INVESTIGATING THE RESEARCHER–PRACTITIONER RELATIONSHIP

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (PhD)

In the

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies

at the

University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Prof. J.D. Jansen

Pretoria

July 2008
DECLARATION

I hereby do declare that this research report, being submitted for the award of the degree of PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (PhD) of University of Pretoria is my independent work and it has previously not been submitted for a degree or any other examination at this or any other university.

Ke Yu

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_____________ day of ______________ ______________
AKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work would be impossible without the guidance and critical feedbacks provided by Prof. J.D. Jansen as the supervisor of this research.

Likewise, this work would also impossible without the contribution of all my participants. I am thankful to their devotion of time and willingness to open to an academic inquiry. Originally, I planned to present my appreciation by providing them individual acknowledgement, particularly for those whose real identity was used upon their agreement. However, because of the university regulation, I was suggested to protect all my participants “by giving them full anonymity”, therefore all the names appear in this dissertation were pseudonyms and the opportunity to reinstate my gratitude would be limited by expressing my thanks to them all, but not providing individual acknowledgement.
## ETHICAL CLEARANCE

### ANNEXURE D

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ABSTRACT

This research reports on the nature and preference of the relationship between researchers and practitioners, as expressed by both parties.

The research methods used in this study included a critical analysis of 28 Masters and doctoral dissertations from a large university in South Africa to examine how they described the researcher–practitioner relationship. This was followed by extended interviews with both the original researchers and the participants in three studies selected from these 28 projects. In addition, two research projects conducted by experienced researchers were included, as well as a discussion on how my participants interacted with me as a researcher. The data were explained through the theoretical frame of a general model developed by Huberman in 1990, not only focusing on the relationship manifested in the research process itself, but also locating the relationship within a broader theoretical frame that seeks to explain the patterns and consequences of such engagement.

The findings draw attention to the often uncovered similarities between the two communities, while also highlighting ethics as an area of concern that displays the biggest disjunction between the two communities. In addition, the findings confirm the powerful influence of organisational culture, in this case academic discourse on the behaviour of an individual researcher. On the other hand, however, the findings also point to the individualism manifested in research decisions and processes. Finally, the findings disprove the way in which power is perceived in research situations in the literature.

The significance of this study also includes a revisiting of existing theories about insider/outsider positioning and research utilisation and the proposal to extend current debates.
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