042)</p> <p>‘Never, never take it away from the line managers, safety is a line management thing (OHSP 2042)</p>
<b>Change takes time and there will be resistance; have the patience to stick with it</b>	<p>“...having the patience to stick with them.” (OHSP 2099).</p> <p>“Each organisation has its own particular culture that either supports or resists change. ... it doesn't mean change can't occur, what it means is that there's a lot lot more in engagement of stake holders required and the ability to influence and persuade to bring about that change.” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“Of those months it was just getting the organisation to a point that it could accept the change you know. An awful lot of work with all the senior executives.” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“And it's not a quick journey. So, all of them need working on. There are some better than others ... (OHSP 2042)</p>
<p>Well, it'll be the classic approach of sitting down with him, identifying what his issues are, letting him know why I'm trying to achieve what I'm trying to achieve, and then seeing whether we can get to an amicable solution. So there'll be a little give and take .. where you have to just get, because the relationship is the thing that's the matter. (OHSP 2042)</p>	

#### **4.3.2.4 Track record**

As with the managers, the OHSPs recognised the importance of track record in their credibility however there was a variation in the perception in that the managers referred to 'track record' in the context of recruiting an OHSP, as did some OHSPs (0206), but the main perception was their track record in achieving change within their current organisation (OHSP 2019).

**Table 16: OHSP illustrative quotes for credibility**

<p><b>Credibility</b></p> <p>“There’s got to be credibility in what you are saying. You’ve got to know your stuff. You’ve got to know your background. You do not open your mouth unless you’ve got the facts.” (OHSP 2042)</p>	
<p><b>Advice</b></p> <p>“So, knowing your stuff, having the right solutions, being able to consult with others rather than it’s just not my, ... certainly you need to have your own stance but it’s information that’s been built up with consultation at different layers, coming into that decision making, is probably the key to it.” (OHSP 2042)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Focus on critical risk</b></p> <p>“But what their issue is that they’re still killing people. So it’s no use talking about putting bandaids on people when you’ve got situations in there where we’ve got people being killed.” (OHSP 2042)</p> <p>“I used the directors legal compliance and directors liability a very strong leverage with the leadership as well, as well as focusing on critical risk.” (OHSP 2042)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Informed advice</b></p> <p>“I’ll take them through the strategy .. and the theory behind it because I have tried to merge the issues at (company) from all the audits had, the incidents they’ve had, the scale of the scope of the business, with what is happening legislatively, and also what’s happening in contemporary thinking with Reason’s, Hopkins and ..... Hudson’s thinking in particular.... “ (OHSP 2024)</p> <p>“The other issue is you find yourself not staying close to the research. You might read the magazines and that may prompt you but forming the relationships with, (researchers, current thinkers) ... those discussions and getting a mentor, not only just inside the business but from an academic point of view and staying close to people that are researching, is probably the best thing you can do, because you’ll get sucked into your own line of thinking too much, and if you stick to it you’re missing out on all the other opportunities that have been developing outside you.” (OHSP 2042)</p>
<p><b>Qualifications and experience</b></p> <p>“From that we were able to build the relationships, so it's actually having ... the person with the three things of technical competence, human relationship competence and the business acumen side of it.” (OHSP 2099)</p> <p>“We’ve appointed people who have the ability to, to do the job but we want people to get formal qualifications ... I guess what I see from my point of view is that qualifications now being asked for more you look at adverts ... they’re saying hey this is the minimum qualification we’re looking for ... which will drive more people to get the qualification.” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“My whole thinking in safety is generally influenced very much by my study because before I did the study I didn’t know anything so ...so its heavily influenced my thinking and my approach to safety over my entire time. That gives you a little bit of background. ... you wouldn’t have any credibility as a doctor if you did not have any formal medical qualifications and I think much the same here. ... It is not just the paper, it is the quality of the paper.” (OHSP 2024)</p> <p>Look you know the qualification is important what that does is gets you to the starting line ... You’ve got a certain level of discipline to be able to apply yourself to achieve an outcome. Beyond that it’s really about what the person is able to provide and value they can bring to the business but the qualifications barely, ... just to say hey it’s another way of, you’ve got 1,000 people here draw a line across here and this 100 at least have got this level of, of ability to apply themselves and it doesn’t say much more than that and I think that’s probably ... not too far off the mark.” (OHSP 2019)</p> <p>“I think what you get out of university is all about technical competence, or that's where most of the focus has been over the years, but in fact what's probably been in delivering the result, what's probably been the most benefit is, learning the leadership and influence stuff. Which you tend not to get at universities. ... You never learn that (understanding managers) at uni.” (OHSP 2099)</p> <p>“I guess, parallel to that is how organisations work; understanding how organisations work. It’s that business element that I don’t think we do enough of. I think a lot of the training is still focussed on a safety inspector, technical stuff ... my experience is I don’t think this is addressed in any education that they receive currently, that I’m aware of.” (OHSP 2042)</p> <p>So experience I think is a big part of it particularly in senior positions, senior management experience ... qualification is certainly important to. ... All experience is, is have I seen a situation like this before, what worked, what didn’t work, what was successful and what wasn’t successful, how do I apply that learning to this situation? That’s what experience is you don’t get that out of safety qualification, you don’t get that out of an MBA you don’t get it out of anything else. It’s an important base to build that experience on you know. But the qualification without the experience is no good, the experience without the qualification is less ... relevant. (2019)</p>	

#### **Call the shots**

“I read the riot act a couple of times in some areas where we were absolutely head to head and basically just said, “look this is unacceptable that we operate like this around this important issue. You all know it's important, let's talk about it sensibly and just put the guard down a little bit” and that works.” (OHSP 0206)

“That's one of the critical reasons that all this reports into here .... there's no circuit breaker in there. Now there's a circuit breaker called me and if I have to at the end of the day I can say this is the way it's going to be.” (OHSP 2019)

“And that's what they were told pretty frankly in the report back to them. And I thought I'd be either there for about 30 seconds or it may lead somewhere. And it was quite funny, just watching after I'd said it, and I said it basically like that, there was a long pause while they digested it and then one of them stood up and actually, physically banged the table and said isn't it about time that we accepted that this is the case.” (OHSP 2042)

“... you've got to have a strong personality, you've got to have a really strong personality” (OHSP 2041)

#### **Change through supported empowerment**

*See Table 12*

#### **Track record**

“they wanted somebody who knew how to manage a complex program of activity and that's what I'm doing” (0206)

“My first 12 months or so in the organisation I'd be going there on a regular basis given them feedback on the strategy of where we're at, what we're doing etc., etc., um the board sub committee has got sufficient confidence in me now, they don't need me to come along and keep reporting on how things are going. Ditto with the executive team.” (OHSP 2019)

“He's just developed confidence in me over time I guess that I can deliver on the things that he needs delivering on.” (2019)



### **4.3.3 Confidence and trust to get on with the job from the OHSP perspective**

The preceding sections describe how, from the OHSP perspective, a shared understanding between the manager and the OHSP develops and the factors that contribute to the credibility of the OHSP. With this basis the manager develops confidence in the OHSP which leads to trust. The OHSP perceives that, with this trust, the manager is comfortable in letting the OHSP get on with the job without ‘the need to ‘micro-manage’ the OHSP.

Trust to get on with the job was clearly evident in five of the observations. The managers expect the OHSPs to be getting on with the job and to bring any items of concern to their attention as indicated by manager statements such as:

“Any upcoming meetings I should know about?”

“You sort it out, I do not need to know the detail”

This is in comparison to the one situation where the manager did not appear to have full confidence in the OHSP. In this case the manager did most of the talking, was quite directive in setting the tone of the discussion; sought the input of the OHSP on specific items; and summed up the meeting discussion. These features are all the opposite of that noted in the other observations.

#### **4.3.4.1 Strategic support**

While the manager who trusts the OHSP allows the OHSP to get on with the job without micro-managing, the OHSPs recognise that the strategic support of the manager is crucial to their influence. This role of the manager is recognised by OHSP 2019:

“He’s very good at understanding which buttons need to be pressed appropriately to get the outcomes that you need ... politically savvy is clearly not the right word for it but I’m only successful because of his ability often to open doors when they need opening from time to time.” (OHSP 2019)

Observations provided evidence that the managers delivered on the requirement for strategic support. One manager picked up on a suggestion by the OHSP and enhanced it by engaging with a colleague in his professional network; another offered support for a difficult situation (“let me know if I need to intervene”).

**Table 17: OHSP illustrative quotes for 'trust get on with the job'**

**Get on with the job/not micro manage**

“But he lets me get on and get on with it.” (OHSP 2019)

“We'll discuss things and we'll come to a conclusion and in the main I'll go off and do it.” (OHSP 0206)

I guess the other thing is to say yeah he is able to take on this other stuff because he knows that he doesn't have to micro manage HSE and you know, he can, you know, I blow my own trumpet here but it's reality if he had to micromanage me then I'm the wrong person in the job. (OHSP 2019)

**Strategic support**

“The sort of things that I need from him is, it's actually very little in that you need his visible commitment. Other than that it's not much.” (OHSP 2099)

“ ... he knows how to ... when is the right time to do the right thing is to get the right results overall. So you know I'm very lucky to work for him, he's very very good.” (OHSP 2019)

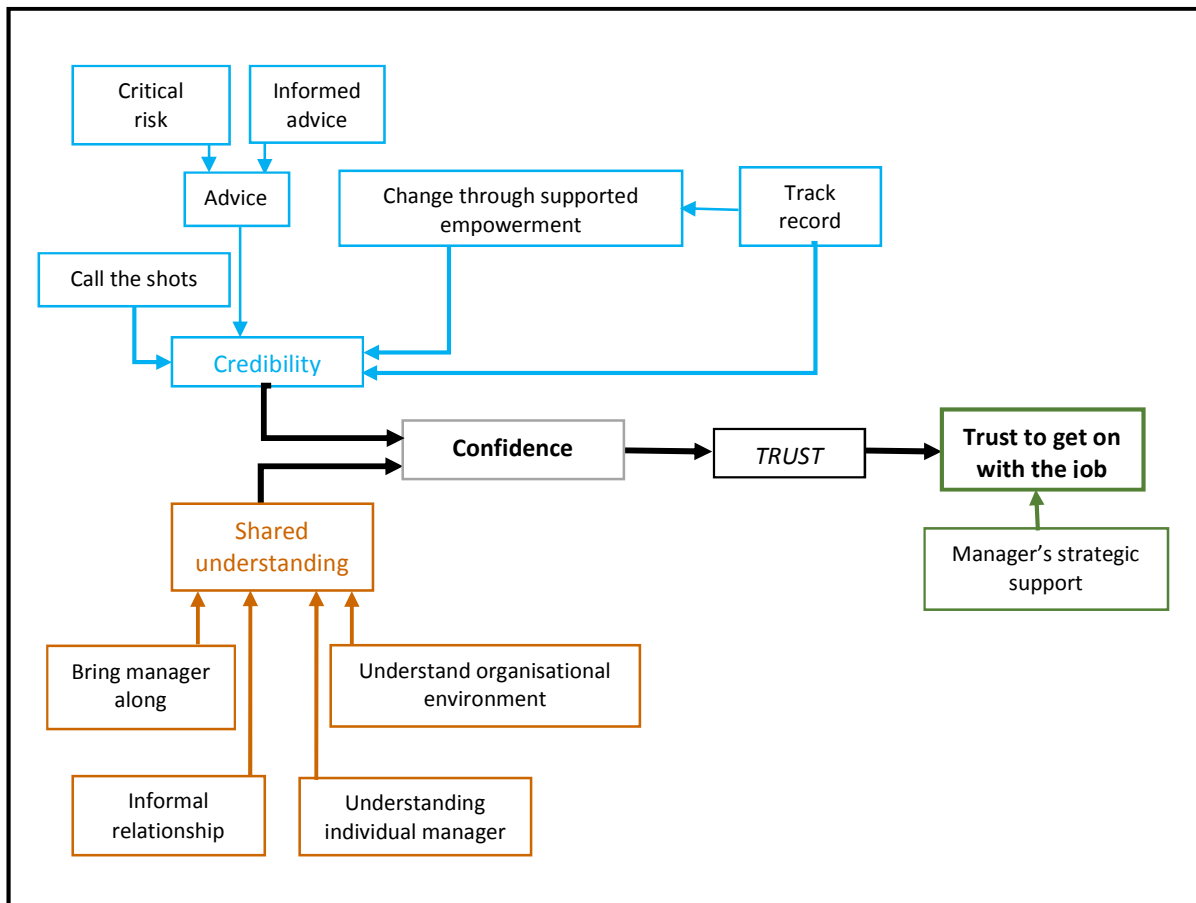
“He was very keen to say “yeah, okay let's do it and I'll personally take the lead in pushing it along and solving problems and making sure that everybody keeps the nose to the grindstone”. (OHSP 0206)

“You got the support of senior people, that gives you influence.” (OHSP 2041)

“ ... as a result of that report, and (manager) basically led that” (OHSP 2042)

#### **4.3.5 Diagram summarising trust in the relationship from the OHSP analysis**

Figure 9 describes the key components of trust as perceived by the OHSPs.



**Figure 9: OHSP perception of trust in the relationship**

#### 4.4 Trust as a category in the relationship between the senior manager and the OHSP

The research question underpinning this study is:

*What factors impact on the strategic influence of OHSPs with senior managers?*

As the study progressed the sub-research questions became:

*How does the nature of the relationship between the manager and the OHSP impact on the strategic influence of the OHSP? and*

*What are the factors defining this relationship?*

Analysis of interviews with managers and with OHSP supplemented by observations of the interactions resulted in trust of the OHSP by the manager being perceived as the key factor in the relationship, and so the influence of the OHSP. While there were variations in the manager/OHSP perspectives, these variations were at the detail level with agreement on the key factors.

This section takes the manager and OHSP perspectives on trust and considers them through the 'lens' of symbolic interactionism together with the literature review in Chapter 3 to describe 'trust' as a high level concept or theoretical category and the properties and dimensions of that trust. Categories or themes as defined by Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 159) are high-level concepts while Charmaz (2006, p. 91) is more expansive in describing categories as subsuming common themes and patterns in several codes to clarify ideas, events or processes. Properties, as defined by Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 159), are the characteristics that define and describe the categories, while dimensions are variations within properties that give specificity and range to the concepts or categories.

In this analysis there was also a causal flow with three of the four properties being precursors to trust and the dimensions being factors that contributed to the development of the property. Figure 10 show the properties and dimensions of trust together with the causal links.

#### **4.4.1 Trust and decision making**

In the context of understanding the properties and dimensions of trust as a factor in the strategic influence of OHSP it is useful to apply the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism to understand the decision-making process, how a shared understanding, credibility, and confidence in the OHSP may develop. As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.1.2.2), 'symbolic interactionism' is a unique perspective that assists in understanding human action by focusing on the interaction with others, the history of the interaction and the many choices people make. Taking this perspective it follows that what goes on in the human world is always traceable to social interaction which is the intersection of different people's streams of action, each altering their stream of action according, in part, to what others do; and over

time such interaction leads to a shared view of reality, a perspective, which enters into their definition, decision-making and action (Charon, 2010).

Charon's five ideas central to symbolic interactionism (p. 28) are informative when considering the development of trust. Firstly, the human being is a social person, what they do depends on interaction with others, both in the past and the present. Secondly, the human being is a thinking being with human interaction not only being the result of interaction among individuals but interaction within the individual through conversing with themselves as they interact with others (i.e. thinking). No two humans think alike as they create a reality that is uniquely their own through their internal conversations. Thirdly, humans interpret their current situation or environment through the 'lens' of their social interaction and thinking. Fourthly, human action is the result of what is occurring in the present situation, the present interaction and present thinking. The past impacts on the current actions mainly through how they think about the past and use the past to define the present situation. Fifthly, human beings are actively involved in what they do; they are not passive outcomes of their past.

Taking a symbolic interaction interpretation, decision-making by a manager is an action which is the result of the manager's interpretation of the situation, or their perceived reality, at the time. This perceived reality is defined by their goals, the perspectives of significant others, applying knowledge of the past to the present situation, taking the role of others, considering the impact of their decisions and defining themselves in the situation. (See Charon, p. 126) The decision itself is the result of: a complex stream of action; the consequences of past actions; interactions with others, especially significant others; together with relevant knowledge, goals and motives; and integrative thinking or 'mind action'. The influential OHSP will be part of the manager's stream of action and the social interactions contributing to the manager's interpretation of the situation.

#### **4.4.2 Credibility as a property of trust**

Credibility of the OHSP is an important factor, especially in the cognitive component of trust. The rational factors of giving the right advice, together with track record and demonstrated interaction with senior managers and others emerged as dimensions of credibility from both

the managers and the OHSP perspectives. ‘Supported empowerment’ was an important dimension from the OHSP perspective.

#### **4.4.2.1 Track record**

The OHSP’s track record as defined by past activity and achievements and how they are respected or perceived by others, both inside and outside the organisation, became the ‘baseline’ in developing trust.

From past experience (streams of decisions and actions) managers found that track record is a good indicator of credibility. As track record initially impacts on the manager’s recruitment decision, track record may be considered the first step in the manager’s social interaction with the OHSP. The manager’s perception at this early stage is influenced by their interaction with others and how others perceive the OHSP. As the interaction with the OHSP develops (a further stream of action) the manager’s initial perceptions will be enhanced or modified and this perception will also be influenced by the perception of others as the manager also interacts with others and their views become integrated with theirs through ‘mind action’. Thus ‘track record’ develops as a dimension of credibility.

#### **4.4.2.2 Informed advice**

In order to give the manager the ‘right advice’ the OHSP requires technical knowledge supported by well-developed underpinning conceptual or mental models of both OHS and change management. In developing their own mental models influential OHSPs could identify and discuss referenced sources that had informed their own mental models. Currency both in technical knowledge and in leading-edge thinking informing OHS practice was also important in giving the ‘right’ advice. OHS qualifications are a ‘given’ baseline. However while university OHS qualifications tend to deliver good technical knowledge but are not seen to address leadership qualities or business acumen. Thus experience, especially at senior management levels, is vital.

The focus on critical risk is important in credibility as it ensures that the advice given engages with the manager's goals and is related to the risks that will have the greatest impact on the organisation.

As the manager's decision making is the result of a complex stream of action including the consequences of past actions together with relevant knowledge, 'Informed advice' contributes to credibility in that they have found the past advice to be the 'right' advice. In addition, the 'informed advice' will also impact on the manager's social interactions to inform their interpretation of the current situation.

#### **4.4.2.3 Call the shots**

Charon's discussion of symbolic interactionism (2010) leads to the understanding that what goes on in the world is always traceable to social interaction. From the managers' perspective, part of the credibility of the OHSP is being clear in their message, being a 'straight talker' and able to take control in a crisis. The OHSP reinforced this quality and took it further so that 'call the shots' has two components: plain speaking and knowing when to take control.

#### **4.4.2.4 Interaction with senior executive**

Managers valued the ability of the OHSP to interact with the senior executive as vital to the credibility of the OHSP. This dimension of credibility highlights the importance of interactions with 'significant others' in the manager's perceptions and decision making. This research was not able to tease out the characteristics of credible engagement with senior executive but, as five of the seven OHSPs were members of the senior executive, it may relate to the dimension of a 'shared understanding' (See section 4.4.3).

#### **4.4.2.5 Change through 'supported empowerment'**

The OHSPs described a change process which in this research has been labelled 'supported empowerment'. This process has nine features and while not realising or enunciating it the OHSPs could be applying a symbolic interactionist perspective to change management. Symbolic interactionism not only assists understanding in one-on-one relationships but can

also be applied in more complex situations such as within an organisation. Taking Blumer's definition of a society (in Charon, 2010, p. 154), organisations may be considered to have at least the beginnings of a society because people are able to work together. In doing so, they construct their actions together and they are able to do this through communicating with one another and understanding one another's communication, thus identifying what one must do in the interaction.

In applying their nine principles of change through supported empowerment, the OHSPs treat the organisation as a society by providing: leadership; a vision; creating a collective by depersonalising the problem and engaging people; and empowering the collective through learning, support and ownership.

**Table 18: Principles of change through 'supported empowerment'**

1) Provide leadership with a clear vision to bring people along
2) Create an imperative for change
3) De-personalise the problem
4) Engage people in the process
5) Base change on learning
6) Set an example
7) Provide support and make people comfortable
8) Enable people to have ownership of the outcome
9) Recognise that change takes time and there will be resistance so have the patience to persevere

#### **4.4.3 Shared understanding as a property of trust**

Charon (2010) states that people differ in how they see reality (p. 12), and that their perceptions are determined by their perspective which he defines as “an angle on reality, a place where the individual stands as he or she looks at and tries to understand reality” (p. 4). He explains that perspectives are made up of words that are used by the observer to make sense of the situation and, as such, may be considered as a conceptual framework which leads



to value judgments and assumptions (p. 5) and thus influences their decisions and actions (p. 8). People's perspectives, and thus the way they see 'reality', are socially created; they are products of the social world in which they move (p. 9) and may change as the individual's groups and roles change (p. 11). This is summarised by Charon as:

People interact over a period of time; out of that interaction they come to share a perspective; what they see will be interpreted through that perspective; often each perspective tells us something very different about what is really true.(p. 4)

A 'shared understanding' involves: interaction and communication to arrive at shared meanings for 'symbols'; working through the phases of social development that include taking on the perspective of significant others; and taking the role of the other.

Interaction among humans relies heavily on the use of symbols (Charon, p. 25) and the symbolic interactionist perspective takes the use of symbols, especially words, as the central concept of the perspective (p. 43). People make them, people discuss them and people agree on what they stand for, and so they have a shared meaning in intentional communication. Symbols may include words, objects and acts, that are used to represent whatever people agree they should represent and so enable communication with others and to ourselves (p. 49). However what is essential for communication is that the symbol has the same representation or meaning for one person as for the other. As symbols are arbitrary representations they can be changed at any time by discussion and interaction (p. 48).

The concept of a shared understanding explains the role of Schein's (1996) occupationally based sub-cultures where the senior managers will have their roots in the 'executive culture' and the OHSP is likely to be based in the 'engineering culture'. (See section 3.2.2.2.). Where the OHSP cannot breach the divide between the two cultures then it is unlikely that it will be perceived that there is shared values and beliefs and underlying assumptions.

The role of 'significant others' in the development of perspective is explained by Charon (pp. 73-77) who draws on the work of Mead and Shibutani to describe four stages in the social development of the individual: the preparatory stage; the play stage; the game stage; and the reference group stage. It is in the 'play stage' that the individual assumes the perspective of 'significant others', those who they desire to impress, respect or with whom they identify.

Whatever the state of the person's life, the significant others are people whose views are important at the time. In the mature reference group stage the individual interacts with many different groups and so have several reference groups or social worlds with whom they share a perspective.

Trust takes time to develop and has to be continually reinforced as it is easily lost. The time factor is important as trust develops through social interaction, which in turn enables the manager and the OHSP to explore their individual perspectives to arrive at shared interpretations of the meaning of "words, objects and acts". The social interaction also enables the manager and OHSP to take the role of the other, to consider the situation from the other's perspective and thus able to understand, to some extent, how the other sees the situation; thus developing a shared understanding as a basis for trust. In some cases the time factor may be shortened by a natural rapport being part of the relationship or formal strategies to facilitate development of shared understanding. These trusting relationships tend to be informal but at this stage it is not clear whether informality is an outcome or contributing factor to the trusting relationship.

The properties or factors found to contribute to a shared understanding were: a shared background; understanding the manager as an individual; understanding the organisational environment and 'bringing the manager along'.

#### **4.4.3.1 Shared background**

A shared background, such as having worked together in the past and/or the manager acting as a mentor to the OHSP, creates a ready base for a shared understanding. Such a shared background by the OHSP and the manager will enable them to have explored and arrived at 'agreed' meanings or interpretations of 'words, objects and acts'. In the cases where the manager also acts as a mentor, there is not only an added intensity to the shared background and the opportunity to explore meanings, but there is the impact of the OHSP assuming the perspective of the 'significant other'. Involvement of the manager in the recruitment process may also be considered part of a shared background.

The code of 'like me' derived from the manager analysis gives another aspect to the shared background. This is supported by Fu et al. (2004) who report that people tend to react negatively to behaviour that appears to deviate from their own norms and standards (See section 3.3.2.3.). Exploration of the literature on leader-subordinate relationships indicates that while leaders may behave similarly to work group members as a whole they act differently toward individual subordinates (Scrieshiem, Castro, Zhou, & Yammarino, 2001, p. 518). This premise has led to a body of research around Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory which examines the relationships that develop between leaders and followers as a result of exchange processes over time (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995 in Scrieshiem et al., 2001, p. 524). LMX theory postulates that the quality of the relationship affects important leader and member attitudes and behaviours (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007, p. 269) and that, due to time and resource constraints, leaders develop a cadre of a few trusted assistants with whom they develop high-quality exchange relationships (the 'in-group'). Leaders will have other subordinates with whom they have low(er) quality exchanges (the 'out group') (Scrieshiem et al., 2001; Van Breukelen, Schyns, & Le Blanc, 2006). Schrieshiem et al. go on to explain that according to LMX theory:

Subordinates with high LMX (ie: the 'in group') tend to invest increased levels of effort and personal loyalty in their relationship with the leader, thereby providing an enhanced contribution to the work unit and the leader's performance. Leaders tend to reciprocate by giving such subordinates increased social support, organizational resources and rewards. Conversely, employees with low LMX (the 'out group') tend to rely more on the formal exchange parameters extant in the organization. They do not go beyond normal work expectations and their leaders are therefore less likely to provide them with incremental resources or benefits in exchange. (p. 525)

LMX theory draws on social exchange theory to explain the development of the dyadic relationship (Blau, 1964 in Ilies et al., 2007). Social exchange theory is based on the principle of reciprocity in relationships where reciprocity is not so much an economic activity as a part of social engagement, as may be seen in the reciprocal exchange of gifts in primitive societies (Coser & Rosenberg, 1969; Ekeh, 1974). Parsons and Shills (in Coser & Rosenberg, 1969, p. 87) bring a symbolic interactionist perspective to the concept of reciprocity by proposing that communication through a common system of symbols is a precondition of reciprocity such that actions, gestures or symbols have more or less the same meaning for both, thus enabling a

common culture through which the interaction is mediated. Cohen and Bradford (1989, p. 9) consider that reciprocity is the basic principle behind all organisational transactions, including those between an employee and his or her supervisor or higher level managers. Thus people are influential only insofar as they can offer something that others need.

The LMX construct, initially termed the 'Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL)', was first investigated in 1972 by Dansereau et al., (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). While interest in the model has increased substantially over the years, concerns have been raised regarding the validity of the LMX scales and evolution of LMX measurements as well as the design of many of the investigations (Schriesheim et al., 1999; Schriesheim et al., 2001; Van Breukelen et al., 2006). Notwithstanding these concerns, and the need for greater theorisation to underpin LMX research, many researchers believe that the LMX approach has substantially contributed to our understanding of the fundamental leadership phenomenon (Schriesheim et al., 1999, p. 16). While there has been little research on how LMX relationships develop (Van Breukelen et al., 2006, p. 300) Graen and Uhl-Bien (in Van Breukelen et al., 2006, p. 300) propose a life-cycle approach involving three phases: a 'stranger' phase; an 'acquaintance' phase; and a 'mature partnership' phase. The dyads that develop into high quality LMX relationships advance through all three stages, often in a short time frame with first impressions and experiences being important (Van Breukelen et al., 2006, p. 301).

LMX theory is consistent with symbolic interactionism and adds richness to the understanding of the development of relationships. Not only is social interaction the basis for human activity (Charon, 2010, p. 137) and the development of an individual's perception of reality (Charon, 2010, p. 125) but the reciprocity of the exchanges occurring during these interactions affects the relationship. The life cycle approach to the development of a relationship in some LMX writing can be compared with the social development of the individual through the preparatory, play, game and reference group stages as described by Charon (2010, pp. 73-77).

Research summarised by Van Breukelen (2006) suggests the following factors may have relevance in the formation of high LMX relationships:

1. Initial performance as perceived by the leader (weak to medium relationship).

2. Similarity between leader and member in terms of demographic characteristics (age, education and gender) (weak relationship).
3. Values related to autonomy, authority and achievement (ie: whether the leader recognises the member's independence, whether the member accepts the leader's authority and whether the leader and member strive for optimal task accomplishment).
4. Similarity in attitudes and values particularly with respect to career strategies, education and life goals.
5. The way in which the leader and member might have worked together in former contexts.
6. The level of influence exerted by the leader in selecting and appointing new members.

Factor 6 is consistent with the number of managers who were directly involved in recruiting the OHSP, while factors 4 and 5 particularly resonate with the findings from the managers' interviews reported here: i.e. 'like me' and a shared understanding; and a shared background.

#### **4.4.3.2 Understanding the individual manager**

Applying a symbolic interactionist perspective highlights the importance of understanding the individual manager. Applying Charon's (2010) interpretation of symbolic interactionism, we see that to arrive at a shared understanding, the OHSP has to effectively imagine the perspective of the manager and 'take on the role' of the manager. A shared background may be an important part of understanding the individual manager but the OHSP has to take concrete steps to further inform their understanding to identify the needs, drivers and personalities of the managers to enable them to 'take on the role of the manager' and use this to inform how they frame their advice and approach.

To arrive at a shared understanding requires the individual to effectively imagine the perspective of another individual, to take on the perspective, or the symbolic framework, of the other (Charon, pp. 103, 104). Almost all social interaction involves 'role taking' which involves imagining the world from the perspective of another; overcoming the egocentric

view point and understanding things from different points of view. The angle that others have is always different from their own, and how the individual perceives the perspective of another will be mixed with their own perspectives; thus ‘taking the role of another’ will always be imperfect (pp. 105, 106). The greater the difference in the individuals the greater the difficulty in effective role taking (Charon, 2010, p. 111) those with a greater breadth of experience are likely to be more effective in role taking (p. 112). It is not only the effectiveness of communication that is impacted by the individual’s ability to assume a role, but the appropriateness and relevance of what an individual does in a situation depends on taking the role of others that exist in the situation (p. 107). Charon considers that the ability to role take amounts to *social intelligence* (p. 106) but it not clear if this is the same as social intelligence as defined by popular writers. Role taking is an essential requirement for *influence* as the individual wishing to influence has to recognise where others are at and so what makes sense to them (Charon, p. 111).

#### **4.4.3.3 Understanding the organisational environment**

The determinants of behaviour derived from symbolic interactionism include ‘defining the situation’ including: goals, perspectives of significant others; objects (emotions and motives); defining themselves in the situation and imagining the effect on others. Thus ‘understanding the organisational environment’ becomes much more than the nature of the business or the organisational landscape.

#### **4.4.3.4 Bringing the manager along**

The OHSPs’ strategy of ‘bringing the manager along’ appears to provide the OHSP with the opportunity to ‘role take’ while taking the manager through a series of interactions that enable the manager to ‘engage with significant others’ and to integrate their thinking, as part of the decision making process. The importance of such an iterative process in developing a shared understanding was highlighted by Hoon (2007) who found that:

the negotiation of different meanings and viewpoints between management levels in order to reshape the strategic context is not located ‘within’ the committee but take place in strategic conversations. (p. 945)

#### **4.4.4 Confidence as a property of trust**

Applying a symbolic interactionist perspective, decision making by a manager is the result of: a complex stream of action; the consequences of past actions; interactions with others, especially significant others; together with relevant knowledge, goals and motives; and integrative thinking or 'mind action'. Thus through their stream of action including past interactions with the OHSP; as the OHSP develops credibility; and they develop a shared understanding the manager gains confidence in the OHSP.

#### **4.4.5 Trust to get on with the job as a property of trust**

The culmination of the credibility of the OHSP, the shared understanding and the manager's confidence is that the manager can then trust the OHSP to get on with the job without micro-managing them.

##### **4.4.5.1 Strategic support**

While the manager trusts the OHSP to get on with the job, the manager also needs to provide strategic support to 'smooth the way'.

This interaction between the manager and the OHSP reflects the principles of social exchange theory and reciprocity. (See section 3.5.3.) Reciprocity may be the basic principle behind all organisational transactions (Cohen & Bradford, 1989) with a precondition for reciprocity being a common system of symbols and expectations (Parsons and Shills in Coser & Rosenberg, 1969). Reciprocity principles indicate that people are influential insofar that they offer something that the other needs. The OHSP has demonstrated capability to 'get on with the job' and deliver for the manager while the manager provides strategic support without overt interference.

#### **4.4.6 Diagram of the properties and dimensions of trust**

The properties and dimensions of trust of the OHSP by the manager are depicted in Figure 10.

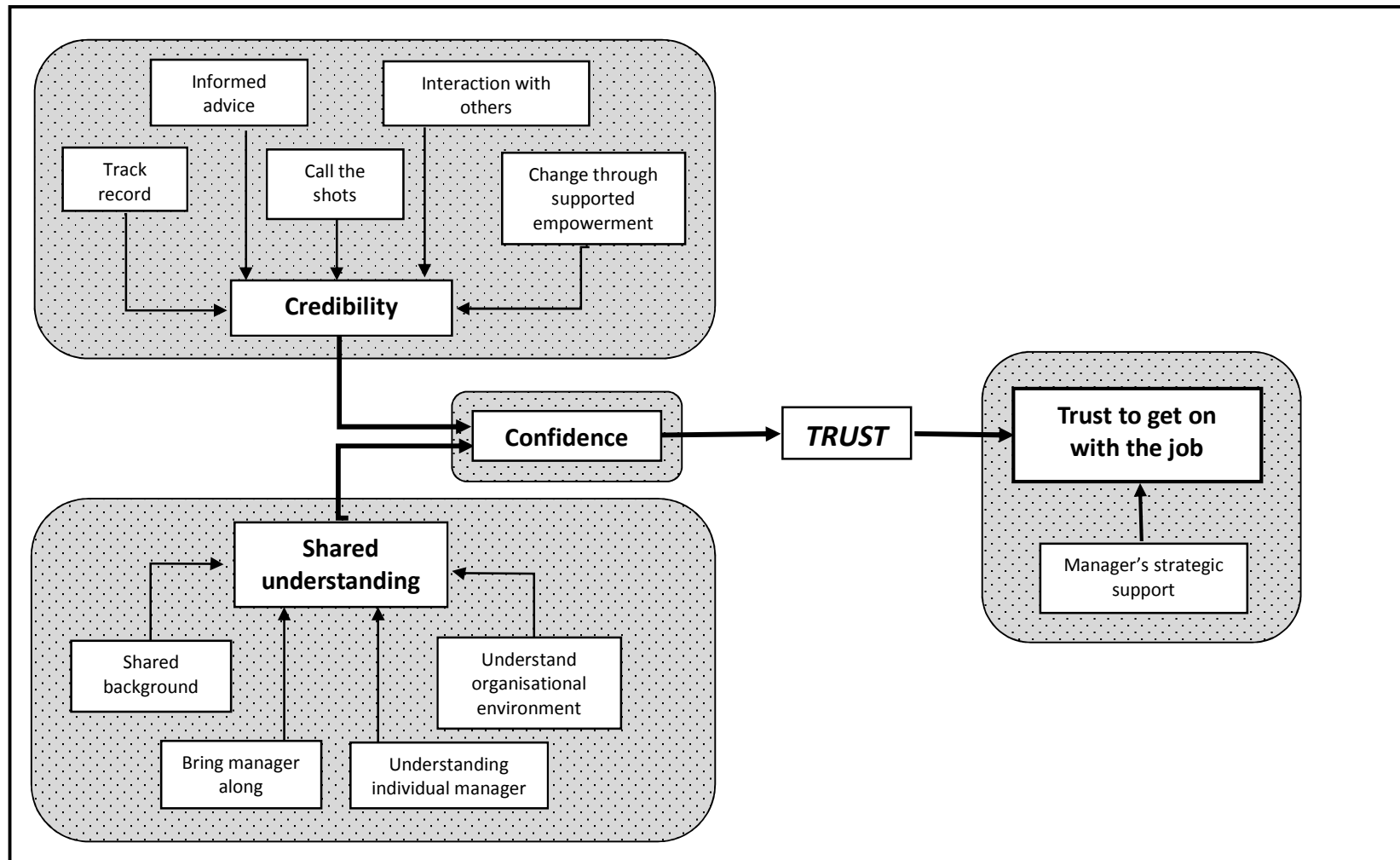


Figure 10: Properties and dimensions of trust in the manager OHSP relationship



## 4.5 *Summary*

The analyses in this Chapter began with intensive examination of the manager interviews as individual data sets and then progressed to considering the manager interviews as a cohort in order to identify the factors that, from the managers' perspective contributed to the influence of the OHSP. A similar process was then applied to the OHSP interviews. Documented observations of interactions between the manager and the OHSP added richness to the analysis.

'Trust' of the OHSP by the manager quickly emerged as a key factor in the relationship with credibility of the OHSP, a shared understanding and confidence in the OHSP being consistent features in the development of trust. Through comparison across the individual datasets and the manager and OHSP cohorts together with reference to the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism 'trust' emerged as the key theoretical category; confidence, credibility and a shared understanding being properties leading to the development of trust. 'Trust to get on with the job' emerged as an output property of trust of the OHSP.

A symbolic interactionist interpretation of the relationship may be that in making decisions managers synthesise information (engage in 'mind action') from a variety of sources. The extent to which the manager 'trusts' the OHSP will be influenced by the manager's past experience and interaction with OHSPs generally and the current OHSP in particular. In their past experience (streams of actions and decisions) the manager may have found that 'track record' is a good indicator of 'trustworthiness' and that the particular OHSP has provided them with 'the right advice', straight talking and 'able to handle pressure'. The manager may also integrate the response and reaction of the other senior managers (significant others) into their perception of the credibility of the OHS professional.

In identifying the need to understand the individual manager and the organisational environment within which the manager operates the OHSP is equipping themselves to 'take the role of the manager' as part of their influencing. Where the OHSP and the manager have a shared background, associated shared experiences and extended social interaction and exchanges over time, the OHSP has had the further opportunity to explore and imagine the perspective of the manager. These exchanges enable the OHSP to effectively 'take the role' of the manager; not simply becoming what the manager wants but able to define the

intentions of the manager, their plans, and their actions, allowing the manager to determine how they shall act on them. The more experienced OHSP is able to do this more effectively.

In working to achieve change through supported empowerment the OHSPs are treating the organisation as a society by providing: leadership; a vision; creating a collective by depersonalising the problem and engaging people; and empowering the collective through learning, support and ownership.

## Chapter 5: Summary and conclusion

Chapter 1 introduced the problem and discussed the role of the OHSP; Chapter 2 described the theoretical framework and research design while Chapter 3 introduced a model of social cognition and perception around which a literature review was structured. Chapter 4 presented the results of the analysis of the manager and OHSP interviews which were then interpreted through the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism to arrive at ‘trust’ as a theoretical category and to understand the properties and dimensions of ‘trust’.

This chapter commences by revisiting and answering the research question. The second section offers a theory explaining the strategic influence of OHSPs, including a model of the social interaction and cognitive processing of information, by the senior manager and the OHSP. The chapter concludes by considering the implications for OHS practice presented in the form of a letter to a young colleague.

### 5.1 *The research question and summary*

This research built on quantitative analysis of questionnaire data that identified the problem that:

*In Australia, improvement in OHS in the workplace may be inhibited by the lack of specialist OHS advice at the senior management level and the focus of the OHSP on low consequence hazards and low level risk controls.*

A constructivist epistemology informed by symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective applied in a modified grounded theory methodology was used to answer the question:

*What factors impact on the strategic influence of OHS professionals?*

This question could also be phrased as “How does the senior manager process information/advice by the OHSP to inform decision making?” Whilst processing of information is often treated as a rational process: rationality is limited; cognitive processing of information is affected by factors related to the context and the individuals involved, with the outcomes of the communication determined by the perceptual processing of the

information. Models discussed in the literature review (Figures 3 and 4) consider factors such as: motives; traits and characteristics; values, beliefs and attitudes of the perceiver (manager) and behaviour including visual and verbal cues of the perceived (OHSP); together with context factors such as task demands and influence of others. However there is no underpinning theory linking the factors in these models. A literature review examined available evidence as to how the factors identified may impact on the influence of the OHSP with senior managers. Evidence from the literature is limited and offers no explanation as to the perceptual processing by the manager and how the OHSP may influence that process (Figure 7).

Through this investigation, an explanation evolved as to how the senior manager processes, and so perceives, information and the factors that impact on this perceptual processing.

*Decision-making by senior managers is the result of a complex stream of action where their goals, motives, attitudes and the consequences of past actions, their knowledge, together with interactions with others; and considering the perspective of others; are integrated to construct a perception or 'reality' of the situation. To be influential the OHSP must enter the manager's 'stream of integrative thinking' and be part of the social interaction that contributes to the manager's interpretation of the situation and so informs their actions. In this interaction the OHSP needs to gain the confidence of the manager as a basis for the manager trusting the OHSP. Credibility and a shared understanding are necessary for such confidence to develop.*

*Credibility initially comes from the OHSP being able to give the 'right' advice that is not only technically correct, but is informed by conceptual models that take account of current OHS thinking and focus on critical risk. OHS qualifications are a basic requirement for providing such advice but experience is also important. Experience not only impacts on the advice provided but creates a credible track record.*

*The way in which the OHSP interacts with others is important in establishing credibility. The OHSP has to be able to 'call the shots' in that they are a 'straight talker' and can take control in a crisis but are also able to empower others. These qualities are particularly important in enabling the OHSP to 'sit at the table' with the senior executive team. Overall the OHSP who creates change through 'supported empowerment' optimises their influence.*

*Influence requires more than credibility. It requires the OHSP to be able to see things from the manager's perspective and for the manager and the OHSP to have a common language and understanding. Such a common understanding develops in a number of ways. In addition to shared experiences through actually working together in an organisation, the manager recruiting the OHSP, or perhaps acting as a mentor*

*to the OHSP, the manager may relate to the OHSP by recognising similarities in background, attitudes, values and approach to work. The OHSP's efforts in understanding the personality and values of the individual manager, as well as the organisational business context in which the manager operates, are vital for developing a shared understanding. In keeping with creating change through supported empowerment, iterative engagement with the manager to 'bring the manager along' on the journey, thus enabling the manager to input to the development of OHS strategies, and so integrate their thinking as part of management decision-making is a key strategy.*

*Once confidence and a trusting relationship are established the manager is prepared to step back, to let the OHSP get on with implementing change while expecting to be kept informed and providing strategic support to the OHSP.*

This investigation focused on the relationship between the senior manager and OHSP. The literature review examined possible relationship descriptors as to their relevance for describing the relationship between the manager and the OHSP. (See section 3.5) Applying these relationship descriptors the relationship between the senior manager and the 'trusted' OHSP may be considered to be a: 'coordinator' (adult:adult) (Hale, 1995); a 'process consultant' (Schein, 1978); and one involving social exchange and reciprocity (Cohen & Bradford, 1989). The OHSP may have power '*in actua*' (see Latour, 1986) derived from their activity, particularly in managing change employing supported empowerment and rational, persuasive and relational influencing tactics. Table 19 provides an extract from Table 8 showing a comparison of the (i) adult:adult, (ii) process consultant and (iii) reciprocal relationships descriptors, and the matching influencing tactics proposed for such relationships.

Particular insight into the explanation of these findings was gained by revisiting Schein's discussion of occupational cultures (See section 3.2.2.2.). OHSPs have a strong occupational culture. They usually have a strong externally-based network that may derive from a shared educational experience, a professional language, concepts and focus of activities. This external reference may be strengthened by the OHSP operating as a solo practitioner and by organisational and community perceptions of the OHS role. (See section 1.2 for a discussion on the OHS role.) In comparison, the senior manager will be part of an executive culture built around the organisation's financial health and a preoccupation with investment, boards of management and shareholders. They are likely to seek out their 'own type'. The findings of this research indicate that influential OHSPs are able breach the cultural divide between the

technically-based OHS occupational culture and the executive culture, and so gain the trust of the manager.

## **5.2 *Towards a theory and a model***

As this research progressed and the category of trust and its properties and dimensions were interpreted through the ‘lens’ of symbolic interactionism together with reflection on the literature, a theory emerged for the strategic influence of OHSPs with senior managers. This theory is that:

*Through a process of interactions with the senior manager and others, the influential OHSP is able to bridge the cultural divide between the technically-based OHS occupational culture and enter the executive culture of the manager. Trust is the key to breaching this cultural divide.*

This theory is further developed in Figure 11. The interaction of the characteristics of the manager and the attributes and behaviour of the OHSP, together with the social interactions that lead to the managers’ expectations, behaviours and inferences, are presented using the framework of the Klimoski and Donahue Interactive Model of Social Cognition and Perception.

**Table 19: Relationship descriptors and influencing tactics that may be applied by 'trusted' OHSPs (an extract from Table 7)**

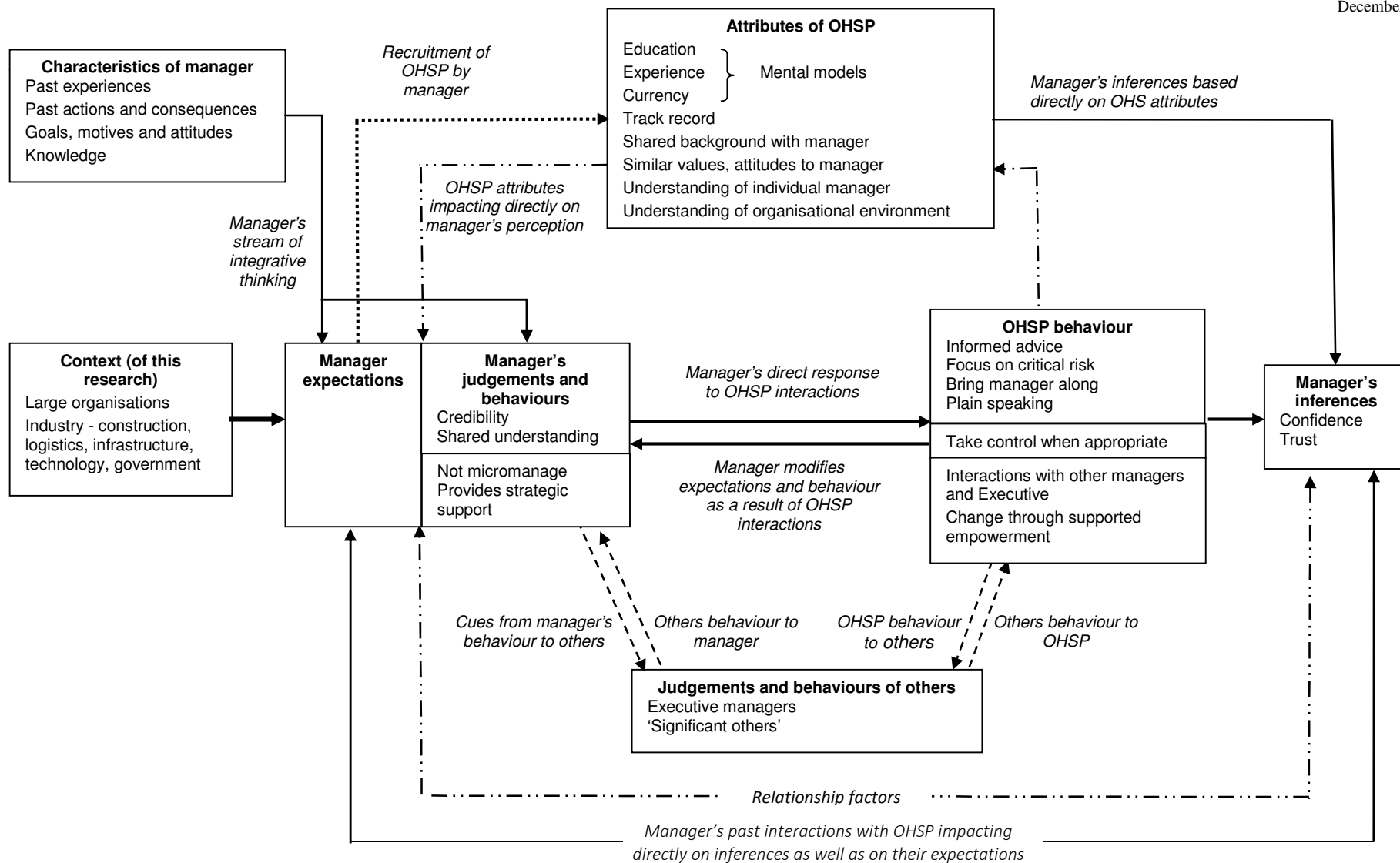
Influencing tactics <sup>b</sup>			Transactional analysis <sup>c</sup>		Consultant role <sup>d</sup>		Reciprocal relationship <sup>e</sup> Commonly traded organisational currencies		
Category	Sub category	Example	Role	Clues	Role	Description	Category	Description	
<b>Rational</b>	Rational persuasion	Used logic to convince.	<b>Adult</b>	<i>Body language</i> Similar to active listening; tilted head and body with eye movement indicating attention.	<b>Process consultant</b> Client involved in diagnosis and continues to own problem, while consultant facilitates diagnosis by knowing what questions to ask, what to look for and how to separate facts from feelings. Client is in charge of finding the solution with the assistance of the consultant. Consultant supports client to develop skills to apply in the future.				
	Written explanation	Explained reasons.		<i>Verbal</i> Words indicating data processing such as: Asking Why? What? When? Who? How? ... How much? In what way? I think .. I see. In my opinion...					
	Appraising	Presented information to support view. Wrote a detailed report justifying position.							
<b>Persuasive</b>	Inspirational appeal	Mobilised other people in the organisation to help in influencing (co-workers, subordinates).							
	Consultation Collaboration								
<b>Soft/relational</b>	Gifting								
	Informal engagement Personal appeal Socialising								
							<b>Inspirational</b>	<i>Vision</i> : being involved in a task that has larger significance. <i>Excellence</i> : having a chance to do important things really well. <i>Moral/ethical</i> correctness: doing what is “right” by a higher standard than efficiency.	
								<b>Relationship</b>	<i>Acceptance/inclusion</i> : providing closeness and friendship <i>Personal support</i> : giving personal and emotional backing. <i>Understanding</i> : listening to others’ concerns and issues.

<sup>b</sup> Influencing tactics based on Kipnis and later refinements (Fu et al., 2004; Leong et al., 2007; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990).

<sup>c</sup> Transactional analysis as per Harris 1969.

<sup>d</sup> Consultant role as per Schein 1978.

<sup>e</sup> Reciprocal relationship description as per Cohen and Bradford, 1989



**Figure 11: A model of the social cognition and perception of the manager and the OHSP**



### 5.3 *Limitations of the research*

This research identified the factors impacting on the strategic influence of OHSPs with senior managers as confidence, credibility and a shared understanding. It gives some insight into the factors that contribute to credibility and a shared understanding which include personal attributes and behaviours of the OHSP. As with all research, it raises further questions. Some key findings from this research are listed below together with questions identified for further research to provide greater understanding and insight into the factors impacting on the strategic influence of OHSPs.

**Table 20: Questions for further research**

<b>Research finding</b>	<b><i>Questions for further research</i></b>
Informed advice based on technical knowledge and conceptual mental models is important.	<i>What conceptual models do influential OHSPs find most useful? Is there any commonality in the models found useful, or is it the existence of a mental model per se that is important? How are the OHSPs using the models? Is it overt and explained to others, or is it 'silent' in that it informs their thinking and the way they present information?</i>
Iterative engagement with the manager on strategy development is important to enable the manager to provide their input and also integrate the strategy into their own thinking.	<i>What is the manager's perception of this process? What are the subtleties of this process?</i>
With some qualification, speaking plainly, calling the shots and being able to take control in a crisis are important behavioural qualities for the influential OHSP. However it is equally important that the OHSP is able to identify when these assertive actions are appropriate.	<i>What are the limitations on, and when is it appropriate for, the OHSP to 'call the shots' and take control?</i>
Interaction with other managers and being able to 'sit at the table with the executive' are important qualities for the influential OHSP. This requires an understanding of the organisational environment.	<i>What knowledge and behaviours are sought by executive managers to accept the OHSP at the 'executive table'?</i>
Achieving change through what has been labelled in this research 'supported empowerment' is a key finding in the behaviours of the influential OHSP. While nine features of supported empowerment were identified, this research was not able to delve into the	<i>What does achieving OHS change through supported empowerment look like in practice? What is required to achieve such change? What might be the limitations/barriers and how might they be overcome?</i>

detail of the concept and application of change through supported empowerment	
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

The findings in this research is based on interviews of seven dyads of a male manager and a male OHSP. The limitations of this sample must be considered if extrapolating the findings to a broader population and especially where the gender of the manager:OHSP relationship may be other than male:male. Also, as the dyads were purposefully selected as examples of a relationship where the OHSP was perceived to be influential, examination of manager: OHSP relationships where such trust does not appear to exist would be informative.

#### ***5.4 Implications for OHS practice***

The research provides information to inform the practice of OHSPs. This guidance is presented as a letter to a young colleague.

Dear James

Congratulations on your recent graduation with a Masters in OHS. You now have started on your journey as an OHSP. This can be a highly satisfying career not only in that what we do impacts on people's work, their health and safety and so their lives in general but our engagement with people on a personal level is so important to our own work satisfaction. I would like to share some findings from my research which involved interviewing OHSPs and their senior managers.

As OHSPs we tend to gravitate to own kind; we are very good at networking, often with the people we studied with and other colleagues who we see as 'like-minded'. However to be influential you have engage with managers and be able to enter their world and their thinking. Being influential is very much about the relationship you develop with the manager.

Where the manager has trust in you they will take your advice and integrate it with their own thinking, providing their input and strategic support while letting you get on with the job. At university you will have developed a good technical background together with broader systems and risk management knowledge. You will also have learnt how to research and write well-structured and well-reasoned reports. But being influential is about

much more than the rational presentation and justification of 'the facts'. The key words to keep in mind are 'credibility', 'shared understanding', 'confidence' and 'trust'.

You have taken the first step in establishing credibility by gaining your qualification. As you have said yourself the qualification is just the start in creating your knowledge base. OHS is a dynamic field and the knowledge and how we think about OHS is evolving all the time. Maintaining currency is about more than going to a few conferences. It is about continuing the processes that you engaged in while at university: reading journals and other literature; critical discussion with colleagues and reflection to develop your own mental models. As you progress in your career this reading and discussion should expand to include management and leadership literature as well as keeping up with the current OHS issues in the industry in which you are working.

As we discussed in our earlier chats, qualifications and knowledge are just the beginning. Your experience and the track record you create is the next step in establishing your credibility. You may well find that the people you work with during this development period become your manager or colleague later in your career, possibly in another organisation. Your track record will also become more widely known in the industry as well as the profession.

Forming relationships is about social interaction. We are all human and we all respond well to people that appear to have a similar background, values and approach to work. Without being artificial (as this will always be detected as 'b\*\*\*\*\*t') it can be useful to find out about your manager's background and interests (personal as well as professional and business). You may find that you share similar views or interests in work or personal areas. An extension of this is to try to understand your manager as an individual. Some people may interpret this as what 'buttons to push' but it is more about respecting the manager as an individual and about how they interpret and respond to information. A manager's perception of you, the information you provide and the situation faced, will be the result of how they integrate and think about their own past experiences, their earlier actions and the consequences of those actions, their own knowledge, goals and motives together with the information you provide and how you present and deliver your advice.

Many people in the OHS profession will advise you to develop some financial skills to inform the way you present OHS information. While this knowledge will be useful it is more about having knowledge of the organisational 'landscape', how organisations, and leaders, operate and being able to 'sit at the table' with senior managers. To be influential you will put all this information together to see the situation from the perspective of the manager, to 'take the role of the manager' in your own mind and so engage with the manager in a way such that they see you as credible and they feel that there is a shared understanding between the two of you.

My research also identified some key pointers in how influential OHSPs operate that I would like to share with you.

Influential OHSPs focus on critical risk. Senior managers are dealing with big issues and big dollars on a daily basis, they are not interested in what they perceive as trivial. Influential OHSPs apply the practice of what I have called 'bringing the manager along'. You do not tell the manager "This what you need to do!" You will set yourself up for rejection. Influential OHSPs develop a 'draft' or outline which they test with the manager and seek input (and so begin the process of enabling the manager to integrate your advice with their own thinking). This may be an iterative process depending on the manager, the issue or the situation. Having said that you do not tell the manager what to do, 'plain speaking' and 'telling it like it is' is important, knowing when to 'call the shots', and being able to take control in a crisis. The key is knowing when to speak out.

I can't repeat often enough that influence is all about relationships and how you engage with people. The manager will take their cues from how you relate to other people and how others relate to you, especially other senior managers.

Improving OHS is about change. My analysis of the OHSP interviews revealed a process that I have called 'change through supported empowerment'. This process can apply to your engagement with your manager, other managers or the organisation overall. The process is so important to influence, and change, that I have listed its characteristics:

- 1) Provide leadership with a clear vision to bring people along.
- 2) Create an imperative for change.
- 3) De-personalise the problem.
- 4) Engage people in the process.
- 5) Base change on learning.
- 6) Set an example.
- 7) Provide support and make people comfortable.
- 8) Enable people to have ownership of the outcome.
- 9) Recognise that change takes time and there will be resistance so have the patience to persevere.

In summary, if you want to progress to the senior level and be strategically influential on OHS you need to be more than technically competent; you need to be able to breach the divide between the technocrat OHS role and your manager to engage in a way that enables the manager to relate to you, to trust you and to trust your advice. It is all about the relationship.

I hope that you find the above of use in your career. Perhaps put it away and re-read it occasionally over the months and years and you may find different things resonate at different points in your career.

Best wishes for your future in OHS

Regards

Pam Pryor, BSc, BEd, GDOHM, FSIA

## References

- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics). (2003). *1301.0-Year Book Australia*. Retrieved 30-09-07, from [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)
- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics). (2006). 6324.0 Work-related injuries, Australia 2005-06 Summary (Publication. Retrieved 30th September 2007, from Australian Bureau of Statistics: <http://www.abs.gov.au>
- Adams, S. J. (2000). Today's safety professional: Manager or engineer? . *Professional Safety*, June.
- Appleton, B. (1993, 31 Oct - 4 November ). *Lessons from the Piper Alpha disaster*. Paper presented at the Global Occupational Health and Safety Conference: Industry, community, government - Enhancing partnerships to minimise risks Perth, Western Australia
- ASCC (Australian Safety and Compensation Council). (2005). *National Occupational Health and Safety Strategy 2002-2012* Canberra Australian Safety and Compensation Council
- ASCC (Australian Safety and Compensation Council). (2008a). Comparative performance monitoring report (9th ed.). Canberra: Workplace Relations Ministers' Council
- ASCC (Australian Safety and Compensation Council). (2008b). Newly released research reports. Retrieved 28th July, 2008, from <http://www.ascc.gov.au>
- Bailey, J., Schermerhorn, J., Hunt, J., & Osburn, R. (1991). *Managing organisational behaviour* (Second ed.). Brisbane: John Wiley and Sons
- Baker III, J. A., Bowman, F. L., Erwin, G., Gorton, S., Hendershot, D., Leveson, N., et al. (2007). The report of the BP U.S. refineries independent safety review panel [Electronic Version], from [http://www.bp.com/liveassets/bp\\_internet/globalbp/globalbp\\_uk\\_english/SP/STAGIN/G/local\\_assets/assets/pdfs/Baker\\_panel\\_report.pdf](http://www.bp.com/liveassets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/SP/STAGIN/G/local_assets/assets/pdfs/Baker_panel_report.pdf)
- Blair, E. H. (1997). *Occupational health and safety management competencies as perceived by certified safety professionals and safety educators*. University of Kentucky, Lexington
- Blattner, J., & Bacigalupo, A. (2007). Using emotional intelligence to develop executive leadership and team and organizational development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 59(3), 209-219.

- Blewett, V., & Shaw, A. (1996). The OHS professional: manager of change or changing manager? *Journal of Occupational Health Safety - Aust NZ* 12(1), 49-54.
- Bluff, L. (2004). Working paper 23: The use of infringement notices in OHS law enforcement  
Canberra: National Research Centre for OHS Regulation.
- Borys, D. (2007). *Exploring risk-awareness as a cultural approach to safety: An ethnographic study of a contract maintenance environment* University of Ballarat, Ballarat.
- Borys, D., Else, D., Pryor, P., & Sawyer, N. (2006). Profile of an OHS professional in Australia in 2005. *J Occup Health and Safety Australia NZ*, 22(2), 175-192.
- Bringer, J. D., Johnston, L. H., & Brackenridge, C. H. (2004). Maximizing transparency in a doctoral thesis 1: The complexities of writing about the use of QSR\*NVIVO within a grounded theory study [Electronic Version]. *Qualitative Research*, 4, 247. Retrieved 10th August 2008, from <http://qrj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/4/2/247>
- Bringer, J. D., Johnston, L. H., & Brackenridge, C. H. (2006). Using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software to develop a grounded theory project [Electronic Version]. *Field Methods*, 18, 245-266. Retrieved 10th August 2008, from <http://fmj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/18/3/245>
- Brun, J. P., & Loiselle, C. D. (2002). The roles, functions and activities of safety practitioners; the current situation in Quebec *Safety Science*, 40, 519-536.
- Byron, K. (2007). Male and female managers' ability to 'read' emotions: Relationships with supervisors' performance ratings and subordinates' satisfaction ratings. *Journal of Occupational Organizational Psychology* 80, 713-733.
- Cameron, I., Hare, B., & Duff, R. (2007). *Superior safety performance: OSH personnel and safety performance in construction*. Leicestershire: Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
- Charmaz, K. (2001). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. Thousand Oakes, California: Sage Publications
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London: Sage Publications
- Charon, J. M. (2010). *Symbolic interactionism: An introduction, an interpretation, an integration* (10th ed.). Sydney: Pearson Education
- Chenitz, W. C., & Swanson, J. M. (1986). *From practice to grounded theory*. Menlo Park, California: Addison-Wesley

- Chua, R. Y., Ingram, P., & Morris, M. W. (2008). From the head and the heart: Locating cognition- and affect-based trust in managers' professional networks *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(3), 436-452.
- Clayton, A. (2002). Working paper 5: The prevention of occupational injuries and illness: The role of economic incentives. Canberra National Research Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.
- Cohen, A. R., & Bradford, D. L. (1989). Influence without authority. *Organisational Dynamics* 17, 5-17.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). London Sage Publications
- Coser, L. A., & Rosenberg, B. (Eds.). (1969). *Sociological theory: A book of readings* (Third ed.). New York: Macmillan Company.
- Covey, J. A. (2001). People's preferences for safety control: Why does baseline risk matter? *Risk Analysis*, 21(2), 331-340.
- Cowley, S. (2006). *OH & S in small business: Influencing the decision makers* University of Ballarat, Ballarat.
- Coyne, I. T. (1997). Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling; merging or clear boundaries? *Journal of advanced nursing*, 26, 623-630.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process* Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Dawson, S. (1986). *Analysing Organisations* London: Macmillan Education.
- Dawson, S., Poynter, P., & Stevens, D. (1984). Safety specialists in industry: roles, constraints and opportunities *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, 5, 252-270.
- Draucker, C. B., Martsolf, D. S., Ross, R., & Rusk, T. B. (2007). Theoretical sampling and category development in grounded theory *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(8), 1137-1148.
- Drebinger Jr, J. W. (1998). Effectice communication *Professional Safety*, 43(6), 42-44.
- Dunford, R. (1992). *Organisational behaviour: An organisational analysis perspective* Sydney: Addison-Wesley.
- Dwyer, T. (1992). The industrial safety professionals: A comparative analysis from World War 1 until the 1980s *International Journal of Health Services* 22(4), 705-727.



- Eckenfelder, D. J. (1998). Professional prosperity; The narrowing road *Professional Safety*, 43(6), 32-36.
- Ekeh, P. P. (1974). *Social exchange theory*. London: Heinemann Educational
- FIOH (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health). (2005). Research by discipline Retrieved 28th July, 2008, from <http://www.ttl.fi/internet/english>
- Fu, P. P., Kennedy, J., Tata, J., Yukl, G., Bond, M. H., & Peng, T.-K. (2004). The impact of societal cultural values and individual social beliefs on the perceived effectiveness of managerial influence strategies: A meso approach *Journal of International Business Studies* 35, 284-305.
- Gunningham, N. (1999). *CEO and supervisor drivers: Review of literature and current practice*. Sydney: National Occupational Health and Safety Commission
- Gunningham, N., Thornton, D., & Kagan, R. A. (2004). Working paper 30: Motivating management: Corporate compliance with safety, health and environment regulation Canberra National Research Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Regulation
- Haefeli, K., Haslam, C., & Haslam, R. (2005). Research report 403: Perceptions of cost implications of health and safety failures [Electronic Version]. Retrieved 30th July 2008, from <http://www.hse.gov.uk>
- Hale, A. R. (1995). Occupational health and safety professionals and management: Identity, marriage, servitude or supervision? *Safety Science*, 20, 233-245.
- Hale, A. R., & Guldenmund, F. G. (2006). *Role and tasks of safety professionals: Some results from an international survey*. Paper presented at the Safety In Action, Melbourne.
- Hale, A. R., & Hovden, J. (1998). Management and culture: The third age of safety. A review of approaches to organizational aspects of safety, health and environment In A.-M. Feyer & A. Williamson (Eds.), *Occupational injury: Risk, prevention and intervention* (pp. 129-169). London: Taylor and Francis.
- Hall, W. A., & Callery, P. (2001). Enhancing the rigor of grounded theory: Incorporating reflexivity and relationality [Electronic Version]. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11, 257-272. Retrieved October 18, 2008,
- Harris, T. A. (1969). *I'm OK - You're OK: A practical guide to transactional analysis* New York: Harper & Row.
- Hill, D. C. (2002). Time to transform? Assessing the future of the SH&E profession. *Professional Safety*, November.

- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (2004). The active interview. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice i* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications
- Hoon, C. (2007). Committees as strategic practice: The role of strategic conversations in a public administration *Human Relations* 60, 921.
- Hopkins, A. (2004). *Safety, Culture and Risk*. Sydney: CCH Australia.
- Hopkins, A. (2007). *Lessons from Gretley: Mindful leadership and the law*. Sydney: CCH Australia.
- Hussey, J., & Hussey, R. (1997). *Business research: A practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students* London: Macmillan.
- IBSA (Innovation and Business Skills Australia). (2012). BSB07 Business Services Training Package: BSB51312 Diploma in Work Health and Safety [Electronic Version], from <http://www.training.gov.au>
- Ilies, R., Nahrgang, J. D., & Morgeson, F. P. (2007). Leader-member exchange and citizenship behaviours: A meta-analysis *Journal of Applied Psychology* 92(1), 269-277.
- ILO (International Labour Organization). (1983). *Convention 155: Occupational safety and health and the working environment*. Geneva.
- International Labour Organization. (1985). *Recommendation 171: Occupational Health Services* Geneva.
- Kim, S. (2005). AMP Capital Sustainable Funds Position Paper: Investment reasons for OH&S (pp. 22). Sydney: AMP Capital Investors
- Klimoski, R. J., & Donahue, L. M. (2001). Person perception in organizations: An overview of the field. In M. London (Ed.), *How people evaluate others in organizations* (pp. 5-43). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing* Thousand Oaks, California Sage Publications
- Latour, B. (1986). The powers of association. In J. Law (Ed.), *Power, action and belief: A new sociology of knowledge?* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Law, K., & Wong, C. (2004). The construct and criterion validity of emotional intelligence and its potential utility for management studies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(3), 483-496.

- Leggett, S. (2005). *Reframing notions of organisational maturity: Constructing a framework for understanding and analysing the development of OHS management in small business* Unpublished Proposal for transfer of candidature from Masters of Applied Science to Doctor of Philosophy University of Ballarat.
- Leong, J. L. T., Bond, M. H., & Fu, P. P. (2007). Perceived effectiveness of influence strategies among Hong Kong managers *Asia Pacific J Management* 24, 75-96.
- MacIntosh, M., & Gough, R. (1998). The impact of workplace change on occupational health and safety: A study of four manufacturing plants *Human factors and ergonomics in manufacturing* 8(2), 155-175.
- Macquarie University. (1986). *The Macquarie Dictionary*. New South Wales Ken Fin Books
- Marchant, H. (2004). Who are we and what do we do? *The Safety and Health Practitioner*, 22(9), 30-33.
- Mather, E., & Finkel, S. (2003). *Governance of workplace health and safety: Communicating OH&S management and performance* Paper presented at the Safety in Action conference.
- Mayhew, C., & Peterson, C. L. (Eds.). (1999). *Occupational Health and Safety in Australia* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Merriam-Webster. (2009). [Version]. *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Retrieved January 6, 2009, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *An expanded sourcebook: Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications
- Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E., & Alexander, L. (1995). *In-depth interviewing: Principles, techniques and analysis* (2nd ed.). Sydney: Addison Wesley Longman Australia.
- Moustafa-Leonard, K. (2007). Trust and the manager-subordinate dyad: Virtual work as a unique context *Journal of Behavioural and Applied Management* 8(3), 197-201.
- Mullen, J. (2004). Investigating factors that influence individual safety behaviour at work *Journal of Safety Research*, 35(3), 275-285.
- Myers, D. G. (2008). *Social psychology* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill
- Nelson, L. (1994). Managing managers in occupational health and safety. *Asia Pacific J of Human Resources*, 32(1), 13-28.

- NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health). (2006). Ten years of leadership advancing the National Occupational Research Agenda Cincinnati: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health). (2008). National Occupational Health and Safety Agenda (NORA): National construction agenda Cincinnati: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- NOHSC (National Occupational Health and Safety Commission). (1994). Guidance note for development of tertiary level courses for professional education in occupational health and safety [NOHSC:3020 (1994)]. Sydney: Australian Government Printer.
- NOHSC (National Occupational Health and Safety Commission). (2002). National Occupational Health and Safety Strategy 2002-2012. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
- NOHSC (National Occupational Health and Safety Commission). (2004). *The cost of work-related injury and illness for Australian workers, employers and the community*. Canberra: National Occupational Health and Safety Commission
- O'Dea, A., & Flin, R. (2001). Site managers and safety leadership in the offshore oil and gas industry *Safety Science*, 37, 39-57.
- Orb, A. (2000). Ethics in qualitative research *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(1), 93-96.
- Orton, J. D. (1997). From inductive to iterative grounded theory: Zipping the gap between process theory and process data. *Scand.J.Mgmt*, 13(4), 419-438.
- Parker, D., Laurie, M., & Hudson, P. (2006). A framework for understanding the development of organisational safety culture. *Safety Science*, 44(6), 551-562.
- Patton, M., Q. (1980). *Qualitative Evaluation Methods* London: Sage Publications
- Patton, M., Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Perlesz, A., & Lindsay, J. (2003). Methodological triangulation in researching families: Making sense of dissonant data. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6(1), 25-40.
- Pettigrew, A., & Mc Nulty, T. (1995). Power and influence in and around the boardroom. *Human relations* 48(8), 845-873.
- Pryor, P. (2004, April ). *OHS professional education in Australia in 2004 and beyond*. Paper presented at the IOSH conference: Growing professionally - Developing influence Harrogate, United Kingdom.

- Pryor, P. (2006). *Profile of an OHS professional in Australia and implications for achievement of the National OHS Strategy 2002-2012*. Paper presented at the Safety in Action, Melbourne.
- Pryor, P. (2010a). OHS professionals: Are personal and professional characteristics linked to strategic influence? . *Journal of Health, Safety and Environment* 26(1), 21-33.
- Pryor, P. (2010b). Rigour and credibility as it applies to a qualitative study investigating the influence of OHS professionals. *Unpublished*
- Pryor, P., & Ruschena, L. (2012). The generalist OHS professional in Australia. In HASPA (Health and Safety Professionals Alliance), *The Core Body of Knowledge for generalist OHS professionals*. . Tullamarine. VIC: Safety Institute of Australia.
- Pryor, P., & Sawyer, N. (2010). OHS professionals: Technicians or strategic advisors. *Journal of Health Safety and Environment* 26(1), 7-20.
- Quinlan, M., & Bohle, P. (1991). *Managing occupational health and safety in Australia* Melbourne: Macmillian Education Australia.
- Reason, J. (1997). *Managing the risks of organisational accidents*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Rittenberry, R. (2007). A history of OH&S. *Occupational Health and Safety* 76(1), 60, 62-69.
- Ritter, M. (2004). Ministerial Inquiry: Occupational health and safety systems and practices of BHP Billiton Iron Ore and Boordarie Iron Sites in Western Australia and related matters [Electronic Version]. Retrieved 30th September 2005, from [http://www.premier.wa.gov.au/docs/features/BHP\\_Ministerial\\_Inquiry\\_Vol1.pdf](http://www.premier.wa.gov.au/docs/features/BHP_Ministerial_Inquiry_Vol1.pdf)
- Robens, L. (1972). *Safety and health at work: Report of the committee* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oakes, California: Sage Publishing
- Rundmo, T., & Hale, A. R. (2003). Managers' attitudes towards safety and accident prevention *Safety Science*, 41, 557-574.
- Safe Work Australia. Interpretive guideline: Model Work Health and Safety Act - The Health and Safety Duty of an Officer under Section 27 [Electronic Version], from <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au>
- Safe Work Australia. (2012). Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy [Electronic Version], from <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au>

- Safesearch. (2008). *Health safety and environment remuneration survey 2007/2008*  
Melbourne Safesearch.
- Safesearch. (2011). *Health safety and environment remuneration survey 2010/2011*.  
Melbourne Safesearch.
- Safesearch. (2013). *Health safety and environment remuneration survey 2012/2013*.  
Melbourne: Safesearch
- Sandowski, M. (1993). Rigor or rigor mortis: The problem of rigor in qualitative research  
revisited *Advances in nursing science* 16(2), 1-8.
- Schein, E. H. (1978). The role of the consultant: Content expert or process facilitator? .  
*Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 56(6), 339-343.
- Schein, E. H. (1996). Three cultures of management: The key to organizational learning *Sloan  
Management Review*, Fall, 9-20.
- Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organisational Culture and Leadership* (3rd ed.). San Francisco:  
Jossey-Bass.
- Schreiber, R. S., & Stern, P. N. (Eds.). (2001). *Using grounded theory in nursing* New York:  
Springer Publishing
- Schriesheim, C. A., Castro, S. L., & Cogliser, C., C. (1999). Leader-member exchange (LMX)  
research: A comprehensive review of theory, measurement, and data-analytic practices  
*Leadership quarterly*, 10(1), 63.
- Schriesheim, C. A., & Hinkin, T. R. (1990). Influence tactics used by subordinates: A  
theoretical and empirical analysis and refinement of the Kipnis, Schmidt, and  
Wilkinson Subscales *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75(3), 246-257.
- Scrieshiem, C. H., Castro, S. L., Zhou, X., & Yammarino, F. J. (2001). The folly of theorizing  
"A" but testing "B": A selective level-of-analysis review of the field and a detailed  
Leader-member exchange illustration *The Leadership Quarterly*, 12, 515-551.
- Shaw, J., Cudmore, S., Antonelli, A., McMahon, A., Wright, M., Cash, B., et al. (2006).  
Research report 450: Case studies that identify and exemplify boards of directors who  
provide leadership and direction on occupational health and safety [Electronic  
Version]. Retrieved 30th July 2008, from <http://www.hse.gov.uk>
- Sillitoe, J. (2008). Tutorial notes: Prior Work 1; What is this thing called research? . Ballarat:  
University of Ballarat.
- Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting qualitative data*. London: Sage Publications

- Snook, S. A. (2000). *Friendly fire: The accidental shutdown of U.S. Black Hawks over Northern Iraq* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Sparkes, A. C. (2001). Myth 94: Qualitative health researchers will agree about validity [Electronic Version]. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11, 538-552. Retrieved December 8, 2008, from <http://qhr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/11/5/538>
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basic of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California Sage Publications
- Sweeney Research. (2003a). Prosecutions Evaluation Melbourne WorkSafe Victoria.
- Sweeney Research. (2003b). Qualitative and quantitative research in the F100 program Melbourne Victorian WorkCover Authority
- Toft, Y., Capra, M., Kift, R., Moodie-Bain, D., Pryor, P., Eddington, I., et al. (2010). Safeguarding Australians: Mapping the strengths and challenges toward sustainable improvement in OHS education and practice. Final Report, Part 1. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.
- Turner, B. A. (1983). The use of grounded theory for the qualitative analysis of organizational behaviour *Journal of Management Studies*, 20(3), 333-348.
- Van Breukelen, W., Schyns, B., & Le Blanc, P. (2006). Leader-member exchange theory and research: Accomplishments and future challenges *Leadership*, 2(3), 295-316.
- Vernon, W. (2005). Boom time *Engineering Management Journal* 15(5), 42-46.
- Walls, J., Pidgeon, N., Weyman, A., & Horlick-Jones, T. (2004). Critical trust: Understanding lay perceptions of health and safety risk regulation. *Health, Risk & Society* 6(2), 133-150.
- Welsh, A. (2002). Dealing with data: Using Nvivo in the qualitative data analysis process [Electronic Version]. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3, 26. Retrieved 10th August 2008, from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/>
- Whittemore, R., Chase, S., K., & Mandle, C., L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research [Electronic Version]. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11, 522-537. Retrieved December 8, 2008, from <http://qhr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/11/4/522>
- Young, G. J., Charns, M. P., & Shortell, S. M. (2001). Top manager and network effects on the adoption of innovative management practices: A study of TQM in a public hospital system *Strategic Management Journal*, 22, 935-951.