Dublin Business School / John Moore’s University

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Executive MBA in Leadership, Liverpool John Moore’s University in conjunction with Dublin Business School

Why is there a lack of consensus on the value and contribution a PMO makes to the Business?

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Abstract

Although a relatively new business phenomena the Project Management Office (PMO) has since its inception in the early 90’s presented itself in a number of guises and today has evolved into a strategic management unit that not only supports company strategy but is a main stakeholder in the decision making process. Many companies who seek to drive business performance through projects have taken the decision to establish PMO’s to manage programme and project activities across the organisation.

Despite spending 25 years on this evolutionary path, opinion across industries and academics remains without consensus as to what role the PMO performs and what contribution if any it makes to business performance. Aubrey and Hobbs (2007) found that there was a significant variation in models deployed, their functions, and wide-ranging views on value, demonstrating the variance and broad range of PMO performance.

Business managers consistently question the value that the PMO delivers and argue that the significant overhead associated with the structured approach to project management hampers decision making and reduces the flexibility needed to react to changes in implementation and scope. These positions are further nurtured as PMO’s often take on functions normally managed by the line removing elements of control and decision making they have grown used to. Previous studies found that “the justification of the PMO remains a recurring problem in organisations; with almost 50% reporting that the existence of their PMO has been recently questioned” (Aubrey & Hobbs 2007).

Despite this finding, PMO managers and project professionals passionately argue that the structured approach to managing projects delivers real, sustainable and measurable benefits to the business. These entrenched and opposing tenets are central to the lack of consensus regarding the value and contribution a PMO delivers. In an article in 2001 Thomas et al pointed out that “After more than half a century of history in the management of projects, its contribution to performance is still not
acknowledged outside the group of professionals who believe in project management” (Thomas et al 2002)

The aim of this dissertation is to examine and interpret information from previous research and thinking, and using the output from this author’s research on the subject, try and advance the current body of knowledge and suggest an accord regarding the value and contribution a PMO makes to a business and its performance.
1 Introduction

1.1 Lack of Consensus

Despite the significant number of PMO’s established in organisations globally and the vast number of articles published in recent years there is a real lack of consensus regarding the value or contribution the PMO delivers to company performance. Aubrey and Hobbs (2005) suggest that “this lack of consensus is driven by a number of facts, that the PMO is a relatively recent phenomenon, the variety of PMO’s in existence across organisations, and the limited numbers of PMO’s people have been exposed to”

Research on 500 PMO’s carried out by Aubrey and Hobbs (2007) was used as input to a model created by Pinto et al in 2010 which would determine how many models of PMO were possible based on a number of different scopes and approaches. They determined that there were 21 possible types of PMO. Considering this outcome and the diversity of functions, the probability of misalignment of the PMO with organisational needs increases and the tensions around its value and performance grow.

Aubrey and Hobbs (2007) also contend that a contributing factor to this lack of consensus stems from the fact that on examination PMO’s established in many companies do not reflect the models being rationalised in written literature and that their directives contrast significantly from one organisation to the next. “Observations of PMO’s in organisations contrast quite sharply with the image portrayed in literature”

The lack of consensus is also driving the restructuring and closure of PMO’s where research by Aubrey and Hobbs (2007) has suggested that the life expectancy of a PMO was as little as two years. PMO’s in existence for this short period of two years will struggle to develop the capability to evolve and mature so as to demonstrate real value and make a significant contribution to business performance.

This vast array of PMO models and significant variance in functions and responsibilities is driving both the lack of consensus and lack of standards within
industry. “*despite the perceived need for PMOs, their ambiguous role and often incomplete implementation limit their effectiveness*” (Deloitte 2009).

As late as 2012 the Project Management Institute (PMI) as part of a broader thought initiative on PMO’s found that “*despite the abundance of existing and helpful literature on the subject there was little consensus around many of the basic issues*”. (PMI 2012)

If consensus can be reached it will do a lot to remove the current bias and provide a framework for the establishment of a PMO and continuous development needed to ensure it remains relevant and continuously delivers to the requirements of the business going forward.

### 1.2 Research Question

The primary question in this research paper is “Why is there a lack of consensus regarding the value and contribution a PMO makes to the business?” The author will collect both quantitative and qualitative data in order to attempt to answer this primary research question

Further research objectives for the paper are outlined below.

- Examine past and current PMO related research and add value to the discussion
- Determine if in fact there is a lack of consensus on the value or contribution
- Identify the main reasons for this lack of consensus
- Outline what value if any a PMO contributes to the Business
- Propose where the PMO should be placed within the organisation to ensure maximum impact and effectiveness
- Identify and evaluate the Functional, Tactical and Strategic PMO
- Provide helpful information for those considering establishing a PMO to ensure the appropriate model is deployed.
1.3 Author’s Suitability to carry out this research

The researcher has forty years’ experience in the Telecommunications Industry, fifteen of these at senior management level. He holds a degree in Business Studies, a diploma in Project Management and is a PMI accredited project management professional (PMP). During his time in telecommunications he was both an operations manager and set up and managed one of the first PMO’s in the industry. He has completed and passed all course modules in the Executive MBA programme in Dublin Business School.

1.4 Chapter Overview

There are six chapters in the main body of this dissertation

*Chapter 1* introduces the research problem area and question and presents the rationale behind the research.

*Chapter 2*, The Literature Review outlines how the theories, concepts and models, relate to the objectives of this study. It broadens your knowledge of the subject and familiarises you with the methodologies used by other researchers. It seeks to search out current and past thinking on the subject in order to identify gaps in the literature and identify where further research might be beneficial.

Chapter two will guide the reader through the various areas that contribute to the ambiguity and debate about value contribution. The vast array of contextual areas where the uncertainty can emanate from demonstrates some of the complexity in identifying the primary drivers for the lack of consensus and shows how positions and opinions have changed over time.

*Chapter 3*, Research Methods and Methodology will look at the research approach in order to achieve the objectives of the dissertation. The central point of research is collecting and analysing data but before you get to this point there are many methodological choices and strategies that need to be considered. Research is defined by Saunders et al (2012) as something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, therefore increasing their knowledge.
The main aspects of the chapter will be a re-introduction of the research problem area and an overview of the methodology chosen. It will give an explanation on why particular philosophies and approaches were used, outline the limitations of the research and conclude with a brief outline of some of the ethical issues that were considered while carrying out the research.

Chapter 4, Will present the findings of the in-depth interviews, the focus group and the survey identifying what was learnt and the significant resulting data from each of the methods used. The findings together with the literature review will form the analysis and inputs into the conclusions in chapter 5.

Chapter 5, will discuss, analyse, and interpret the findings of the research, and highlight any important areas identified by the author. It will also help the reader to formulate a deeper, more profound understanding of the research problem being discussed.

Chapter 6, the conclusion is intended to help the reader understand why the research is important and conveys the larger implications of the research. A conclusion is not merely a summary of your points or a re-statement of your research problem but should be a synthesis of key points.

Chapter 7, the reflections on learning appraises the learnings and development of the student and how this learning can be applied in a personal and business context. It reviews some of the best known models and theories on learning and puts them in context from a personal and academic viewpoint.
2 Literature Review

2.1 Purpose of a Literature Review

Writing a literature review is a means of demonstrating your knowledge about a particular field of study and identifying previous research on the subject. The literature review also provides a framework for contextualising your findings relative to previous research. “The significance of your research and what you find out will inevitably be judged in relation to other people’s research and their findings” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012).

The literature review should bring clarity and focus to your research and helps you identify the theoretical roots of your study. It should also familiarise the reader with previous research on the topic.

To deliver a good literature review the researcher must develop strong critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is a learned competency and although you will not become an expert over the duration of the dissertation the researcher will develop skills they did not possess coming into the exercise. Critical thinking is “the examination and test of propositions of any kind which are offered for acceptance, in order to find out whether they correspond to reality or not”. (Sumner W.G 1940)

In a paper presented by Boote and Belle to the American Educational Research Association in 2005 they conclude that writing a faulty literature review can ruin a dissertation. If the literature review is without substance then the dissertation itself will be regarded as substandard and come under greater scrutiny because they hypothesise that without understanding the current literature in any field of study it is impossible to carry out any significant research.

“Examiners typically started reviewing a dissertation with the expectation that it would pass; but a poorly conceptualised or written literature review often indicated for them that the rest of the dissertation might have problems. (Boote & Beile, 2005)

The author hopes that the information in this Literature Review will give the reader a better understanding of the PMO, what it is, why they are established, what roles and
functions they carry out, what value they contribute, give an overview of the diverse range of models that exist and what successful PMO's look like. The author also hopes to show based on this research how and why diverse opinions are reached on the value or contribution of a PMO to the business and its performance.

2.2 Value, Contribution and Organisational Performance

Before we analyse the value or contribution a PMO makes to performance we should first try to get a better understanding of organisational performance. In today’s competitive business environment several words are used almost as synonyms to organisational performance – for example efficiency, output, productivity, effectiveness, health, success, accomplishment, and organisational excellence (Savoie & Morin 2002)

The subject of value or contribution to business performance is subjective, governed by beliefs and bias, and subject to the role within the organisation that the evaluator is operating in. “This construct is subjective because it exists in the minds of those who are evaluating” (Aubrey and Hobbs 2011). For example the CFO regards finance of primary importance whereas the HR director has little regard for either finance or the role of resource management carried out by the PMO.

Research suggests that the business manager and project manager are measuring two distinct values. The project manager measures value based on whether the project was delivered as planned with regard to time, cost, and quality. However the business manager measures the project against proposed business benefits and its impact on revenue generation and business performance. These diverse opinions impact both the brand and reputation of project management and PMO’s by association.

Research by Dai and Wells, Ibbs, Reginato and Kwak in 2004 attempted to associate the direct contribution that project management made to the bottom line with little success. The results of the research by Ibbs et al are not statistically significant (Thomas & Mulally, 2008). Whereas Hobbs and Aubrey 2007 take the contrary view “results confirm the positive contribution of PMO’s to organisational performance”
Studies by the Gartner Group (2000) indicate that organisations with a well-functioning PMO will experience half the cost and time overruns as those without one. But should value be reduced to financial indicators alone? Would this dilute the contribution that the structured approach to projects that a PMO delivers?

Value can also be measured through efficiencies delivered by activities such as development of tools and methodologies, providing reports and executive information to support decision making, monitoring and controlling of timelines and financials, coaching and mentoring project managers and portfolio risk management.

2.3 The PMO

2.3.1 Programme Office

The Project Management Office first came to the attention of academics and project managers in 1998 when Harold Kerzner described a “Project Office” in the sixth edition of his best seller Project Management, a systems Approach to Planning Scheduling and Controlling.

There are many reasons a company will establish a PMO but in the main, the predominant motive is to increase the likelihood that projects and programmes of work are delivered in a structured, repeatable way with positive outcomes with regard to time, cost and quality. “PMO managers and executives interviewed had a common goal: to enable the organisation to grow the business by building a core set of practices that delivers consistent outcomes” (Forrester 2013). Projects are normally created when the requirements of the organisation cannot be fulfilled by the existing business functions and secondly to fill a competency or resource deficit within the organisation.

In large organisations the more projects that are being executed simultaneously the more difficult it is to guarantee or ensure this consistency. The organisation reaches a precipice where it becomes critical to establish a PMO to manage the growing number of projects and manage organisational needs.
In research carried out by Pelligrinelli & Garagna (2009) on the continuing relevance of PMO’s one company stated that “the primary reason they established a PMO in the first instance was that nobody understood what project management was”

In fact, PMOs arose because of different needs, but the vast majority had a greater objective in common: “to obtain better results in those projects developed by the organization” (PMI Research and Education Congress 2010)

“Economic factors have placed a greater value on efficiency, intelligent investments and cost optimisation” (Blumhorst 2012). In this climate of business uncertainty the PMO can play an active part in driving change by supporting organisations to prioritise investment, control costs and resources and positively influence business results.

2.3.2 History of the PMO

The PMO structures and approach have existed for nearly a half-century, dating back to the U.S. military’s development of missile systems in the 1950s. PMO’s first became popular in business around 1994 where they began appearing in large IT companies or the IT departments in organisations and have been growing significantly since (Dai & Wells 2004). PMO’s have historically been used for the control and delivery of large projects and programmes.

By 2003 the link between the PMO and business strategy was becoming more apparent “The PMO is a centre of intelligence and coordination which allows a link between the strategic business objectives and the related practical results through organizational portfolio, program and project management” (KENDALL & ROLLINS 2003). PMI in their report Pulse of the Profession 2013 suggested that despite or perhaps because of the fast growth in PMO recognition, organisations have not extracted the full benefits from the PMO, especially in cases where PMOs lack the cohesiveness, direction from top managers and clarity of purpose to work efficiently and create value.

PMO’s were established because of different needs but predominately they had a greater objective in common which was “to obtain consistent levels of project
success” (Forrester 2013) which takes more than just an organised approach. However, despite more than half a century in development, and evidence suggesting that they offer significant benefits to organisations that implement them, in 2012 PMO’s were still struggling to define their role and demonstrate their value within the organisation (PMI 2012).

2.3.3 Legitimacy of the PMO
Data from a survey of 500 PMO’s carried out by Hobbs and Aubrey in 2007 shows that PMO’s are being shut down or radically restructured almost as fast as they are being created (see graph 2.1). The survey also shows that PMO’s in companies where project management maturity is high are regarded more legitimate than in other companies (Hobbs and Aubrey 2007)

Graph 2-1, Aubrey and Hobbs 2007, Relevance of PMO, recreated by Author
Opinions on the value or legitimacy of the PMO are not unique to business units within the organisation. In research carried out by Boston Consulting in conjunction with the PMI in 2013 they found that just one third of PMO leaders themselves feel that their PMO realised its full potential for contributing business value to the organisation (BCG, The PMO Imperative, page 5)
A significant number of projects either fail or fail to deliver any real or tangible benefits. The PMO by association gets tarnished with these failures and feeds into the debate on value and legitimacy.

2.3.4 Diversity of Naming Conventions

There are numerous descriptions and names assigned to the unit within the organisation with responsibility for overseeing the delivery of projects. The most used of these are Project Office, Programme Office, Project Control Office, Project Support Office and Centre of Excellence. There is agreement across most industries and organisations that Project Management Office (PMO) is the most used name and suitably reflects the definition of the entity being researched in this document.

Table 2.1 below reflects the great variety of names from research conducted by Hobbs & Aubrey of 500 PMO’s in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Percentage %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Management Office</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name containing the term “project” e.g Project Department</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Support Office</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Office</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Management Office</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre of Excellence</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Name</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – a great variety with none greater than 1%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2-1, Aubrey & Hobbs 2007, Naming Conventions, recreated by Author

The proliferation in the naming conventions for PMO’s further demonstrates the lack of clarity regarding the types, roles and functions of a PMO. This lack of clarity is adding to the uncertainty surrounding the value the PMO contributes to the business and is fuelling the need for the PMO to continuously justify its existence. Standardisation of naming convention and design would make it easier for organisations to compare, select and establish the PMO model that will best meet their organisational needs.
2.4 Types, Roles and Functions

2.4.1 Types of PMO

The nature and complexity of the PMO gives rise to a difficulty when it comes to establishing a standard way of characterising them. These significant differences make the task of summarising PMO’s into just a few types extremely difficult. Americo Pinto in collaboration with the PMI in 2010 identified 21 different possible models.

The earliest typology cited was by Dinsmore in 1999 where he outlined four different types in his model. The first concentrated on the management and support of a single project evolving to the management of multiple projects, the project management centre of excellence and finally the programme management office.

Figure 2.1 below synopsises and compares some of the main typologies mentioned in literature and although there are numerous similarities it also demonstrates the complexity when it comes to choosing the appropriate model for an organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dinsmore 1999</th>
<th>Dai &amp; Wells 2004</th>
<th>Aubrey &amp; Hobbs 2007</th>
<th>PMI 2013</th>
<th>SOMOS 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomous Project Team</td>
<td>Providing Project Administrative Support</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Controlling Project Performance</td>
<td>Centre of Excellence / Competency</td>
<td>Performance, Monitoring and Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Support Office</td>
<td>Developing and maintaining PM Standards and Methods</td>
<td>Development of PM Competencies and Methodologies</td>
<td>Tools, Methods &amp; Training</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Management Centre of Excellence</td>
<td>Provide human resource / staffing support</td>
<td>Multi – Project Management</td>
<td>Project – Programme Specific / PMO</td>
<td>Project direction &amp; Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Management Office</td>
<td>Developing and maintaining Project archives</td>
<td>Strategic Management</td>
<td>Organisational / Division PMO</td>
<td>Strategic Advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2-1, Comparison of Typologies, Author

2.4.2 Functional, Tactical and Strategic PMO’s

The Functional, Tactical and Strategic model of PMO is used widely in industry. This typology mirrors the levels and functions of those researched and described by Dai &
Wells, Aubrey & Hobbs, PMI and Somos in figure 2.1. It is a comprehensive yet simplex typology and reflects the evolution of PMO's from initially being a support and administrative function to tactically controlling and managing projects and eventually driving strategic change within the company.

2.4.2.1 Functional PMO
The Functional PMO is a level one PMO and provides only a basic set of functions for the organisation. It is primarily focussed on a single project providing services such as supporting project planning and control or managing or assisting in the recovery of a strategic project.

2.4.2.2 Tactical PMO
The Tactical PMO carries out the functions of the functional PMO but for a group of projects. It also encompasses the development of a project methodology and tools to assist in the successful delivery of projects. It will also identify and fulfil the training needs of the organisation in regards to project management and PMO competencies.

2.4.2.3 Strategic PMO
The Strategic PMO requires the PMO to think strategically and offer services that have a strategic context or impact the organisation strategically. This PMO needs to be strategically aligned in the organisation hierarchy and be managed or sponsored by an executive level manager. The PMO needs to be embedded in the decision making process with regards to the portfolio of programmes and projects and provide key information to executives to support and implement organisation strategy.

2.4.3 Role of the PMO
There are many opinions regarding the role of the PMO and they vary significantly depending on the organisation, where in the organisation structure it sits and the model of PMO deployed. Hill suggests that “The PMO’s role is to help both the project manager and the relevant organisation to not only understand and apply modern project management practices, but also to adapt and integrate business interests into the organisations project management efforts” (Gerard M. Hill 2004).
In a thought leadership paper by Forrester in 2013 they outline the mission of the PMO as “To move the Strategic Needle for the company”. In the research PMO leaders and executives interviewed shared a common goal: to enable the organisation to grow the business by building a core set of practices that deliver consistent outcomes.

The Project Management Institute (PMI) is the leading not for profit professional membership association for the project, program and portfolio management profession. They contend that the PMO offers a broad range of supports and functions from administrative support to strategic planning and everything in between. “The responsibilities of a Project Management Office (PMO) can range from providing project management support functions to actually being responsible for the direct management of one or more projects” (PMI, 2013, P.11).

A PMO is the area in which certain activities and functions relating to project management are centred and its objective is to help the organisation achieve better results through projects (Pinto et al, 2010). “One of the most important roles of the PMO is to monitor and control the performance of projects” (Aubrey and Hobbs 2011).

Many organisations have identified the need for a PMO but few if any understand best practice in the implementation of a PMO and fewer still what role it will carry out when implemented and what contribution it will make based on the PMO model chosen. Hobbs and Aubrey (2008) contend that the lack of consensus on their structure and roles they undertake prevent the establishment of formal standards on PMO’s.

2.4.4 Primary Functions of the PMO

PMO’s carry out many and varied functions depending on the model deployed and mandate from the organisation. According to Rad “A PMO is an administrative mechanism by which a focal point is provided for organisational project management activities” (Dr Parvis F. Rad 2001).

Research by Hill 2004, Dai & Wells 2004, Aubrey & Hobbs 2007, and Hurt & Thomas 2009 has shown that there is a diversity of functions across all the models but there
are a number of generic functions that they all deliver in some shape or format. These
tend to be providing reports and information to stakeholders and senior executives,
developing project management methodologies, monitoring and controlling projects,
managing and rescuing projects that are deemed strategic and driving organisational
learning

Results from a multi phased research programme on 500 PMO's carried out by
Hobbs & Aubrey in 2007 showed the functions in table 2.2 below were regarded as
the primary functions and are shown in order of priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMO Function</th>
<th>% of PMOs Where Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report project status to upper management</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement a standard methodology</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and control of project performance</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop competency of personnel, including training</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement and operate a project information system</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide advice to upper management</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordinate between projects</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and maintain a project scoreboard</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote project management within the organisation</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and control performance of PMO</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in strategic planning</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide mentoring for project managers</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage one or more portfolios</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify, select and prioritise new projects</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage archives of project documentation</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage one or more programmes</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct project audits</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage customer interfaces</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a set of tools without an effort to standardise</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execute specialised tasks for project managers</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocate resources between projects</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct post project reviews</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement and manage database for lessons learnt</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement and manage risk database</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits management</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network and environmental scanning</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit, select, evaluate and determine salaries for project managers</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2-2, Aubrey & Hobbs 2007, PMO Functions, recreated by Author
A large number of the respondents to the questionnaire used by Hobbs and Aubrey validated the list of 27 functions and concurred that it was complete and reflected the functions mandated to and expected from PMO’s. The results show the great variety of roles carried out by PMO’s and demonstrates further the difficulty in describing and standardising the functions.

2.4.5 PMO’s as agents of change
In a number of companies PMO’s responsible for internal projects are regarded as vehicles of change. Some of the bias towards PMO’s may stem from the belief of employees within the company that the PMO is responsible for a significant number of the change programmes which may have been unpopular.

“He who introduces it (change) has all those who profit from the old order of things as his enemy (Machiavelli)"

The PMO as agents of change can be a victim of their own success. Following completion of a change programme their relevance can be questioned and they will be asked to justify their continued existence in the face of political pressures (Pellegrinelli and Garagna 2009)

2.5 Evolution and Life Expectancy

2.5.1 Evolution of the PMO
In the main PMO’s do not evolve organically but are the result of a distinct catalyst which predominately stem from project failure or a response to an emerging organisational need. Research by Forrester in 2013 proposes that these catalysts are:

- **A very visible project fails** forcing the company to re-assess the way they manage and deliver projects.
- **A project goes over budget** which can impact both profitability and customer relationships.
- **Market Competition** retaining and growing market share demands more consistency
A PMO enabled the success of a strategic project and the organisation is seeking to replicate this success.

According to research carried out with 587 C-suite and executive managers 88% said that executing strategic initiatives successfully will be essential or very important in ensuring their companies remain competitive over the next three years (Boston Consulting Group 2013). They also found that among the initiatives launched over the past three years only 56% were successful re-enforcing the need for a set of core competencies that drive success through the alignment with business stakeholders and operational excellence.

2.5.2 PMO Competency Continuum

Gerard Hill (2004) suggests that there are 5 stages in the evolution of a PMO. The PMO competency continuum (Figure 2.2 below) provides a framework that defines a series of PMO stages that can be examined for application in an organisation.

![Figure 2-2, Hill 2004, Competency Continuum, recreated by Author](image)

Hill also suggests that the “five stages are also indicative of an organisations maturity in project management with the PMO’s role and the responsibilities advancing from project management oversight and control at the lower end of the competency
continuum to strategic business alignment at the higher competency stages” (Hill 2004).

2.5.3 Project Management Maturity
The level of project management maturity has been found to impact the PMO model established and functions carried out by the PMO significantly. Research by Aubrey and Hobbs in 2007 found that very few organisations reach the highest level (5) of project management maturity. In fact less than 3% were found to have reached the highest level. The research found that the level of project management maturity is directly related to the supportiveness of the organisation culture. Most organisations are at the lower levels (1 and 2) and these figures are supported by further research by Mullaly in 2006. “The effectiveness of a competent cadre of project managers can be magnified significantly if these project managers have the full suite of PMO services at their disposal” (Rad 2001)

Hobbs and Aubrey used the Capability Maturity Model (CMM) to measure the level of project management maturity within the organisation. It suggests five levels of maturity through which an organisation is expected to progress through. 1) Initial level, 2) Repeatable level, 3) Defined level, 4) Managed level, 5) Optimised level. The research also suggests that the size and complexity of projects influences the maturity and capability of the organisation to deliver strategic initiatives. “The results further showed that when projects are larger, the maturity level of the organisation tends to be at the higher level” (Hobbs and Aubrey, 2008).

2.5.4 The PMO Maturity Model
At the PMI Research and Education Congress 2010 a group led by Americo Pinto suggested that the degree of maturity of a PMO was a reflection on how proficient it was at creating value for its customers and the organisation as a whole.

It is possible for a less mature PMO to exist in more mature organisations, given that the maturity of the PMO is a reflection of its capability of performing its functions and delivering its objectives and not its maturity on the evolutionary path from Functional to Strategic (Pinto et al 2010).
Pinto et al argued that the PMO is a support area within the business but unlike any other support area internally they are being continuously required to justify their existence and generate value. They therefore hypothesise that similar to any other service provider if they are not delivering or generating value their contract may be reviewed. This means that as internal and external forces change the company must evolve to meet new demands and only PMO’s that evolve in tandem with the parent organisation will survive.

They also suggest that evaluating the proliferation of information on the PMO since its inception that there still is a lack of knowledge regarding the maturity of PMO’s. They therefore propose that a specific model for self-evaluation of maturity is needed.

The proposal of this PMO maturity model is based on the standard ways of typifying PMOs in its two principal dimensions: scope and approach. In this model the scope is the reach within the organisation of the PMO and the approach is how it operates with its customers. Figure 2.3 shows the 9 quadrants resulting from the relationship between Scope and Approach

![Figure 2-3 Pinto, PMO Maturity Model, recreated by Author](image)

In developing this model Pinto et al use previous research on 500 PMO’s carried out by Aubrey and Hobbs in 2007. This research identified 27 common functions of

25 | Page
PMO’s. These 27 functions were then used as reference points and evaluated using the maturity model to ascertain how many different PMO models there were.

The conclusion was that it was possible to have 21 different types of PMO considering the three mutually exclusive scopes – (Enterprise, Departmental and Operational) and the seven possible approaches - (Strategic, Strategic–Tactical, Strategic Operational, Tactical, Tactical–Operational, Operational, Operational and Strategic–Tactical–Operational) see table 2.3 below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enterprise</td>
<td>Departmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report project status to upper management</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement a standard methodology</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and control of project performance</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop competency of personnel, including training</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement and operate a project information system</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide advice to upper management</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordinate between projects</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and maintain a project scoreboard</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote project management within the organisation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and control performance of PMO</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in strategic planning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide mentoring for project managers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage one or more portfolios</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2-3 Pinto, Functions Vs Scope & Approach, recreated by Author
Table 2.3 shows the 27 functions described by Aubrey and Hobbs (replicated) and their relationship with approach and scope. (Pinto et al 2010)

### 2.5.5 Expected Life of a PMO

PMO’s appear to be in constant transition or have a specific lifespan. There are different opinions why PMO’s fall from grace or are restructured frequently. Empirical evidence shows that the life expectancy of a PMO is approximately two years (Stanleigh 2005; Hobbs & Aubrey 2007)
Where Hobbs et al. (2008) implied that the frequent restructuring and short life spans of PMOs is a negative finding reflecting a lack of sustainable value from PMOs for their organisations, Hurt & Thomas (2009) take the contrary view that “effective” PMOs continue to add value specifically by changing and reinventing themselves – as long as they stay focused on the principle of improving project management in the organisation.

Sarah Fisher Gale has an alternative view where she suggests that research completed by PWC shows that the longer PMO’s are around the more effective they become and the more success they have in managing projects. “PMO’s in place for 6 years or more report that 62% of projects achieve their intended business benefits and 74% of projects are deemed high quality” (Gale 2013).

Aubrey and Hobbs quote Van den Ven & Garud 1994 and suggest that the evolution of the PMO is occurring concurrently with the host organisation “The dynamic relationships between the PMO and its host organisation are conceptualised as co-evolutionary (Aubrey & Hobbs 2007). If this evolution is incremental and not moving at the same pace as the demands of the host organisation or external environment then the likelihood of strategic drift is high, reducing the effectiveness and success of the PMO and its reputation.

Other evidence suggests that PMO’s are dynamic entities created to solve specific issues within dynamic organisations which imply a short life expectancy for PMO’s (Aubrey, Hobbs & Muller 2010). This argument would imply that the short lifecycle of a PMO is a natural outcome of strategic transformation of PMO’s, the natural evolution process or the instability of the organisation. The notion of “creative destruction” is cited by Pellegrinelli and Garagna and implies that one economic/organisational form is replaced by another, rather than disappearing or taking a virtual existence.

2.5.6 The Virtual PMO

The concept of a virtual PMO is that what remains in the organisation following the disbandment of the PMO. Pellegrinelli and Garagna 2009 describe the PMO as a “powerful manifestation of the importance attached to project and programme
management”. But they also suggest that in the absence of a PMO the “Virtual PMO” is a viable option. The project management methodology is still used to deliver projects, templates, processes and reports are embedded in the organisation and are now regarded as normal business practice. Former PMO staff, project managers and business managers that espouse the benefits of the structured approach in delivering change engage and collaborate in a virtual community. They await the opportunity to recreate the PMO that strategic change and wider organisational decisions brings.

2.6 Deploying a PMO

2.6.1 What Model is Appropriate
There are as many variances in PMO’s models as there are functions. This means that is of critical importance to deploy a PMO that makes sense to your organisation and ensure that it is fully supported and resourced to deliver on the mandate and context in which it was set up. When designed and supported effectively strategic PMO’s can constitute a competitive differentiator in delivering bold change (Boston Consulting Group 2013).

Depending on the organisational requirements an organisation may establish a PMO at any level but it is presumed that a higher stage PMO has already attained and performs the competencies prescribed for a lower stage PMO. According to Hill “it is critical to discern the approximate level of PMO competency that the relevant organisation needs, not every organisation needs to have a PMO at stage 5” (Hill 2004)

Caution should be exercised when deciding what model or stage to establish a PMO as deploying a PMO that is ineffective and does not meet the business needs will impact the organisations perception of the value of both the PMO and project management.

2.6.2 Staffing
Most research completed on PMO’s regard staffing as a key factor in determining whether the PMO will be successful or not. In a thought leadership paper Forrester recommend that you should “Staff the PMO with strategic thinkers who can analyse
performance, identify opportunities and drive change, because they implement only the processes that bring measurable value to the organisation” (Forrester 2013)

The basic PMO may have only one staff working it but as the PMO moves up through the stages / models, staffing levels need to increase and staff competencies need to be augmented with the appropriate skills to meet the increased demands that larger and more strategic projects and programmes mandate. This increase in staff has a significant impact on costs and the subsequent debate around value, justification and return on investment. However to keep things in perspective there is significant cost in having a large number of projects fail, “this implicit cost tends to be significantly higher than the explicit costs of establishing a PMO” (Rad 2001)

Graph 2.2, Aubrey & Hobbs, PMO Staffing Levels, recreated by Author

Graph 2.2 shows the staffing level from a survey of 500 PMO’s carried out by Hobbs & Aubrey in 2007. The data shows that 50% of PMO’s surveyed had 3 or less staff. “Staff the PMO with the number of people and competence that seems required and choose the people with care” (Anderson et al 2007). In an interview with Forrester in 2013 regarding success a PMO director for an Indian based construction company quoted “We staffed the PMO with visionaries who could solve problems and were
dedicated to creating systems and controls that visibly made it easier to manage projects”.

2.6.3 Strategic Alignment

Strategic alignment of the PMO with the Executive of the organisation usually occurs in the later stages of the PMO evolution. Transitioning the PMO from being functional to become strategically aligned is not easy. This evolution of the PMO is normally a result of the relationship with the parent organisation in which it is embedded. “The PMO and organisation adapt and evolve constructing the context together” (Aubrey et al 2009).

In July 2013 PMI commissioned Forrester Consulting to evaluate strategically aligned PMO’s. Their findings showed “that strategically functioning PMO’s that are closely connected to executive management play an active part in strategic planning” (Forrester 2013). They also found that these PMO’s can positively influence business results and deliver value at every level of planning and execution.

Not all PMO’s need to be strategically aligned. Strategically aligned PMO’s tend to be customer facing and have an external focus. Research carried out by Hobbs and Aubrey identified that PMO’s located in the business are less mature with regards to project management, are less supportive to the functions of the PMO and have a different mix of staff and competencies than PMO’s elsewhere. They hypothesise that their focus is more aligned with business unit performance rather than project management success (Hobbs and Aubrey 2008)

Research by the Boston Consulting Group in 2013 highlights that high performing PMO’s enable the right level of engagement with senior leaders which is critical for strategic project implementation.

2.7 Opposing Opinions of the Value and Legitimacy of the PMO

The PMO is regarded as a support function and it is unique in that it is continually being asked to justify its existence and generate value. Compare this with other support areas finance, Human Resources and IT where their value and contribution is seldom questioned.
PMO’s completed approximately US$100 million worth of projects in 2012 and US$71 million in value in increased revenue and cost reductions (PMI’s Pulse of the Profession 2013). “Yet only a third of PMO managers believe that they have realised their full potential in contributing value to their organisation” (Sarah Fisher Gale 2013, page 31)

Pelligrinelli and Garagna assert that senior management in companies where project management culture is embedded in the organisation understand intimately the value of a PMO (Pellegrinelli & Garagna 2009).

The lack of consensus surrounding the value of the PMO stems from a number of opposing tenets. There are multiple aspects to this thinking of which politics within the organisation plays a significant role. Analysis of the research by Aubrey et al suggests that “the politics surrounding the PMO are responsible for the development of tensions that lead to decisions concerning organisational project management” (Aubrey et al 2008)

Pelligrinelli & Garagna claim that the “PMO can be the battleground between empowerment and control, between people and processes and between political factions (Pelligrinelli & Garagna 2009).” The PMO tends to bring control into the centre and away from project managers and line managers. This in-turn stirs up political tension and unless the PMO can control this they may face pressure not only from the business but from within its own community.

Politics is not the only reason that different parts of the same organisation have diverse views on the value or role of the PMO. There is opinion in some organisations that the “PMO takes on the roles and functions that might otherwise be done by other parts of the organisation (Pelligrinelli & Garagna 2009).” Some also believe that in certain instances the PMO sets itself up in the organisation chart almost like a target to be shot at.

On the continuing relevance of the PMO Pelligrinelli & Garagna quote Dai & Wells “reported project performance is higher in organisations that have a PMO in comparison with organisations that do not, but not high enough to merit statistical
significance”. They also suggest that the PMO is established in organisations in response to a specific need and as soon as this need is met the legitimacy of the PMO is decreased if not spent.

Pelligrinelli & Garagna also propose that the role of a PMO is to “transfer value to the rest of the organisation”, project management methodology and learning for instance. Once these has been embedded as operational norm in the organisation that their contribution has been made and their continuing relevance questioned.

There are individuals that value the respect of project management processes, while at the same time in the same organisation others value exactly the opposite and encourage delinquency (Aubrey and Hobbs 2011)

This point is also made in the research paper Four Steps to a Stronger PMO where Gale advocates that if PMO’s consistently deliver successful projects that success becomes expected as the norm. In circumstances where a directive to cut costs is cascaded down through an organisation the high performing PMO may find its continued existence is being questioned (Gale 2013 page 35).

The PMO on the other hand believe that they have further value to contribute but are at odds with the organisation who believe having gained this competency they can now proceed on their own without the support of the PMO. Politics prevail again where significant influencers of strategy may feel the PMO in its current function is no longer legitimate and promote its demise.

2.8 Successful PMO’s

Successful PMO’s must tailor their role and functions to the needs of the organisation. The Boston Consulting Group 2013 suggests that a crucial element of this success is by adopting the “minimum sufficiency or right level of system controls, information based assessment of progress and support from the PMO – and nothing more” (The PMO Imperative, page 13). They advocate that minimum sufficiency pervades the behaviours and processes found in successful strategic initiatives.

Successful PMO’s provide senior management and executives with the information they need to make strategic decisions. The information needs to be accurate and at
the appropriate level of detail to support the decision making process. “High performing PMO’s help enable the right level of engagement with senior leaders” (Boston Consulting Group 2013) In large portfolios and programmes providing excessive data on what is broadly aligned with business expectations takes significant time to review and analyse and is in reality a waste of senior management’s valuable time.

Distilling down the potentially overwhelming amount of information to the most important and critical points frees up senior management to make the decisions that will have the greatest impact for the organisation as a whole.

Successful PMO’s have a positive relationship with the parent organisation based on mutual respect. This PMO is in partnership with the business, providing the appropriate levels of collaboration and support and not continuously trying to catch the business out. High performing PMO’s are acutely aware of the context in which it was set up and the changing needs of the organisation. According to the Boston Consulting Group high performing PMO’s are “far less likely to be primarily focused on policing and setting up policy than on supporting the implementation of the project or programme” (The PMO Imperative 2013, page 11). Adversely, low performing PMO’s are more likely to insist on the use of templates, processes and methodology even in specific circumstance when not appropriate or have no real business benefit.
3 Research Methods and Methodology

3.1 Introduction to Chapter

This chapter explains the research methodology used, beginning with a re-statement of the primary research question and objectives to be researched. It describes why the research methodology was selected and the benefits and limitations of this strategy.

The PMO is a relatively new phenomenon and is gaining momentum as a research topic. Over the past three decades significant research has been carried out attesting to the benefits and contribution they make to business performance. Their design and management is complicated by the significant variations in models deployed and the functions, responsibilities and success of these PMO’s and as a result there is no consensus on the benefit they deliver and some have questioned the value if any they contribute to the performance of a company.

The primary question in this research paper “Why is there a lack of consensus regarding the benefits and contribution a PMO makes to the business?”

3.2 Research Philosophy

The research onion (figure 3.1) as characterised in Research Methods for Business Students Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2013) provides a framework for selecting an approach to conducting research. The primary aim of research is to collect and analyse data but before you reach that point there are many layers of the research onion to peel away and analyse. The framework assists the researcher map their way through the most appropriate approach for their research. Saunders et al (2013) point out that there is no one research philosophy better that another. Each is suited better for different types of research and outcomes.
There are 4 philosophical approaches in the outer ring, Positivism, Realism, Interpretivism and Pragmatism. The two most notable of these are *positivism* and *interpretivism*. Many researchers carry out significant research without any knowledge of philosophy but most researchers believe that having a working knowledge of the underlying principles of philosophy is beneficial to the research.

Comparisons of Positivism and Interpretivism presented by Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2011) have been recreated and can be seen in table 3.1.
### Basic Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>View of the World</strong></td>
<td>The world is external and objective</td>
<td>The world is socially constructed and subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement of researcher</strong></td>
<td>Researcher is independent</td>
<td>Researcher is part of what is being observed and sometimes even actively collaborates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Researchers Influence</strong></td>
<td>Researcher is value free</td>
<td>Researcher is driven by human interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assumptions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is observed?</strong></td>
<td>Objective, often quantitative, facts</td>
<td>Subjective interpretations of meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How is knowledge developed?</strong></td>
<td>Reducing phenomena to simple elements representing general law</td>
<td>Taking a broad and total view of phenomena to detect explanations beyond the current knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-1, Positivism / Interpretivism comparison, Bloomberg 2011, recreated by Author

Saunders et al 2012 suggest that no one philosophy is better that another rather each one is better suited when trying to achieve different things and that most research questions can be answered in more than one philosophical domain.

The author has chosen to use an interpretist approach to this research as Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill believe it to be most appropriate for business and management research. The interpretist perspective indicates that individuals cannot be separated from the environment around them. Interpretivism advocates that as researchers we must understand the difference between conducting research among people or about objects. Critical to the interpretivist philosophy is that it demands the researcher must take an empathetic stance in that you must view the world from the point of view of our research subjects, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2013).
3.3 Research Approach

There are two distinct reasoning approaches: deduction (testing theory) and induction (building theory).

3.3.1 Deductive

Deductive theory represents the commonest view of the nature of the relationship between theory and research. “Deduction is a form of inference that purports to be conclusive, that is the conclusion must necessarily follow from the reason given” (Blumberg, et al 2011). Deduction is the leading research approach used in the natural sciences where theory is subjected to rigorous testing and verification. Deductive reasoning occurs when the conclusion is derived logically from a set of premises (Ketokivi and Mantere 2010). A deductive approach is often criticised as the rigidity of the approach does not allow for flexibility in the interpretation of the results.

3.3.2 Inductive

Inductive theory is where the researcher infers the implications of his or her findings for the theory that prompted the whole exercise (Bryman & Bell 2011). Inductive research does not have the same strength of association between reasoning and conclusions. Inductive reasoning is where we assume something based on observations but the outcome is never tested or certain. With an inductive approach the researcher plays a much more active part in the research and takes the context in which the research was collected into account. Induction is more appropriate when a smaller sample of subjects may be used.

The author has chosen to use induction as his preferred research approach as although induction is regarded as the weaker it forms a conclusion based on past experience and evidence. The more evidence is available the more likely this interpretation is to be correct.

3.4 Research Strategy

The research strategy of a dissertation is the approach of how the researcher will go about answering the research question. The strategy should be based on clear and unambiguous research questions. The overall strategy is to develop theories from
both qualitative and quantitative data otherwise known as a pluralistic approach. The author has chosen to use both qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

Saunders et al. (2013) suggested that there are several strategies that can be used, of which experiments, surveys, case study, action research, ethnography and archival research are a few.

3.4.1 Qualitative Research:
Qualitative research is normally used when the researcher plans to study small populations or groups. “Qualitative data consists of open ended information that researchers gather through interviews with participants” (Creswell, Plano Clark 2007). Qualitative research is relatively unstructured and is regarded as deeper and more informative. Qualitative research is regarded as a constant comparison method whereas quantitative analysis occurs predominately at the end of data collection.

There are a number of problems with qualitative research. The data is not easily collated and reduced for reviewing, large groups are difficult to study, and is very time consuming.

This author’s approach will include a focus group of both project professionals and operations managers. The intention is that by including both operations managers and project managers in the same group will create a dynamic that will encourage debate from people with diverse opinions on the value a PMO contributes to a business. It is hoped that the relaxed informal atmosphere of a group should foster free flowing debate and synergies and stimulate levels of interest not achievable from the more structured in-depth interviews.

Secondly the author will carry out in-depth interviews with PMO Managers and Senior Management from a number of companies to reflect their experience of working in organisations that have implemented PMO’s. These meetings will be face to face and somewhat informal, but structured with direct open ended questions. An interview guide will be used to ensure uniformity of questioning and that all areas of interest were covered. Pertinent quotations will be used to illustrate general opinions relating to the emerging themes identified.
It is the intention of the researcher to use audio recording to capture the data during any interviews. Permission will be sought from the interviewees prior to the interviews. Note-taking is an alternative to audio-recording and can be effective where there is reluctance on the part of an interviewee to consent to his or her precise words being audio-recorded (Bell, 2005).

“In semi-structured interviews the interviewer is free to probe and explore within these predetermined inquiry areas. Interview guides ensure good use of limited interview time; they make interviewing multiple subjects more systematic and comprehensive; and they help to keep interactions focused”. (Hoepfl, 1997)

The data collected will be used to discern what type of PMO the company operated, what type of roles it performed, where it was positioned in the organisation and evaluate whether they believe the PMO contributed to the success of the company and if so how?

### 3.4.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research on the other hand is structured and prescribed and the anonymity aspect of the research can lead to more honesty answering the questions. “Quantitative data includes closed ended information such as that found on attitude, behaviour or performance instruments” (Creswell, Plano Clark 2007)

The author will create a questionnaire and using Survey Monkey will collect and review opinion of both managers and project professionals that have worked in companies where PMO’s were established. The reliability of the data collected and the response rate will be dependent on the design and structure of the questionnaire (Saunders et al 2012). Foddy suggested that there are three stages that must occur if a question is to be valid and reliable (Foddy 1994). Figure 3.2 presents these stages pictorially.
The proposal is to complete the focus group and in-depth meetings before creating the questionnaire to remove any real or perceived bias that the author may have garnered on the subject during his career in business. Bryman and Bell propose “Another position in relation to the whole question of values and bias is to recognize and acknowledge that research cannot be value free, but to ensure that there is no untrammeled incursion of values into the research process” (Bryman & Bell 2011). They also suggest that prior knowledge and experience will influence what precisely the researcher will see and how the researcher perceives it.

3.4.3 Attitude Scaling
There has been debate around the measurement and validation of self-reporting (questionnaires). Ambiguous questions, mis-interpretation, non-response and failure to answer some questions are the main issues driving this criticism. The overall length of a scale can be a contributor to this argument so the author hopes that the use of a shorter scale “Likert” (1 to 5 with 3 as a neutral position) will reduce the likelihood that the respondent may lose interest, concentration or use random selection sampling.

When compiling the questions for the in-depth interviews, the focus groups and the questionnaire the author intends to use prior research including his own, known
authors on the subject, academic journals and articles from the DBS library and use the Project Management Institute (PMI) as one of my primary research agents.

### 3.5 Research Choice

#### 3.5.1 Mixed Method Research

The use of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches is termed mixed methods and the combination of both provides a better understanding than either approach alone. “Mixed method research provides more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone” (Creswell, Plano Clark 2007). The weighting of either can be equal or one may play a dominant role meaning the other is regarded as support research.

Creswell et al also advise that the real value of mixed method is in the mixing of the collected data. They suggest that this value is derived because the data can be merged in three different ways and that this provides the researcher a better understanding of the problem than if either dataset was used alone. Figure 3.3 gives a view of the different mixes.

Saunders et al (2013) suggest that findings may be affected by the research method used. To cancel out this “method effect” the use of mixed methods should lead to greater confidence in your conclusions.

![Figure 3-3, Creswell et al Data Mixing, recreated by Author](imageurl)
3.6 Time Horizon

As presented in research methods for business students (Lewis et al 2013) there are two types of time horizons to choose from, cross-sectional and longitudinal.

3.6.1 Cross Sectional Study

“The snapshot in time horizon is what we call cross-sectional while the diary perspective we call longitudinal” (Lewis et al 2013). Cross sectional is the study of an issue at a particular time and can be used to explain the relationship between two sets of data at that moment. An example of this might be how many employees have a specific skillset at a moment in time or how many customers bought a particular product on a certain date.

3.6.2 Longitudinal Study

Most research completed as part of an academic course has time constraints placed upon them and so are not sufficiently long enough to carry out longitudinal study. Longitudinal research is valuable when studying change over time as in research of a product over its lifetime or looking at the effect of a product on the health of people over time.

Taking this into consideration the author chose to use cross sectional study as the most appropriate time horizon for this research.

3.7 Data Collection and Analysis

Survey data falls into two categories, interviewer-administered (focus groups) and self-completion (questionnaire) (Hair et al. 2003). The key data will be collected through in-depth person to person interviews, focus groups and a questionnaire which will be managed through on on-line survey tool. It is the intention that data from both the in-depth interviews and focus groups will be recorded using an audio recorder coupled with note taking which is an effective method when capturing observational data. If agreement cannot be reached with the interviewee on the recording of the data the researcher will revert to note taking alone.
The audio files will be transcribed to document using any one of numerous companies that provide this service. The output from survey monkey is designed to provide ease of use and will lend itself to a number of levels of analysis.

Using three different collection methods allows for triangulation or validating of one data set against another. This can add significant strength to the conclusions and arguments from the research.

3.8 Population and Sampling

The sampling method being used by the author is purposive or subjective sampling which encompasses expert sampling. This sampling method relies on the judgement of the researcher when selecting the units or population to be studied. The population for this research is PMO managers, Project Professionals and Operations Managers who work with or are stakeholders of PMO’s in Ireland.

The researcher will carry out an in-depth interview with PMO managers from a number of large corporates in Ireland. The researcher will also carry out a focus group with a mix of project professionals and business managers. Finally the researcher will invite all project managers and business managers who are stakeholders of the PMO in each company to complete a questionnaire on line using survey monkey as the host and collector.

“For all research questions where it would be impracticable for you to collect data from the entire population, you need to select a sample”. (Saunders et al 2013). It is the intention of the researcher to survey a population working in and stakeholders of PMO’s in Industry in Ireland as he believes it is a manageable size.

3.9 Ethical Issues

When carrying out any research the rights of the respondents need to be considered and protected. This protection must be built into the model and not happen by chance. “In general, research must be designed so a respondent does not suffer physical harm, discomfort, pain, embarrassment or loss of privacy” (Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler 2011). Research ethics is defined by Lewis et al 2012 as “the
standards of behaviour that guide your conduct in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work or are affected by it”

There are two distinct and opposite ethical positions

Deontological View: A deontological view is governed by the belief that acting outside the rules or social norms is never acceptable.

Teleological View: A teleological view argues that the act should be appraised by its consequences.

In this research all interviewees and respondents to the questionnaire will be assured that their responses will be treated in confidence and with anonymity. To ensure this confidentiality the quantitative questionnaire will be managed through survey monkey using a link sent in an email message. The questionnaire does not seek any personal information that would facilitate the identity of the respondent.

A particular concern would be any reference to third parties or client organisations and to mitigate against any re-use of information that may have been the subject of a non-disclosure agreement, the names of any third parties will be subject to anonymity.

The content of the in-depth interviews and focus groups will be recorded and later transposed onto hard copy. The interviewees will be given the opportunity to retain a non-disclosure agreement signed by the researcher ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Following each interview a written transcript will be provided to the respondent to review and recommend any amendments, deletions or if they then wish they could withdraw from the research completely. The taped information will be stored for audit purposes until after the dissertation has been scored and storage is no longer required.

3.10 Limitation to this Research

As with all research there are limitations which impact on the quality of the findings. Predominately these can be associated with time, cost and access to key people and data. This conflict between the desirable and reality can have a significant impact on the quality and characteristics of the research.
External researchers often hold little status with companies and need to clearly demonstrate their capability as a researcher and the credibility of the research. There may be limitations to the research owing to the extent of the population and the response rates but these will only present themselves after the data is collected. There are also limitations to research because of time restraints and because of the multiple roles the researcher plays i.e. Worker, Parent and Researcher and these can prove very demanding if not managed appropriately.

There will be limitations where the data gathered is limited to the scope of the questions on the questionnaire, asked at the focus groups and in-depth interviews. There may be bias with the quantitative data from the questionnaire as people with interest in the subject matter will tend to engage more than people with little interest.

Finally the quality of the research and the capability of the researcher will limit the validity and credibility of the research. The better the research quality and the capability of the researcher will result in fewer problems experienced during the research.
4 Presentation of Findings

Chapter four will describe the detailed findings from the In-depth interviews, focus group and survey via a questionnaire. It will be followed by a discussion of those findings in the next chapter.

4.1 In-depth Interviews

4.1.1 In-depth interview 1

The participant in this in-depth interview is the PMO manager in a large corporate in Ireland. The PMO is in existence for 5 years and was going through a restructuring. At the time of the interview some functions of the PMO were being de-centralised into the business at divisional level while some of the more strategic functions were remaining within the PMO. The PMO is regarded as valuable within the organisation having delivered a number of significant strategic projects over the years since deployment.

The PMO carries out all the functions expected from a strategic PMO; project monitoring and reporting, governance and control, managing projects, providing senior executives with accurate strategically aligned information, developing project methodologies, project management training, project selection and strategic alignment.

Although we (the PMO) do not have the responsibility for the assignment of project managers we can request a particular project manager (PM) for a project because of his or her skillsets. The project managers report to a PM Resource Manager whose line is within the business which puts pressure on the PM’s with regard to their reporting matrix and performance management. All the PM’s were project management accredited or undergoing accreditation.

The PMO manager believed that providing timely, accurate information at the appropriate level to senior executives to assist them make strategic decisions was one of the most important functions that they carried out. Providing excessive information to sift through, to identify the issue or message was of little use.
Secondly, providing a level of certainty with regards to project delivery is regarded as a primary function. Both these functions were not randomly chosen as critically important but were the result of discussions between the PMO manager, the PM resource manager and their sponsor at executive level. The PMO manager understood what the PMO mandate was and ensured they were aligned with business needs, stayed relevant and delivered a consistent service. To ensure this continued alignment they measured themselves internally against a set of key performance indicators (KPI’s).

When asked to explain the change in function or decentralisation of some aspects of the PMO functions they expressed it as a normal evolution of the PMO. The requirements of the business had changed. The PMO had developed the PM competency and increased the knowledge of project management within the company which allowed the move to departmental project management. The PMO would still carry out a crucial role for the company.

I (PMO Manager) believe that methodologies and templates are of primary importance as they deliver a consistent set of documents and reports to the customer, there are no surprises, the customer knows what to expect, is familiar with how the information is presented and can pull all the relevant data from the documentation with ease.

On the issue of project managers and business managers measuring success differently, I (PMO manager) absolutely believe that this is the position. The PM is completely focussed on delivering the project as per scope whereas the business manager is looking at the value of the project to the business. They are often not aligned. I believe we may be rewarding the wrong behaviours and perhaps the realisation of business benefits should be part of the deliverable of the project.

As with all business units the productivity, effectiveness and overall contribution to the business can be dependent of the capabilities of people within the unit. Similarly the PMO must have skilled people at the appropriate level, otherwise it turns into a purely administration function. But these resources are expensive and this feeds into the value/return on investment debate.
4.1.2 In-depth interview 2

The participant in in-depth interview 2 is the PMO manager of a strategic PMO in a large corporate in Ireland. There were a number of other functional PMO’s within the company at departmental level but there was no working relationship between them. All of the projects and programmes managed through the PMO were strategic for the company and were subjected to a rigorous but not onerous set of controls. Approximately 50% of the PM’s managing strategic projects were internal to the company the others were recruited specifically for the project or programme.

The PMO reported into a member of the executive who assured strategic alignment and sponsorship. The projects and programmes were subject to a gating system of governance, where following completion of a project phase, approval and funding would be released for the next phase. The PMO had the authority to stop a project if the business rational or benefits were questionable or no longer existed.

On the subject on relevance and if the value of the PMO has been questioned over recent years the answer was emphatically “no”. I (PMO manager) have been doing this for approximately ten years in a number of companies and because I am contracted in to carry out this function the relevance or need for a strategic PMO has been identified before I arrive. There are no tensions with the business as the PMO is mandated by the executive and all the PM’s are seasoned professionals who work directly for the PMO and hence there is no conflict of interest in their reporting line.

Politics is not a significant issue either, as the business understands the projects are strategic, that they are sponsored by the executive and that they (the business) have a real interest in the projects being successful. A significant priority for me is building up real relationships with all major stakeholders in the business, the better this relationship is reduces the probability of “show stoppers” and increases the likelihood of success.

How do I measure success? It’s not difficult; it’s around consistency, successful projects, reduction in overruns, rigorous cost management and of course extended contracts. And that is an internal PMO measurement also. The extra overhead for all stakeholders associated with the project is soon valued when you can guarantee
consistency. But there is a second element to success, its stakeholder management, understanding the diverse needs of the many stakeholders and knowing the appropriate levels of support, governance and control to ensure the projects are successful. It’s about providing information at the right level enabling people make informed decisions about the future of the company.

Do I (PMO Manager) believe the PMO delivers value, this is a difficult question to answer as in most cases where I was contracted in to set up and manage a PMO there was no PMO there previously. So you cannot compare success rates as businesses without PMO’s rarely measure the success of projects with metrics, so you have no comparative benchmark to equate against.

On the subject of loss of control by stakeholders, if the PMO model is right and is managed effectively there should be no loss or transfer of control. The PMO should heighten and enhance the decision making capability of the PM and the sponsor.

Are the PM’s accredited by PMI or Prince - do I believe that professional project managers increase the likelihood of project success? Yes it certainly helps but it’s not crucial, there are some really good non accredited PM’s out there. Approximately 50% of our programme managers have professional accreditation but it would be much higher in the PM pool, I would say 80% or higher. We do insist on professional accreditation when recruiting PM’s and PM’grs.

Can I go back to value? When I (PMO manager was brought in to manage the PMO the portfolio of projects were in a bad way and the delivery organisation dysfunctional. Twelve months on there is structure, processes, reporting and success. We have turned around a number of strategic projects without impacting the functionality, timelines or cost. This is where the real value is and it being recognised. A major project that was delivered 18 months ago was significantly over budget (by as much as 400%), late and was not fit for purpose. We recently delivered a similar project brought it in early and with a 10% reduction in costs. We are getting good feedback from the business regarding the project delivery and how functionally effective the model is.
4.1.3 In-depth interview 3

The Participant in in-depth interview 3 is the CEO of a software development company in Ireland. He was previously the “Head of IT” in a large corporate in Ireland. He had in his previous role managed large strategic programmes through a PMO and now as CEO of the new company he has requested that a PMO be deployed to provide monitoring, governance and control for all projects in the company.

There are a number of very experienced project managers within the company but not all are professionally accredited. He has a reasonable understanding of the PMO models and is being realistic about the model to be deployed and wants to make sure that the model is appropriate for the company.

The main reason I (CEO) am insisting on the deployment of a PMO is to provide the structure and consistency I have come to expect from project management initiatives. Currently we have a number of important if not strategic projects that people are moving between and nobody appears to be monitoring this movement or tracking the impact on the projects and their delivery dates. Some projects are started by using resources of other as yet unfinished projects and nobody appears to have a resource plan and nobody appears to have overall responsibility or control.

I (CEO) absolutely believe the PMO delivers real and measurable value with regards to certainty and high rates of project success. Until recently this decision would be mine alone but because of recent changes in shareholding I am currently attempting to convince the new board that is critical to the business to deploy a PMO.

For this reason it is imperative for me to choose the right model to deploy, one that suits the needs of the company. I (CEO) need to ensure it is neither under or over dimensioned. We cannot deploy a PMO that will overwhelm the business, we need to understand the reasons we require a PMO and deploy a model that fits this requirement. The PMO should be dynamic and evolve with the company ensuring that its stays relevant.
I believe the PMO manager will play a crucial role in the success or not of the PMO. He should be more of a relationship manager than a project manager. He needs to convince all the major stakeholders that the PMO will play a crucial role in project alignment and success. If the PMO does not stay relevant the PMO manager is not doing his job.

Do I (CEO) believe the PMO delivers value to the business; absolutely, it’s a no brainer. Increasing certainty of project success, reduction in cost over-runs and most important for us is first to market. Notwithstanding these I personally need the right information to enable me make good business decisions, so monitoring and reporting is something I will be rigorous about.

Do project and business managers measure success in different ways? Yes not only do they measure things differently they also speak a different language. If we are measuring project success we need to make sure that it is not measured on project delivery alone. If we include business benefits in the PM’s performance measurement we will get better outcomes.

Do I think the added overhead of managing a project through the PMO is outweighed by consistent delivery and increased success: yes but you must encourage compliance with the processes by ensuring only critical administrative tasks are mandated. I believe in more support and less governance where appropriate. The PMO delivers control, joined up thinking, certainty and information, all the things a CEO wants.

Do I believe that some of the negative bias towards the PMO is generated because they are seen as agents of change which is often unpopular? I think this is dependent on where the PMO is positioned in the organisation. It is not a problem at a strategic level as the changes are mandated by the executive. At a project or operations level it could be more of a problem.

4.2 Focus Group

The focus group was made up of four project managers, one PMO manager and two business managers from the same company. In the company currently there were
two small PMO’s at operations level and one strategic PMO which reported directly into the executive level of the company. The PM’s were full time and were all accredited as professional PM’s.

Without exception all agreed that correctly positioned and supported a PMO adds value and contributes to business success. But they were all in agreement that the operationally aligned PMO’s within the company regarded compliance, policing and control as their primary function. Most of the PM’s were managing multiple projects where documents and reports mandated by the PMO overwhelmed most PM’s and were disproportionate for the size and value of the projects being managed at operational levels within the company.

They concurred that the level of support provided by the PMO was negligible and that as key stakeholders significant effort was needed on behalf of the PMO to develop relationships with the PM’s and business managers. They questioned the capability of the PMO staff to develop this relationship and regarded them as purely administrative, functional and lacking the core skills to provide real support to failing or troublesome projects.

The majority of the group questioned the value the operational PMO contributed and even went as far as saying that the PMO was a blocker to progress and success. The PMO manager who managed a strategically aligned PMO spoke about the correct levels of governance and support “Minimum Sufficiency” which he promoted in his PMO and the concept was discussed at length within the group and widely supported.

Within this group there was no lack of consensus as they all agreed that the model of PMO was appropriate but that the staff did not have the capability to deliver the agreed functions of the PMO and so concentrated on lower level less complex tasks that were within their capability and comfort zone. The PM’s had made representations to senior management in the operations area and explained weaknesses and many of the issues they had with the PMO but no progress had been made.
It was planned to use a structured questionnaire at this focus group but the immediate debate that ensued without guidance or direction answered a significant number of the questions. It became obvious early in the discussion that the structure and nature of the questions would not be appropriate given the recent experience of the attendees with the PMO they were working with.

In the following weeks after the focus group the author received a mail from one of the PM’s letting him know that some progress had been made and that a focus group chaired by the strategic PMO manager had been set up to identify the main issues and propose a plan to resolve them.

4.3 The Survey

An integral element of the primary research included a survey carried out using a questionnaire hosted in survey monkey as the collector. There were 24 questions on the questionnaire which were created using specific aspects of the research from a review of literature on the subject. The answers were collated and rated using the likert scale.

Likert is a technique developed by Renis Likert in 1932 to measure individual’s attitude to a subject. It was developed to overcome problems of previous techniques which allowed the consistency and outcomes to be questioned. It is a popular technique among many such as Nominal, Ordinal and Guttman to name but a few. The survey was sent to 251 selected participants all of whom are business, project or PMO managers, technical specialists, or consultants who have worked in companies with established PMO’s. There were 115 responses, a success rate of 46%. The full questionnaire including results is attached as appendix 1.

The questions have been collated into a number of themes for ease of analysis.

4.3.1 Model of PMO, positioning and length of time established.

The purpose of this group of questions is to determine if the length of time the PMO is in existence, the participants understanding of the different models of PMO and where the PMO is positioned in the company has an impact on the answer they give
to question 8 (do you believe the model of PMO deployed is suitable to meet the organisational needs of the organisation?)

**Question 3** asks “How long has the PMO been in existence”? 16.81% of participants responded 4-6 years and a further 39.82% responded more than 6 years. See graph 4.1 below. These results do not concur with research carried out by Aubrey and Hobbs in 2007 where they found the life expectancy of a PMO to be approximately 2 years. Although the result does not verify if the PMO has been in its current state since establishment or has been re-invented or restructured because of new business demands.

**Graph 4-1, Question 3**

![Graph showing percentage distribution of PMO existence duration](image-url)
*Question 4* asks if the participant is familiar with the different models of PMO. 43.24% of respondents were very familiar with 45.05% having only a vague understanding and 11.71% have no understanding whatsoever. This is a reflection on the branding and marketing of the PMO when the majority - 56.76% of their main stakeholders have little understanding of the models of PMO which infers that they would have little or no knowledge of the functions or context of the PMO. See graph 4.2 below.

**Graph 4-2, Question 4**
Most typologies have the Functional, Tactical and Strategic PMO in their DNA and for this reason Question 5 asks “What model of PMO is deployed in your company?” 33.04% responded that they had a Functional PMO, 20.54% had a Tactical PMO and 33.04% had a Strategic PMO. 13.39% did not know even though the model and function of each PMO was explained in the question. This is worrying for both PMO’s and organisations. See Graph 4.3 below.

Graph 4-3, Question 5
**Question 8** asks the participant to rate the statement “The model of PMO deployed is suitable to meet the needs of the organisation” 39.64% of participants believed that the model deployed was either extremely suitable or very suitable. The remaining participants opinions pointed to different degrees of suitability, see graph 4.4 below. This result can have its roots in a number of issues, if the model deployed is suitable to meet the needs of the business, if the skillsets and competencies of the staff within the PMO are adequate to provide the level of service that the model promotes or if the functions of the PMO match the model deployed.

**Graph 4-4, Question 8**
4.3.2 Functions of the PMO and Importance of those functions

This group of questions are set to determine what the key stakeholders believe are the critical functions of the PMO. Understanding the needs of key stakeholders enables the PMO manage their expectations, increasing their satisfaction rating which in turn will remove some of the bias and increase the consensus on their contribution.

*Question 6* asks what the main functions of the PMO in the participants company were from a list of 8 choices. 87.5% of the participants chose project monitoring and reporting, 76.9% chose project control and governance, while project support was chosen by 53.57%. Only 18.75% of the participants believed that organisational learning was an important function of the PMO a score which should be reviewed by PMO managers. The full scoring is shown in table 4.1 below

**Table 4-1, Question 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Monitoring &amp; Reporting</td>
<td>87.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Control &amp; Governance</td>
<td>76.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Project Methodology</td>
<td>48.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Support</td>
<td>53.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Projects</td>
<td>52.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Learning</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Selection &amp; Strategic Alignment</td>
<td>37.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 112
**Question 7** asked the participants to rate the importance of the functions taken from a list compiled by Aubrey and Hobbs. Project control and governance scored highest with 93.81% believing it was very important or extremely important. Project monitoring and reporting was rated second with 89.38% believing it was very important or extremely important, and providing senior management with the information they need being rated third with 81.42% believing it was very important or extremely important. Again organisational learning faired poorest here with only 58.4% believing it was very or extremely important. See table 4.2 below

Table 4-2, Question 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Moderately Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Monitoring &amp; Reporting</td>
<td>53.58%</td>
<td>35.40%</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Control &amp; Governance</td>
<td>56.64%</td>
<td>37.17%</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Projects</td>
<td>34.51%</td>
<td>38.05%</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td>7.86%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Projects</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
<td>44.25%</td>
<td>24.78%</td>
<td>7.06%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing senior executives with information they need</td>
<td>33.63%</td>
<td>47.79%</td>
<td>15.84%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Learning</td>
<td>15.64%</td>
<td>43.36%</td>
<td>37.43%</td>
<td>13.21%</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource pool of experienced project managers</td>
<td>19.47%</td>
<td>46.02%</td>
<td>26.55%</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Project Methodology</td>
<td>22.12%</td>
<td>33.83%</td>
<td>32.74%</td>
<td>10.62%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Selection &amp; Strategic Alignment</td>
<td>44.25%</td>
<td>34.51%</td>
<td>12.38%</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Question 22** asks the participants to rate the statement "A crucial element of PMO success is through Minimum Sufficiency" i.e. the right levels of governance and system controls and appropriate levels of support and only that. 67.27% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement where only 13.64% disagreed. This concept is relatively new and needs to be examined by PMO managers who are questioning the success of their PMO internally. See graph 4.5 below.

**Graph 4-5, Question 22**

![Bar chart showing responses to Question 22]
4.3.3 Value of the PMO

Value is the one of the principal aspects of the research question. It is critical that the PMO understands what is regarded as value by its key stakeholders, how to measure it and how to increase the value and contribution it makes to the business.

*In question 10* when asked the direct question on whether the PMO delivered real value and contributed to business performance it was an overwhelmingly positive response with 71% saying yes and only 6% saying no. 71.68% of the respondents were business managers or technical staff and this result contradicts findings in previous research where it was suggested that its contribution to the business was not acknowledged outside the group of professionals who believe in project management. See graph 4.6 below.

Graph 4-6, Question 10
In question 11 when asked how would you measure this value? 86.72% chose successful project delivery as extremely or very important, 83.19% chose realised project benefits and 77% chose financial control and cost savings as extremely important or important. If you take the average rating as the measure, structured project methodology was rated highest with 2.27, project support was rated second with 2.22 and consistent, uniform and professional results rated third with 2.12. The full results are shown in table 4.4 below.

Table 4-3, Question 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Moderately Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project support</td>
<td>15.93%</td>
<td>53.10%</td>
<td>24.78%</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful project delivery</td>
<td>65.75%</td>
<td>30.97%</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent, uniform and professional results</td>
<td>23.89%</td>
<td>44.25%</td>
<td>28.32%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realised project benefits</td>
<td>49.55%</td>
<td>33.63%</td>
<td>12.39%</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate reporting and information</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
<td>40.71%</td>
<td>21.24%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial control and savings across projects</td>
<td>30.97%</td>
<td>46.02%</td>
<td>17.70%</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured project methodology</td>
<td>24.78%</td>
<td>34.51%</td>
<td>30.97%</td>
<td>8.85%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Question 14** sought to understand if the major stakeholders of the PMO believed the added administrative overhead associated with managing a project through the PMO was outweighed by consistency and successful outcomes. The analysis showed a very positive response with 75.22% strongly agreeing or agreeing, see graph 4.7 below.

**Graph 4-7, Question 14**
Question 18 asks a direct question, **what in your opinion is driving the lack of consensus on the value or contribution of the PMO.** And although when asked about the overhead associated with managing a project through the PMO in the previous question where the result was positive towards the value of this overhead, in this question 53.1% of replies saw it as a driver for the lack of consensus. Ambiguous roles and difference in models and functions rated second at 44.25% with professional tensions between the business and the PMO third at 42.48%. See graph 4.8 below.

Graph 4-8, Question 18
4.3.4 Legitimacy or relevance of the PMO
Research on the age of PMO’s showed that they are being shut down or radically restructured almost as fast as they are being created (Aubrey and Hobbs, 2007). The data shows that about half of PMO’s are seen as legitimate within their organisational context, however the very existence of the other half is being questioned.

When asked in **Question 15 if the legitimacy of the PMO had been questioned in recent years?** 53% said yes and 24% said no (see graph below) which reflects the findings in research by Aubrey and Hobbs in 2007 when 58% said yes and 42% said no.

**Graph 4-9, Question 15**

![Graph showing the results of Question 15](image-url)
**Question 23** attempts to determine what participant’s opinion on the continued relevance of the PMO is. They were asked to rate the statement “**PMO's are set up to deliver specific projects / programmes; once these have been completed the continued existence of the PMO is questionable**”. Only 29.47% of participants agreed or strongly agreed against 58.04% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Although the majority of respondents refuted the statement almost 30% agreed which is not an insignificant number and needs reviewing by PMO management. See graph below 4.10

![Graph 4-10, Question 23](image-url)
**Question 21** asks a very direct question on relevance by asking the participants to rate the statement “**Correctly positioned the PMO can play an important role in helping the organisation meet its operational and competitive challenges**”. A resounding 99.12% of people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This is possibly one of the most telling results of the survey and shows that there is no lack of consensus regarding the value of the PMO given the right circumstances.

**Graph 4-11, Question 21**
4.3.5 Political Tensions and Negative Bias

Political tensions are regarded as a significant driver of the negative bias towards PMO and this group of questions tests the hypothesis for a number of the main contributory issues.

**Question 16** attempts to measure the impact on the value of the PMO of being regarded as drivers of change by asking the participants to rate the statement “Some of the negative bias towards the PMO is generated because they are seen as agents of change which in some circumstances has been unpopular”. 42.47% agreed or strongly agreed whereas 28.32% disagreed or strongly disagreed. See graph 4.11 below. There is a strong correlation between this result and the result of question 19 (page 24) on relationship management.

**Graph 4-12, Question 16**
**Question 17** attempts to gauge if the loss of certain elements of project control and decision making is a driver of, or adds to the negative perception of the PMO by specific groups. The participant is asked to rate the statement “The removal of autonomy and elements of project control from key stakeholders causes political tensions that contribute to the negative perception of the PMO”. The result was strong in the belief that it did contribute where 64.6% agreed or strongly agreed against 10.62% who disagreed. See graph 4.12 below.

**Graph 4-13, Question 17**
**Question 13** attempts to reason the drivers for political tensions by asking “if the project manager and business manager measure success in different ways” further explaining the question by stating “The project manager looks at the successful delivery of the project with regard to time, cost, quality whereas the business manager is looking for the realisation of operational benefits”. 78.76% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed, see graph 4.13 below. Again this high percentage score needs to be reviewed as it will have a significant positive impact if improved.

**Graph 4-14, Question 13**
4.3.6 Skillsets and Strategic Capability

PMO’s in general have very few staff as PMO staff are regarded as an overhead or cost. Economic factors have placed a greater value on efficiency and cost optimisation and business areas are reluctant to take on significant added overheads. PMO’s as are most areas of the business being asked to do more with less. This group of questions attempts to see if the number of employees in the PMO and their skillsets and capability is at the root of the lack of consensus on their value.

A PMO must have people with the appropriate skills if they are to be successful. **Question 20** looks to see if the participants believe that the PMO in their organisations have the correct skills by asking them to rate the statement “The PMO has the appropriate skills to provide a professional service to the business”. 60.17% of participants agreed or strongly agreed against 12.38% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. A total of 39.81% disagreed or were unsure which is a significant issue for PMO’s to examine.

**Graph 4-15, Question 20**
**Question 24** examines the requirement for a different set of skillsets being driven by the demands of a dynamic external environment. The participants are asked to rate the statement "**As the external competitive environment changes the business requires new strategic thinking which in turn demands a different set of skillsets from the PMO**". 70.8% of participants agreed or strongly agreed which reflects a belief that in order for the PMO to stay relevant it needs to be strategically aligned and have the capability to match. See graph 4.15 below.

**Graph 4-16, Question 24**
4.3.7 Relationship Management

*Question 12* looks at project management as a competency and looks to see if an increased knowledge of project management in the business would remove some of the bias and improve the relationship between the business and the PMO. “A subtle yet important function of the PMO is to heighten the awareness of the organisation to the importance of integrating project management procedures and culture into the organisation” (Rad 2001) The question asked participants if they thought that “A wider understanding of project management methodologies within the organisation would make the relationship with the business more effective”. The answer was an overwhelming yes with 84.95% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed. This is definitely something easily resolved and should be reviewed with the business. See graph 4.17 below.

**Graph 4-17, Question 12**
Managing key relationships is a primary function of a PMO and question 19 asks how the PMO manages its relationships with its major stakeholders by asking the participants to rate the statement “The PMO manages the relationship with its customers and the business professionally” Although 53.98% agreed or strongly agreed a significant percentage at 46.01% were neutral or disagreed. This can be the result of inwardly focussed PMO’s and should be an issue of real concern for any PMO. See graph below.

Graph 4-18, Question 19
5 Discussion & Analysis

The research question in this paper asked “why is there a lack of consensus on the value or contribution a PMO makes to the business”. The authors and previous research has shown that there is in fact a lack of consensus but that it is not driven by any one issue, rather by a collection of different issues. Many issues are organisation specific but in the main there are a number of generic issues that create the significant noise around the value of the PMO. These issues are discussed in the following subsections.

5.1 Literature Review Conclusion

The literature review looked at research carried out from the early nineties until the present and reflects views that have in general remained the same and others that have changed significantly. The main highlights of the literature review are outlined below.

- Research has shown that PMO’s are evolving from being functional and tactical entities with the business unit to being a strategic unit within the enterprise.
- That the transition and reconfiguration of a PMO is not a reflection on their success or failure but a natural evolution to meet changing business needs.
- That the structure and functions of PMO’s vary significantly from organisation to organisation and their design and management is complicated by the variations within organisations.
- That despite the literature promoting the benefits of a PMO to organisational performance many PMO’s are struggling to demonstrate value for money and some are failing completely.
- For successful PMO’s capability is crucial and it is of primary importance to staff the PMO with strategic thinkers who can analyse performance, identify opportunities and drive change.
Organisational performance is permeated with bias and if it is to be measured objectively it must be examined from different viewpoints within the organisation.

Organisations should establish a PMO that is appropriate and meets the requirements of the business. It is important to note that not all organisations need a level 5 PMO.

Deploying a PMO that is ineffective and does not meet the business needs will taint the organisations perception of the value of both project management and the PMO.

The presence of a simplified structure or typology for PMO's would greatly enhance the ability of an organisation to select and deploy the most appropriate model, increase success and so positively influence opinion on their merits.

PMO's in organisations reflecting a high level of maturity in project management were strategically better placed and tended to perform better than other PMO's.

PMO maturity is not a reflection of its position on the evolutionary path from Functional to Strategic rather a reflection on how effective it is at delivering value based on the functions it was created for.

### 5.2 Legitimacy or relevance of the PMO

Research by Aubrey and Hobbs in 2007 on 500 PMO's advocated that PMO's are being closed down almost as fast are they are being created. There are diverse opinions on the reasons for this data. Some opinion believe that PMO’s are being closed down because of the lack of consensus on their value to the business and others believe it is a natural evolution and are being re-invented or restructured to meet the demands of a changing business environment. “The organisation that never changes eventually loses synchronisation with its environment” (Mintzberg and Wesley 1992).

Keeping the PMO relevant is a significant issue for the PMO to manage. A PMO’s precise role and emphasis, and scope to evolve reflects the organisations unique
needs and priorities (Pellegrinelli and Garagna) 2008. A PMO that is internally focused and which does not evolve in tandem with the changing needs of its host organisation will struggle to survive. Research is also suggesting that PMO’s are more legitimate in organisations with a higher level of organisational project management maturity (Aubrey and Hobbs 2007). Further research by Aubrey et al in 2010 suggests the paradigm that PMO’s change because characteristics or functions are wrong is mistaken. Instead they suggest that the transformation of the PMO is triggered by changes to the internal or external context of the organisation.

5.3 Model of PMO

If there was one learning from this research that would make a significant difference to a business it would be to deploy the appropriate model of PMO, one that understands and continually evolves to meet the changing needs of the company. This research is showing that deploying the wrong model of PMO is regarded as the primary reason driving the diversity of opinion. PMO managers need to understand the context in which the PMO was established, what problem it was set up to resolve and customise a model to meet that requirement. Not every company needs a level five PMO.

This authors research has shown that a significant percentage of business managers and project professionals do not understand the diverse models of PMO’s. The survey results show that 56.76% of people who responded were either vaguely familiar or not familiar at all with the models or typology of PMO’s and 13.39% had no idea of the model deployed in their company. If you are unsure about the model deployed in your organisation, the context in which it was deployed, its role and functions, it is difficult to have an informed opinion on the value it contributes to business performance.

A significant cause of the lack of consensus originates from the complexity around the number and diversity of models and their functions. This subject has grown in importance where in the early ninety’s the issue being discussed in research papers was an absence of a structured model or typology to today where the complexity has
grown as research has shown that the number of PMO model possibilities is 21. (Pinto et al) 2010.

Having a total of 21 possible models increases the likelihood that an organisation will choose and establish a model that will not meet the needs of the organisation. Using this statistic it suggests that if a company lacks an understanding or has limited knowledge of PMO’s it has only a 5% chance of choosing the right model. It appears from this research that reducing the number of models and ensuring a framework that allows for flexibility when choosing functions will reduce the ambiguity and assist the organisation to customise the PMO to deliver the required levels of service to meet its needs.

5.4 Functions of the PMO and Importance of those functions

Given that the diversity in functions and the performance of the PMO with regards to these functions is one of the main contributors to the lack of consensus it is of critical importance that a PMO selects functions that will enable the organisation drive business success through consistent delivery, sustained growth and increased productivity. These functions must fulfil the needs of the organisation and resolve the problem or context in which it was set up.

Aubrey and Hobbs (2008) identified and evaluated the functions of over five hundred PMO’s and identified and rated 27 functions in order of importance. For the majority of PMO’s there is a much reduced subset of generic functions which if performed effectively and professionally will deliver value and remove much of the debate around the PMO’s contribution to the business.

Participants in this authors survey were asked to rate a subset of these functions in importance. Project control and governance was rated as most important with project monitoring and reporting and providing information to senior management as close second and third respectively.

5.5 What is regarded as Value, what’s important?

Value is subjective and dependant on the needs of key stakeholders. Senior managers and executives are extremely busy, with significant demands on their time
and attention. In the hierarchy of organisations they could sit several layers away from where projects are being executed. All too often, senior leaders do not hear about problems until it’s either too late or too expensive to resolve them.

Senior management need certainty and consistency that managing a programme of work through a PMO delivers. They need accurate timely information at the right level to allow them make informed strategic decisions. They do not have the time to search through large reports to find that crucial piece of information. In the survey 81.42% of the respondents regarded providing senior management with the information they need as a priority for PMO’s.

The project manager needs a robust methodology, quick decision making and turnaround of escalated issues. They need support in managing cross project dependencies and risks and continuous assessment of their capabilities and personal development. They need support in getting the right decisions at executive level to ensure continued sponsorship of the project.

The CFO needs accurate financial information and robust financial management practices. He needs to be assured that the costs of the project are being managed and that where possible cost savings are identified and implemented. He needs to have a level of comfort that the business benefits for the project will be achieved and certainty that there will be a return on investment. He also needs assurance that projects are aligned with strategy.

The PMO needs external recognition for overall organisational performance. To achieve this, PMO managers need to understand the diverse needs of the different key stakeholders and create a management plan that is stakeholder centric including KPI’s to ensure these needs are met. “PMO leaders cite project alignment to strategic objectives as the top-rated PMO function having the greatest potential for adding real business value to organisational activities” (PMI 2013)

5.6 Political tensions and negative bias

The PMO can be a battleground between empowerment and control, between people and processes and political factions (Pellegrinelli and Garagna) 2008. Some of the
negativity towards PMO’s stems from political tensions between the business, the PMO, project managers and sponsors. Managing a project through a PMO can lead to a loss of control by both the business manager and the PM causing division and stirring up political debates which need to be managed. In the survey 64.6% of respondents believed that the removal of autonomy and elements of project control from key stakeholders caused political tensions that contribute to the negative perception of the PMO.

Politics plays a crucial role in the ongoing relevance of the PMO “politics surrounding the PMO are responsible for the development of tensions that lead to decisions concerning organisational project management” (Aubrey et al 2008). PMO’s can easily transgress into doing work that is considered by others (including PM’s) as their role and so provoke protectionist reactions and calls for their dissolution (Pellegrinelli and Garagna) 2008.

PMO’s must evolve as the organisation matures and understand that the dynamic internal and external environment in which the company operates demands a different level of thinking and service. Aubrey and Hobbs (2008) and Van den Ven & Garud (1994) suggest that the evolution of the PMO should occur concurrently with the host organisation. PMO’s should regard themselves as a service provider whose customers demand increasingly complex requirements.

Keeping the PMO Relevant is a significant issue for the PMO to manage. A PMO’s precise role and emphasis, and scope to evolve reflects the organisations unique needs and priorities (Pellegrinelli and Garagna) 2008. A PMO that is internally focussed and who does not evolve in tandem with the changing needs of its host organisation will struggle to survive.

5.7 Managing relationships with key stakeholders

A number of the interviewees in the author’s research believe that the PMO manager needs to be more of a relationship manager than a project professional. Understanding who your key stakeholders are, what their individual and collective needs are and who the blockers and facilitators of your strategy are is of primary importance.
In the survey 46.01% of participants were unsure or disagreed that the PMO managed its relationships with its key stakeholders professionally. An overwhelming 84.5% of participants suggest that a significant improvement in this relationship could be made if there was a greater understanding of project management within the company. This is something within the control of the PMO and serious attention should be given to the issue.

“The right relationship is built on a contract of respect in which the PMO is not trying to “catch” the business and functions in missteps but instead is collaborating in an environment of mutual trust” (Boston Consulting Group) 2013. That said the PMO should not seek to be liked, as it would compromise its ability to ask the difficult questions instead it should focus on establishing a position of trust and respect within the organisation.

5.8 Skillsets and Strategic Capability

Forrester (2013) found that PMO’s were successful because they put the right people in place. PMO’s are set up to positively influence business results and so it is of critical importance that the PMO has the core set of skills to carry out this function. The PMO is not only responsible for increasing the awareness and building project management as a formally recognised role, it is also responsible for the development of PMO staff in tandem with the changing requirements of the business. The higher the level of capability within the PMO the more successful and strategically aligned it is likely to be.

Most previous research has found that having the right skillsets and the appropriate balance of competencies is a pre-requisite for success. “Staff the PMO with strategic thinkers who can analyse performance, identify opportunities and drive change, because they implement only the processes that bring measurable value to the organisation” (Forrester 2013). Results from the author’s survey show that 84.95% of participants believed that a greater understanding of project management methodologies would improve the relationship with the business. Rotating business staff through the PMO would help resolve this issue and prevent the PMO becoming insular in their thinking. Forrester conducted in-depth interviews with 40 PMO
managers and executives and it was clear from the research that strategically aligned PMO’s played a direct part in enabling their companies to obtain successful business outcomes. “Strategic results need strategic positioning” (Forrester 2013).

5.9 Successful PMO’s

All successful PMO’s have a number of things in common. They understand the context in which they were set up. They have a comprehensive knowledge of the business environment and the demands that the changing environment produces. They customise and tailor their role to meet these changing demands and in doing so stay relevant. Only the PMO’s that effectively delivers the functions that are perceived valuable by the organisation will stay relevant.

Successful PMO’s remove the lack of consensus regarding their value and contribution by providing consistent, positive outcomes and certainty on project success. They understand the concept of “minimum sufficiency” and the balance between support, governance and controls and ensure these are appropriate for the project or programme in question. “High performing PMO’s are far less likely to be primarily focussed on policing and setting up policy than on supporting the actual programme” (Boston Consulting Group) 2013

High performing and successful PMO’s engage at the appropriate level with senior management to ensure buy in for strategic projects. The most effective PMO’s have supporters at executive level who champion project management. They drive and support implementation through meaningful objectives and implement processes without extreme burdens and overheads for the project manager or business manager

5.10 Positioning of the PMO (Location, Location, Location)

One of the secondary objectives of this research was to suggest based on the research where the PMO should be positioned within the organisation to ensure maximum impact and effectiveness.

PMO’s can be departmentally aligned if they are providing support to projects at business unit or department level. In most cases these PMO’s are part of the
organisation hierarchy they are supporting. This PMO typically provides “project related services within a business unit or division including but not limited to portfolio management, governance, operational project support and resources management” (PMI 2013).

PMO’s that are providing support to projects across many business units are best positioned centrally within the organisation. These PMO’s tend to be “Tactical” and focused on the tactical activities that support the development and implementation of projects internally within the business. They provide all the services of the departmentally aligned PMO but are not part of the business hierarchy.

Those PMO’s providing support to or managing strategic projects need to be aligned with senior management or executive level management. Globalisation and competition has rapidly changed the environment in which most companies operate. In this environment the ability to introduce new strategic initiatives and “change gears rapidly” is becoming a key differentiator (Boston Consulting Group) 2013. Many organisations still find it difficult to implement these strategies and this is where a PMO can play a crucial role by supporting the implementation of key strategic initiatives. This PMO must be strategically aligned and have the appropriate capabilities to adapt to the needs of varying strategically critical projects. “Our research confirms that PMOs equipped with a high level of decision-making authority, as well as influence at the C-suite level, are much more effective than those operating at a lower level and lacking the proper resources” (PMI 2013)

So in essence the optimum position within the organisational hierarchy for a PMO is dependent on its mandate, the context in which it was established, if it is internally or externally focused and the competitive environment in which it is operating.
6 Conclusions

The primary research carried out by the author shows that the majority of participants believe that the PMO in the right context can play an important role in helping the organisation meet its operational and competitive challenges. This concurs with previous research showing that companies with PMO’s enable leaders to implement strategies that drive better business outcomes. “PMO’s can positively influence business results and deliver value at every level of planning and execution and are seen as a critically important part of achieving differentiation in the market and sustaining business growth” (Forrester 2013).

Research supports the hypothesis that there is a lack of consensus on the value and contribution a PMO delivers to business performance but it is showing that the diversity of opinion on value is PMO and organisation specific. Correctly positioned, supported and equipped PMO’s are regarded as playing an important role in the success of a company. This concurs with previous research by Aubrey and Hobbs (2007), Pinto et al 2010 and PMI 2013 where they found that the structures, roles and legitimacy of the PMO vary from one organisation to the next.

It is crucial that an organisation establishes the appropriate model of PMO, one that understands the context in which it was set up and has the skillsets and capability to drive business success through consistent delivery practices. The significant number of PMO model possibilities (21) is a cause of confusion for most organisations however investing in support to assist in making the correct choice would be invaluable.

The PMO need not be strategically aligned to stay relevant but must have supporters at executive level who champion project management. PMO’s are still evolving and no one model is better than another, rather each is better at doing different things. As said previously organisations must choose and establish the model of PMO to meets its immediate needs and one that is mature enough to evolve to suit the rapidly changing business environment in which it operates.
A PMO needs to regard itself as a service provider and strategic partner and have a clear understanding of who their key stakeholders are. They need to build lasting relationships and have a common goal that enables the organisation to grow the business. These relationships are built on success and mutual respect where the PMO collaborates in an environment where both support and trust each other. They need to understand what their customers regard as value and establish a core set of processes and supports to manage these diverse needs.

Research points to significant success in the establishment of PMO’s globally. Successful PMO’s are closely connected to executive management and deliver real value at all levels of planning and execution and are regarded as an integral part of the organisation and strategy implementation. They collaborate across business functions and know what is going on across the organisation and play a central role in the collation and dissemination of relevant information. They provide senior executives with the appropriate, timely information to make adjustments, progress corrections and informed business decisions.

Successful PMO’s embrace a core set of skills that delivers consistency, certainty and excellence in project and portfolio management. They participate in strategic planning, ensure alignment of projects with corporate strategy and actively support the implementation of key strategic programmes. Successful PMO’s understand their role in the implementation of strategic imperatives and foster and develop talent and capabilities to ensure successful deliver of initiatives.

“When designed and supported effectively strategic PMO’s constitute a true competitive differentiator in delivering bold change and help build critical capabilities, not only within the PMO but also through their engagement with senior leaders and more broadly within the organisation” Forrester 2013.
7 Reflections on Learning

7.1 Introduction

This chapter on reflections on learning is a relatively new aspect of the dissertation. Reflective learning first appeared in 1976 when Martin and Saljo introduced the concept. In a paper on reflection in higher education learning Moon suggests that “the notion of reflection has encouraged both theoretical and practical literature” (Moon 2001). She also proposes that if common sense is used reflection lies somewhere around the notion of learning “We reflect on something in order to consider it”. Moon also considers that reflection is working on something we know already. We include knowledge that we already have, add new information and then draw conclusions from it that suits the purpose of the reflection. This chapter will take account of the theory and understand personal experiences and how it can be applied practically in both learning and business contexts.

7.2 Personal Reflection

I suppose the burning question for me and possibly the most asked question of me by family and friends is “why did I decide to take on an MBA at the end of my career and what value will it be”?

I had long wished for the opportunity to prove to myself and others that my progression through the management ranks of the company where I was employed for all my working career was not by chance but through a learned capability even in the absence of formal academic learning.

It was a big decision for me and one I did not take lightly. I had just left the company I have worked in for almost 40 years but at 55 I had not retired and I planned to work again. I was convinced that my experience at senior management level combined with an MBA would differentiate me from a significant percentage of the people looking for possibly the same employment opportunities as me.

It had been some years since I had attended third level education and I completely underestimated the effort and time commitment involved. Our class with 7 students
was small but the engagement and group synergy was excellent where questions and debate were encouraged. The low teacher / student ratio meant all of our lecturers had an intimate understanding of your business background and capability and customised the classes to make sure you got the best return for your time, commitment and effort. The depth of knowledge and commitment of each of the lecturers generated a collective enthusiasm, ensured interesting debate and fostered an excellent learning environment.

7.3 Learning Styles

A critical element of improving your learning style is to first know what learning style you are. Something to consider is that no one learning style is better or worse than others. Students with different learning styles function quite well in the same learning environment. They may perceive the experience differently, may develop different analyses about the learning experience, and may come away from the experience having learned different things, but they all will learn. Marton (1976) proposed that students who adopt a deep approach to studying take an active role and see learning as something that they do themselves, whereas those students who adopt a surface approach to study take a passive approach and see learning as something that just happens to them.

According to Entwistle and Peterson (2004) “Learning styles are relatively consistent preferences for adopting learning processes, irrespective of the task or problem presented”. Learning styles also relate to such influencers as the environmental conditions under which learners prefer to learn, the levels of activity they partake in during learning, the form and type of information, and their preferred way of processing information.

Curry (1983) tried to make sense of various interpretations of learning styles and proposed a framework that attempts to group human styles of learning. Curry’s framework separates learning styles into three distinct levels of learning. The different styles are thought to differ in terms of the ability to directly observe them and how they can be affected by environmental influences. Curry depicted these levels as progressively deeper layers of an onion.
• **Cognitive personality style:** The individual’s approach to adapting and assimilating information. Curry suggests that cognitive personality styles are attributes of an individual’s personality that influence their approach to learning. They are viewed as relatively permanent and less likely to be changed through learning.

• **Information processing style:** The intellectual procedures used by individuals in assimilating information and in comparison to other layers are not readily observable.

• **Instructional preference:** The individual’s preferences for learning environments and activities and unlike both cognitive and instructional preferences are observable and easily affected by others and the learning environment.

Having completed both Honey and Mumford and Myers Briggs previously, revisiting them over the two years was helpful as a reminder that when you are equipped with information about your preferred way of learning your study becomes more enjoyable, effective and a lot easier.

“Whatever the circumstances of your life, the understanding of type can make your perceptions clearer, your judgements sounder and your life closer to your heart’s desire” (Isabel Briggs Myers 1932)

Isabel Briggs and Cook Myers extrapolated their MTBI profile from previous work by Jung is his book *Psychological Types* 1910. My Myers Briggs profiling shows me to be an INTJ which defines me as very controlled and structured individual and I like facts, data and analysis. INTJ’s are a rare breed and only make up 2% of the population. INTJ’s immerse themselves in the detail and prefer visual representation of the information. They never make knee jerk decisions preferring to carry out a
thorough analysis of the information and potential outcomes before making informed decisions.

**INTJ**

INTJ’s learn best by studying, reflecting and conceptualising. They enjoy learning theories and models, and need intellectual stimulation in order to maintain their interest.

**ENTJ**

ENTJ’s are born leaders, they are very career-focused, and fit into the corporate world quite naturally. They are constantly scanning their environment for potential problems which they can turn into solutions. ENTJs are very forceful, decisive individuals.

Figure 7-1 INTJ and ENTJ as reflected in Myers Briggs.

Taking into consideration that the Executive MBA is on Leadership it would be remiss not to include the ENTJ’s who are born leaders. They have a drive for leadership, which is well-served by their quickness to grasp complexities, their ability to absorb a large amount of impersonal information, and their quick and decisive judgments.

**7.4 Theoretical Approaches to Learning**

**David Kolb (1984)**

Kolb is known for his development of the Kolb cycle which is also known as the cycle of experiential learning and is reflected in figure 7.2 below. Kolb considered reflection as a mental activity that has a role in learning from experience (Moon 2001). Kolb among others believed that experience played a central role in the theories of learning and development. Although first developed in 1984 it is still used as a foundation for further research since. Experiential learning theory (ELT) is “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” Kolb and Kolb (2005).
In Kolb’s model, reflection occurs in the early stages of the process where most other frameworks have reflection in the latter stages as in reflecting on past happenings or things we already know.

**Honey and Mumford (1986)**

Honey and Mumford classify learning into four different categories: Activist, reflector, theorist, and pragmatist. This framework suggests that I am balanced between Reflector, Theorist and Pragmatist scoring high in all three. My Activist score is low. This reflects similar profiling to Myers Briggs where my preferred way of learning is by thinking things through in a vertical, logical, step by step way never jumping into things. I collect data, both first hand and from others, and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to a conclusion. On reflection this accurately illustrated my difficulty choosing a college and subject as described earlier.

Both Kolb and Honey and Mumford’s theories have the same roots which can be seen when overlaid on one another, see figure 6.3 below.
This does not mean that if you are a particular style you cannot operate or diversify into other styles to suit a particular situation. It simply means that you have a preferred or predominant style or natural approach to getting things done. Vermunt (1996, p29) suggests that a learning style “is not conceived as an unchangeable personality attribute but as a result of the temporal interplay between personal and contextual influences”. Since most learning styles are themselves learned, a learner can learn alternate styles to augment his or her preferred learning style.

### 7.5 Relationship between age and learning

Van Rossum and Taylor (1987) found that older students were more likely than younger students to hold more sophisticated conceptions of learning. Having spoken to a number of very young, full time students over the two years it was obvious we were looking for different things from an MBA. It appeared the majority of students I spoke with were looking for a qualification, a piece of paper, whereas I was looking for knowledge, a context for what I already knew, a more comprehensive understanding of business practices and personal fulfilment.

Comprehension was not an issue for me but retention and recall I was concerned about. How much of the significant amount of information that was being shared with me would I remember? I believe the answer to this is “Use it or lose it” and is the same no matter age you are. I believe the difference between the younger student
and myself was significant business experience. I had a context for all of the subject matter, frameworks and business models whereas their reference was based on literature and was purely theory based.

7.6 DBS Executive MBA

The modules of the Executive MBA were particularly well-thought-out with a definite class structure and learning's. It is a difficult decision for lecturers to decide what subjects to include in a twelve week module that will benefit the students but this was done particularly well. From early on we understood what was expected of us and what the expected outcomes would be on completion of the module. The class materials and lectures are first-rate with a wide range of support documentation and mediums used. The weekly class work, assignment practice, advised home study and discussions prepared the class well for both end of module assignments and formal examinations.

We completed two different modules during each 12 week semester which means 4 assignments are due within the last six week period which is onerous with family and work-life fighting for their share also. The first six weeks you try to absorb as much information as possible which can often and for me personally put me into sensory overload. The skill you develop as the course progresses is to filter this information so that you become more effective regarding what information to digest and keep and what you can mentally archive.

7.7 New Skillsets and Capability

I have worked for over forty years for the same company. You don’t hear that very much these days where people appear to move to new employment regularly and by the time they retire they have worked for a number of employers. During my career I have progressed up through the company ranks and developed a significant set of management skills and competencies.

These skills assisted me greatly and helped me manage my way through the MBA programme. Communication and engagement, leadership and influencing skills were
all drawn upon on a number of occasions. During the team assignments team working, winning commitment and often mediation were called upon.

A number of these skills were honed during the MBA programme and a brand new set of skills were learned. Among these new skills I have a new perspective on how to approach and present research findings which I believe will impact my personal and working life most. The structured approach of starting with a broad concept and narrowing down the focus until you have identified the concept, subject or problem needing attention has proven very effective in my current role in business. Looking back at my first assignments during the two year programme, given the opportunity I would, having completed the MBA programme submitted completely different and superior assignments.

7.8 Challenges

There have been many challenges that I have had to work through during the Executive MBA programme. Firstly having worked in senior management positions for a number of years in a large corporate I had developed a distinct business writing style. It became obvious very quickly that the Executive MBA programme would require a more academic writing style and I would need to learn it quickly. Secondly there were a number of modules in the programme that I had little or no exposure to during my working career and I would need to immerse myself in the subject if I were to deliver solid assignments after just 8 weeks learning. The third was managing the “Work / Life / Study balance”. This is an issue all part time students need to manage and without the support of family and my employers I may not have competed or enjoyed the programme as much as I did.

7.9 Transferring Learnings into your Business Life

The Executive MBA put structure on what I already knew, enhanced my knowledge of subjects I had limited expertise in and exposed me to areas of business I had little or no knowledge of. Actions and decisions you made in day to day business now had a context and logic. During lectures, theory, frameworks and models were familiar, you used them every day not realising they had their roots in academic theory and best
practice. You now had the confidence to critique what you had done in the past knowing that you were using best business practices and methodologies.

7.10 In Summary

There are many benefits to having completed the Executive MBA programme. The overwhelming sense of satisfaction is without doubt the principal emotion you experience on completion. In our small class everyone has become both a friend and a business colleague, people I know I can depend on for future collaborations and advice. The experience was rewarding both personally and professionally.

The lecturers absolutely provided us with the information and created a learning environment where we all matured as students, grew academically and developed as business managers. On completion of the modules a number of the lecturers have connected professionally and will remain among my friends and colleagues.

The MBA programme put structure on what you knew already and provided the context on when and how to use it. It also identified the gaps in your knowledge and bridged that gap enabling you to have an informed, educated discussion in subjects that you knew relatively little about before you commenced the programme.

The MBA programme has already benefitted me professionally as having stated on my professional profile that I was in the final stages it opened a number of doors for me. Even at 57 it was well worth it “Thanks”, my only regret is that I did not take the opportunity earlier as I believe it would have increased both my knowledge and business understanding and propelled me into senior management positions earlier in my career.
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9 Appendix 1: Questionnaire & Results

Q1: What is your main role or function within your organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>35.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Manager</td>
<td>15.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMO Manager</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>24.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>14.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Staff</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2: Is there a PMO within your Company or Organisation? (If no you should only answer the relevant questions in Q.3 - Q. 24)

Yes

No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>89.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3: How long has the PMO been in existence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 years</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4: Are you familiar with the different models of PMO?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Familiar</td>
<td>43.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaguely Familiar</td>
<td>45.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Familiar</td>
<td>11.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5: What model of PMO is deployed in your company?

Answer Choices

- Functional (Project Monitoring & Reporting, Project Control & Support, Project Methodology) 33.84% 37
- Tactical (All of above plus Managing Projects, Project Governance) 20.54% 23
- Strategic (All of above plus Project Selection and Approval, Business Case Management, Strategic Alignment) 33.84% 37
- Don't Know 13.39% 15

Total 112
Q6: What are the main functions of the PMO in your company? (Tick Multiple Boxes where appropriate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Monitoring &amp; Reporting</td>
<td>87.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Control &amp; Governance</td>
<td>76.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Project Methodology</td>
<td>48.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Support</td>
<td>53.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Projects</td>
<td>52.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Learning</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Selection &amp; Strategic Alignment</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 112
Q7: How would you rate the importance of the following functions?
Q8: How would you rate the following statement "The model of PMO deployed is suitable to meet the needs of the organisation"?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Suitable</td>
<td>6.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Suitable</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Suitable</td>
<td>41.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Suitable</td>
<td>8.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all Suitable</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>8.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>111</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q9: Where is the PMO positioned in the company’s Organisation Structure?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departmentally aligned (at a business unit level)</td>
<td>32.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrally aligned (providing support to projects across the organisation)</td>
<td>37.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategically aligned (reporting to the Executive)</td>
<td>29.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q10: How would you rate the following statement "The PMO delivers real value and contributes to business performance"?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>20.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q11: In your opinion how would you measure this value?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Moderately Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project support</td>
<td>15.93%</td>
<td>53.10%</td>
<td>24.71%</td>
<td>6.31%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful project delivery</td>
<td>55.75%</td>
<td>30.97%</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent, uniform and professional results</td>
<td>23.89%</td>
<td>44.25%</td>
<td>28.32%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realised project benefits</td>
<td>49.56%</td>
<td>33.63%</td>
<td>12.39%</td>
<td>4.42%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate reporting and information</td>
<td>35.40%</td>
<td>40.71%</td>
<td>21.24%</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial control and savings across projects</td>
<td>39.97%</td>
<td>46.02%</td>
<td>17.79%</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured project methodology</td>
<td>24.78%</td>
<td>34.51%</td>
<td>26.07%</td>
<td>8.85%</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12: A wider understanding of Project Management Methodologies within the organisation would make the relationship with the PMO more effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>27.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>57.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree or Disagree</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>113</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q13: How would you rate the following statement "Project managers and business managers measure success in different ways" (The project manager looks at the successful delivery of the project with regard to time, cost, quality whereas the business manager is looking for the realisation of operational benefits)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>38.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>40.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>113</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q14: How would you rate the following statement “The added overhead associated with managing a project through the PMO is outweighed by consistent delivery practices and successful business outcomes”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>52.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q15: In your opinion has the legitimacy or value of the PMO been questioned in recent years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q16: How would you rate the following statement "Some of the negative bias towards the PMO is generated because they are seen as agents of change which in some circumstances has been unpopular"
Q17: How would you rate the following statement “The removal of autonomy and elements of project control from key stakeholders causes political tensions that contribute to the negative perception of the PMO”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree,</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>47.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>24.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>16.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>113</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q18: What in your opinion is driving the lack of consensus on the value or contribution of the PMO (multiple choice)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent results in project success</td>
<td>36.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead associated with a structured project management methodology</td>
<td>53.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of project control and decision making centrally and away from the business</td>
<td>40.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous roles and significant difference in models and functions of the PMO across organisations</td>
<td>44.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of support provided by the PMO</td>
<td>23.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional tensions between the business organisation and the PMO</td>
<td>42.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs associated with the running of the PMO and return on investment ROI</td>
<td>30.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>20.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 113
Q19: How would you rate the following statement “The PMO manages the relationship with its customers and the business professionally”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree,</td>
<td>8.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>35.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q20: How would you rate the following statement “The PMO has the appropriate skills to provide a professional service to the business”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>52.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>27.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>11.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>113</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q21: How would you rate the following statement “Correctly positioned, supported and equipped, the PMO can play an important role in helping the organisation meet its operational and competitive challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>58.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>38.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q22: How would you rate the following statement "A crucial element of PMO success is through Minimum Sufficiency" i.e. the right levels of governance and system controls and appropriate levels of support and only that.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>39.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total responses: 110
Q23: How would you rate the following statement “PMO’s are set up to deliver specific projects / programmes, once these have been completed the continued existence of the PMO is questionable".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>8.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>46.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>17.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q24: How would you rate this statement "As the external competitive environment changes the business requires new strategic thinking which in turn demands a different set of skillsets from the PMO"