Innovative Practices amongst Academics working in a VET Institution

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Background To this Research

- Educational organizations work within an **everchanging competitive environment**.

- **Innovation** will ensure that an organization will achieve and maintain a competitive advantage and secure the organization's **long-term survival** by improving **quality, effectiveness and outcome** of the learning process   (Messmann and Mulder, 2011).

- Thurlings Et al. (2015) define **innovative behaviour** as 'a process in which new ideas are generated, created, developed, applied, promoted, realized, and modified by employees to benefit role performance.

- Factors that lead to adoption of innovation behaviours amongst academics: **Demographic, Organisational, and individual**.

- Innovation behaviours allow both students and lecturers to keep up to date with the ever-changing society.

- The need for innovation within **vocational educational & training (VET)** providers is high since VET colleges and lecturers must be responsive to the ever changes in societies and workplace.

- The study seeks to identify **what triggers and motivates lecturers to implement innovative practices** that influence innovative behaviours and practices amongst academics working in a Vocational Institution.

- **Impact** of the Study – Attitudinal; Cultural & Policy.
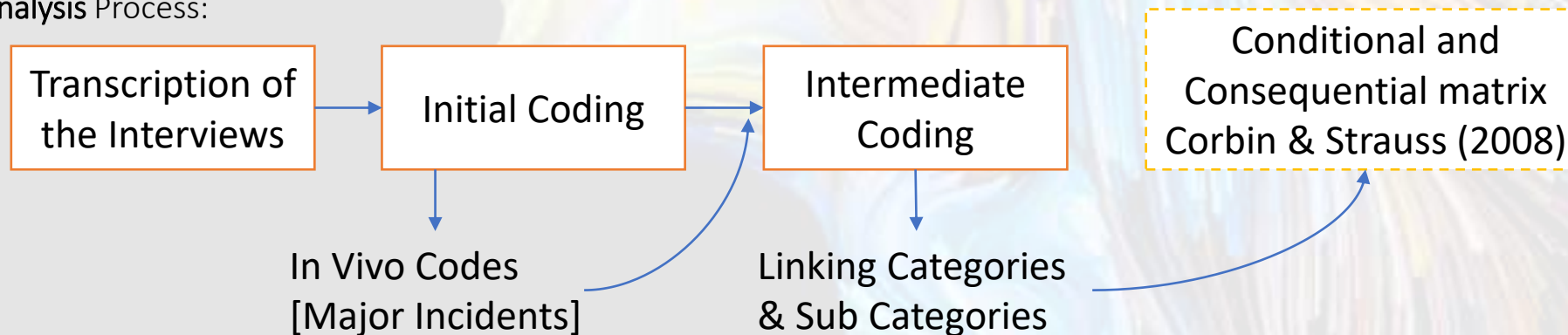
Introducing the Research

How do academics within a vocational college make use of innovative practices to enhance their students' learning process?
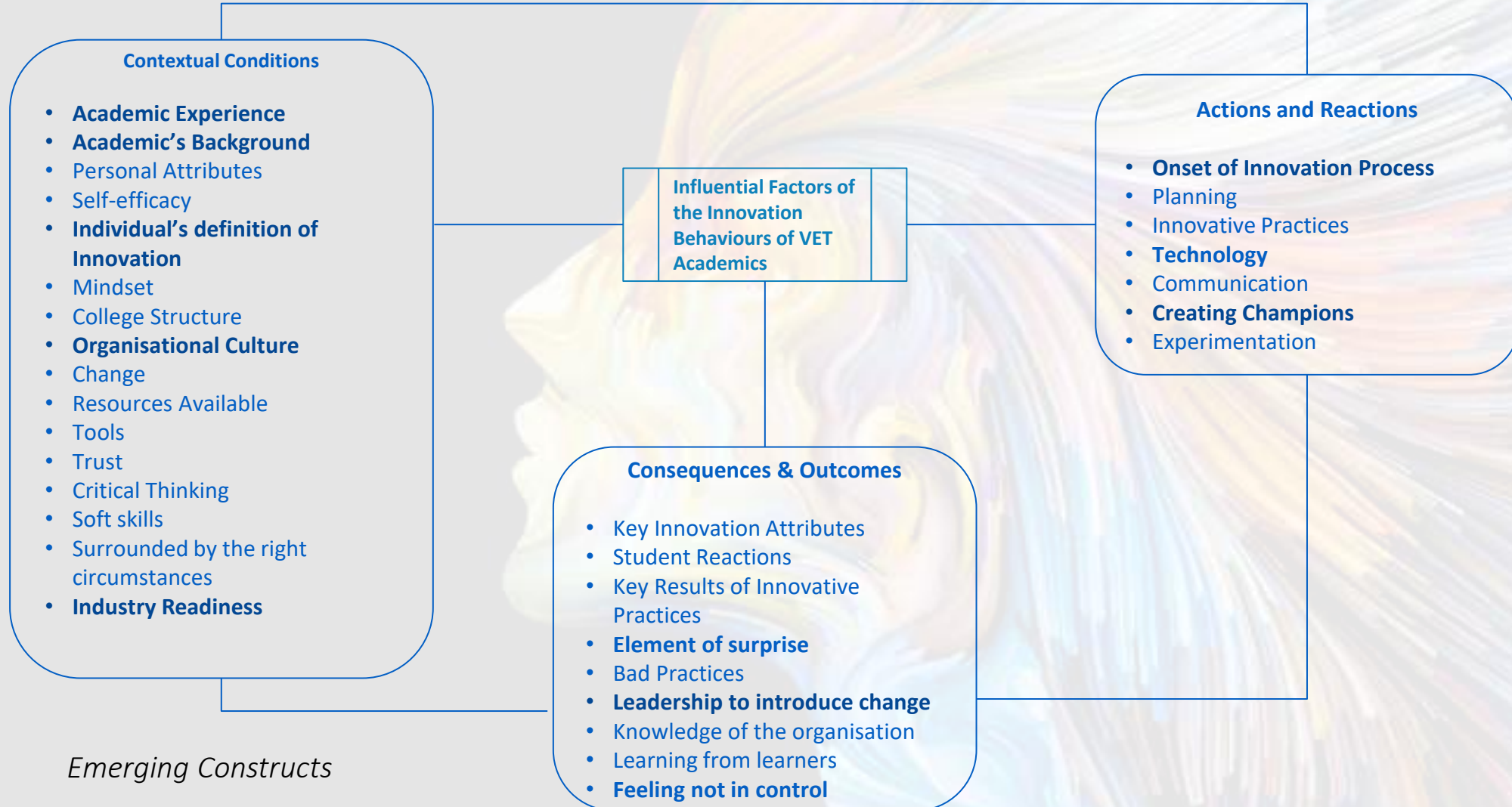
Research Objectives

- To identify, describe and evaluate the various dimensions that **influence academics' innovative behaviour** within a vocational educational organization.

- To **explore the underlying factors governing innovation behaviour** and **understand the relationship** in which the dimensions affect adoption in VET settings.

- To determine and map the emerging constructs influencing the adoption of innovation practices through the development of a **preliminary framework/conceptual model** capturing their relationships

HEALTHY MINDS WORK

MCAST

The Study

- Innovation Behaviors demonstrated by Academics have been investigated using **Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods.**

- This study adopts an **interpretative** & constructive approach.

- **Five in-depth interviews** were conducted with VET lecturers to observe the underlying innovative behaviours being adopted in a VET institution in the small island state of Malta.

- Participants were selected through **Convenience sampling**.

- In this research endeavour the methodological stance that has been adopted is that of **Grounded Theory** (GT). This is a qualitative method that develops theory from observation, representing a structure that is both flexible and rigorous.
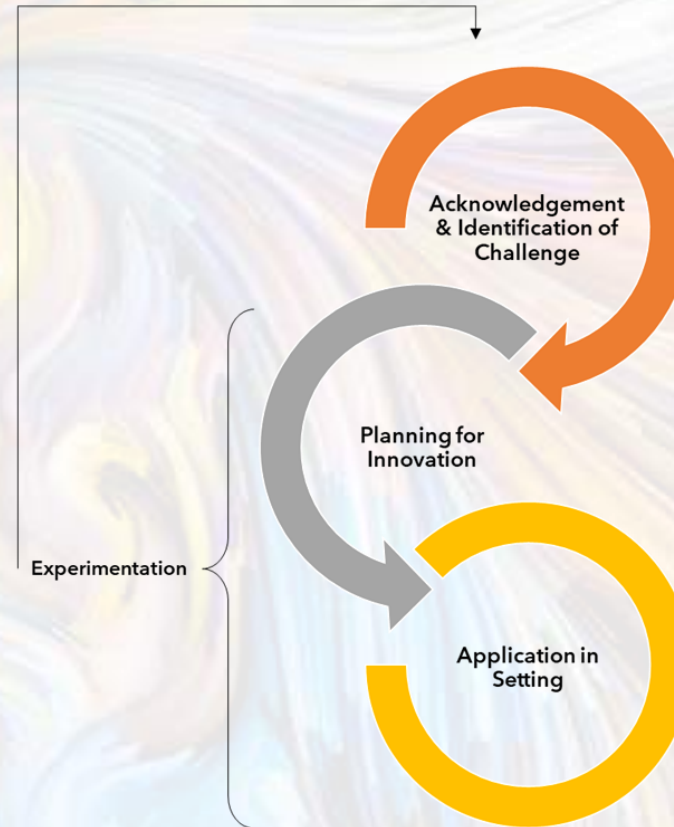
- **Data analysis** Process:

| Transcription of the Interviews | → | Initial Coding | → | Intermediate Coding |

In Vivo Codes [Major Incidents]

Linking Categories & Sub Categories

Conditional and Consequential matrix Corbin & Strauss (2008)

Initial Findings

Contextual Conditions

- **Academic Experience**
- **Academic's Background**
- Personal Attributes
- Self-efficacy
- **Individual's definition of Innovation**
- Mindset
- College Structure
- **Organisational Culture**
- Change
- Resources Available
- Tools
- Trust
- Critical Thinking
- Soft skills
- Surrounded by the right circumstances
- **Industry Readiness**

Influential Factors of the Innovation Behaviours of VET Academics

Actions and Reactions

- **Onset of Innovation Process**
- Planning
- Innovative Practices
- **Technology**
- Communication
- **Creating Champions**
- Experimentation

Consequences & Outcomes

- Key Innovation Attributes
- Student Reactions
- Key Results of Innovative Practices
- **Element of surprise**
- Bad Practices
- **Leadership to introduce change**
- Knowledge of the organisation
- Learning from learners
- **Feeling not in control**

Emerging Constructs

Initial Findings

Key Innovation Attributes associated with VET Academics
Process and master change effectively
Awareness of Industry needs
Flexibility
Engage in open discussion with an open mind
Able to keep learners motivated
Able to keep learners engaged
Adapt learning content to the students' needs and optimize content
Identify and match the innovative tools to suit learner's needs
Ability to Experiment
Work in a team

Acknowledgement & Identification of Challenge

Planning for Innovation

Application in Setting

Experimentation
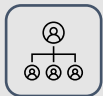
The Innovation Process Adopted by VET Academics

Research Propositions

The **educator's background** has a great influence on the ability of a VET lecturer to introduce and adopt innovative practices in his/her teaching and learning.

The need to introduce innovative practices arises from **failure** to achieve desired learning outcomes in previous years.

Being surrounded by the right circumstances and right people is critical for innovation to flourish in VET educational setting. **[Organizational culture and sub-cultures]**

The application of innovative practices results in **enhanced learning experiences** for students and educators exhibiting a high degree **of personal satisfaction** with the outcomes.

Characteristic behaviours found in lecturers that adopt innovative practices include

1. the ability to process and **master change** effectively;

2. awareness of **industrial needs** and;

3. ability to engage in **flexible and dynamic** approaches.

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH, POLICY OR PRACTICE

Conclusions

Implications

Conclusions	Implications
The drive for a lecture to innovate is **not governed by only one factor** but through a number of direct and indirect phenomena.	Academic managers should consider the **contextual conditions and utilize a combination of different approaches** to ensure that innovative behaviours thrive within their organisation
An **innovation ecosystem** that is built on a **supportive organizational infrastructure** is key.	Management should consider **the organizational culture, leadership and good communication**
Innovation behaviour relates to personal attributes , such as, self-efficacy, motivation and industry connections.	VET academics should be provided with opportunities for **CPD** to support **portfolio enrichment**
VET organisations must match the **speed** of innovation and **expectations** of academics.	VET organisations need to be agile and create the right structures and **frameworks** to harness the complexity innovation brings with it

Recommendations For Future Research Directions

- Increasing the number of cases – Following through with purposeful sampling and

- Including academics from other institutions

- Looking into the possibility of including further stakeholders e.g. students

THANK YOU