

INTRODUCTION

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The creation of Business Science Institute 10 years ago came from the idea that management professors needed to respond to an international demand from managers wishing to continue their studies after an MBA. Indeed, a small number of our alumni from the MBA programmes we had created were asking us to prepare a doctoral thesis. Traditional PhD programmes, designed to train academics, were unable to meet the expectations of practising managers in terms of both objectives and organisation, and high-quality, affordable DBA programmes were few and far between. When we created the *Doctorate of Business Administration* (DBA) programme, our aim was to meet a legitimate need, but we had no idea of the impact it would have.

It was only several years later, after the first series of DBA theses had been defended, and more particularly during the first survey of graduates in 2019¹, that we realised what was happening after the thesis.

While developing the BSIS project for the FNEGE and EFMD², the author of this introduction came to realise that the DBA is more than just a qualification: it is a process that transforms the doc-

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1. "What is the Impact of a *Doctorate in Business Administration*?" EFMD global programmes conference, Lancaster, 13-15 May 2019, Kalika, Mola, Moscarola, Platt.
 2. *BSIS, a decade of Impact*, M. Kalika, EMS, 2022.

toral manager into a manager-researcher, but also, by the very nature of the research carried out by the doctoral manager with the help of professors, a research process that creates results and impacts. Our involvement in international accreditation processes also helped us to identify the impact of the DBA.

As the number of alumni increased, their spontaneous feedback led us to conduct a survey among our graduates to better understand their career paths and the influence the DBA had on their professional and personal lives.

This book, which we wanted to publish to mark the 10th anniversary of the Business Science Institute, is the first result of this survey. After an introduction presenting the methodology used, the respondents, the main impacts resulting from the 79 interviews carried out and the 81 profiles of the graduates interviewed, it contains a summary of each profile. Each profile is deliberately concise, with an engaging title, a few key words, their current situation and significant extracts from the interviews.

Methodology

At the time the study was launched, Business Science Institute had 136 *Doctors in Business Administration*³. 134 were contacted via a general e-mail offering them an interview on the impact of the DBA. Around fifty of the recipients agreed immediately. Subsequently, a series of personalised emails, sent from the President's email account, brought the total number of interviews to 79 and the number of alumni interviewed to 81 (two alumni couples conducted the interview jointly). Two people from Business Science Institute attended the interviews, which were conducted via Zoom. Stephen Platt and Caroline Hertz for the first 50, Stephen Platt and Michel Kalika for the next thirty, with Professor Anne Bartel-Radic being mobilised for 4 interviews with German-speaking alumni.

Why was such a large sample selected, representing almost 60% of the graduate population? Of course, we wanted it to be as representative as possible, and we had decided to stop when we

3. 31 theses are due to be defended at the end of September 2023, the date of the publication of this book.

reached saturation point in the data collected. But it turned out that, given the diversity of alumni profiles in terms of functions, sectors, career paths, and even nationality, each interview provided us with new information. We therefore set ourselves the target of 80 interviews, compatible with the aim of publishing the book on the occasion of the 10th anniversary.

The interviews were structured around four open questions formulated at the beginning of the interview: 1) Introduce yourself. 2) Why did you do a DBA? 3) What was the impact of the DBA? 4) How did you disseminate the results of your thesis? The interviews took place between 27 June 2022 and 7 June 2023.

The interviews lasted a total of 56 hours, with an average duration of 42 minutes. The back-to-back profiles represent a 353-page document containing 275,247 words of 'cleaned' graduate responses only.

All the conversations with the alumni were recorded with their consent, then automatically transcribed into a Word file using Sonix Software. They were then entered in a database into which respondent identification information was entered for future analysis. The summary profiles in the book were written in French and English by Stephen Platt, Frédéric Branger and Aline Closse and approved by the alumni interviewed.

The verbatim comments below were chosen by the author of the introduction and are solely his responsibility. The diversity of the recording languages and the automatic transcription of the interviews mean that he alone is responsible for the quotations.

In this introduction, only the answers to the question on impact are presented.

The respondents

The sample of respondents is representative of the graduate population, i.e., doctoral student-managers who enrolled at Business Science Institute until 2019, with an average thesis preparation time of 3.5 years.

- 84% of the alumni interviewed were male.

- The average age is 50 (the average age of candidates being 46, which makes sense).
- 20% are aged between 36 and 42; -35% over 54.
- 49% come from Europe (including 16% from France), 37% from Africa, 10% from the Americas and 4% from Asia.
- 68% followed the French language, 16% the English language and 16% the German language programme.
- 78% attended the in-person programme and 22% the distance learning programme.
- In terms of sectors of activity, diversity is the norm, with all sectors represented. The most represented sectors are banking and insurance (19%), consulting (19%), the public sector (16%), accounting and law (13%) and education (13%).

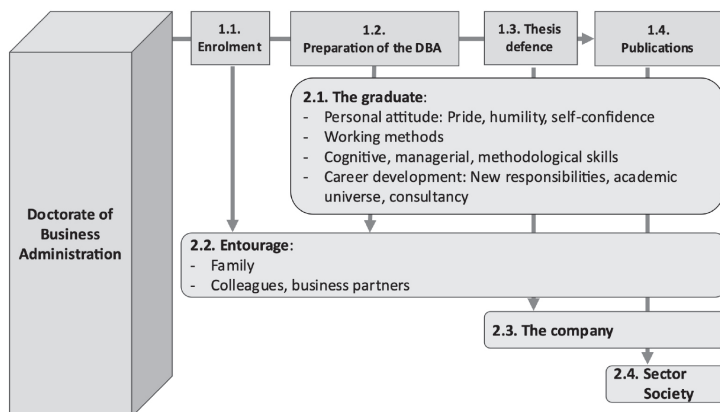
In 2023, the current Business Science Institute student population will be significantly different: 40% will follow the in-person programme and 60% the distance learning programme: thanks to Covid-19! Today, 44% follow courses in English, only 40% in French and 16% in German. It should also be noted that the proportion of students from Asia has risen to 26%.

The Impacts of the DBA

The analysis of the main impacts of the DBA is based on the interview transcripts, the profiles in the book and statistical analyses of the corpus of texts, in particular the occurrences of words and expressions. The quotes below are taken from the full interview transcripts. They are not intended to be exhaustive, as the situations and career paths of our DBA graduates are so different. In addition, only 81 graduates were interviewed in total.

The impact of the DBA refers to the changes brought about by the programme. This covers several stages in terms of causes and obviously different players in terms of consequences.

Impact of the DBA



1. THE IMPACT OF THE DBA ACCORDING TO THE STAGES OF THE PROCESS

First of all, we can distinguish the impacts of the DBA according to when the impact is triggered by the DBA process, which is characterised by several stages.

1.1. The first stage is **enrolment**, when applicants gather information about the programme, particularly on the website, take part in webinars, submit their CV for initial approval, which encourages them to apply, put together their online application, write their research proposal and attend the selection interview. This impact is real for some applicants who spontaneously mention it, even though the programme has not really started yet! *Doctor Gabriel Tremblay*, an economist specialising in the economic evaluation of healthcare, explains: “*Right from the start, just the fact that I was enrolled on the programme had an impact, because they thought: well, he’s working on his doctorate, he could make a good director*”.

1.2. The second stage of impact, and clearly the most important, is the **preparation of the DBA** itself. This stage lasts three to four years on average and constitutes a genuine transformation process. This stage involves attending in-person and remote seminars, listening to videos, reading, monthly monitoring reports, discussions with the thesis supervisor, follow-up seminars, data collection and analysis, writing and formulating rec-

ommendations. This stage is particularly long, rich, and made up of numerous interactions with the thesis supervisor and professors: for example, *Doctor Paul Omandji*, head of internal audit, counted having interacted with around sixty professors!

- *Doctor Diaga Basse*, air traffic controller, says, “*You learn to think more holistically, taking in all the elements of the system*”.
- *Doctor Sébastien Bourbon*, a property developer, notes that “*there’s an undeniable increase in our reflective thinking and in our personal projects; we understand things in all their complexity*”.
- *Doctor Mohamed Bilal Messoud*, as Prime Minister, emphasises “*a sense of height in dealing with issues*”.
- *Doctor Gyula Nagy*, insists that, as an international consultant, “*once I started my research, I think it was really an eye opener for many reasons*”.

1.3. The third, more formal stage is the **defence**. This only takes place once the thesis supervisor has given a favourable opinion, checking the form of the thesis, compliance with anti-plagiarism rules regarding academic integrity, the importance of managerial recommendations and the opinion of the examiners. Each of these opinions is accompanied by advice on how to improve the final document and is a source of discussion with the doctoral candidate. The defence of the thesis, which is public and takes place before an international panel of professors, often with the applicant’s family present, is a solemn occasion, prepared well in advance by the candidate, during which the future *Doctor* presents their work and responds to the comments of the professors and an alumni member of the panel. The defence leads to the award of the title of *Doctor of Business Administration* by the Business Science Institute and its partner, the University of Lyon 3 (IAE), and to the graduation ceremony. This title, obtained after a long and demanding process, **has many benefits**.

- *Doctor Miriam Schmidkonz*, campus director of a business school in England, “*I’ll remember the day of the exam for the rest of my life because it’s a solemn moment. ...It was important. One of my sons came along, ... I was moved, it was moving and it’s very important, very important in my life, that defence... And it’s something I’ll never regret, never, ever*”.

- According to *Doctor Carol Aebi*, strategic analyst, the defence gave her “*a significant level of credibility*”.
- *Doctor Malik Bouacida*, professor in a French university, says that for his contacts with Algerian ministries “*the impact is of course to benefit from a certain legitimacy*”.
- For *Doctor Dominic Brach*, industrial engineer, the DBA was “*very good for my reputation in the field, I wasn't expecting the picture it brings to others. You're a doctor, now. It must mean a lot. It must be very professional. It must be very scientific... This title seems to blind some people*”.
- *Doctor Frédéric Favre*, Minister in a Swiss Canton, notes that the DBA gives “*a certain credibility to me as a person and to my CV*”.
- *Doctor Gyula Nagy*, Management Consultant, comments “*I value this among my biggest accomplishments. The unexpected is the fact that I enjoyed it very much, and I opened my eyes to a different world that I didn't know before. And I find it fascinating. I still read things; it contributes to my curiosity*”.
- For *Doctor Gérald Brandt*, director of Human Resources in a healthcare organisation: “*Today, it's more about the title, the prestige that comes with it...*”.
- *Doctor Mohamed Ben Helal*, a financial manager in the oil sector, notes: “*My colleagues, as well as human resources, my line manager and the managing director all call me 'Doctor, Doctor'...*”.
- *Doctor Holger Niemitz*, a tax and business consultant, insists: “*In professional terms, the title raises us to another level. So, we live in a world of non-doctors. Before becoming a doctor, everything is called into question. After the doctorate, competence is presumed*”.

1.4. The fourth stage: in terms of impact, the DBA does not end at graduation. It continues through publications and conferences. This is all the truer as the Business Science Institute's conception of the DBA is based on the fact that the DBA is more than a qualification, it is also a generator of impact. This fourth stage, publications and **communications**, is directly linked to the doctoral work and is strongly encouraged.

- “*The publications with which we are associated at Business Science Institute ... just add value*” (Doctor Aïssatou Sy, legal advisor in the oil sector),
- The “*requests to present my results at various conferences or research or care centres, and requests to publish articles, but in the professional press or in book chapters*” (Doctor Philippe Anhorn, business economist in the public health sector).

2. THE IMPACT OF THE DBA ON ACTORS

When we talk about impact, we should always specify its origin, in this case the DBA and more precisely the different phases of the process, as has been done above, but also on whom, or what, the impact of the thesis relates. Analysis of the alumni interviews shows that the impact of the DBA is on the *Doctors* themselves, their personal entourage, their company or organisation, their sector of activity and, more generally, the society and country to which they belong.

2.1. Impact on the *Doctor of Business Administration*

The first impact to be noted is of course that on the *Doctor of Business Administration*, who for several years invested all their spare time in their thesis. To say that the thesis was a major process of personal transformation is no understatement: “*The doctoral thesis took me almost five years. I took my time because for me it was more of an introspective process, it was more the path that mattered rather than the finish*”, (Doctor Zahreddine Bouslama, company director and investment management manager).

The *Doctors* cited many forms of personal transformation in terms of personal attitude, working methods, skills and professional orientation.

2.1.1. *In terms of personal attitude*

The DBA confers pride, humility and self-confidence.

- Many of the *Doctors* explicitly state that they felt a perfectly legitimate personal **sense of pride** after the defence and graduation: Sébastien Bourbon, Dominic Brach, Guy

Laurent Fondjo, Stefan Lettig, Vincent Mottet, Didier Mwewa Wa Mwewa, Léopold N'Guessan, Hans-Jürgen Neumann, Frédéric Rozière, Miriam Schmidkonz, and Oumar Soumaré in particular.

- This pride is not incompatible with the increased **humility** that comes from learning about research, its limits and the breadth of knowledge:
 - *“Becoming humbler and being a good listener. It’s taught me a lot about listening, about realising that issues are complex and that you don’t need to have all the answers”, (Doctor Yves d’Aviau de Ternay, digital and industrial transformation consultant),*
 - *“Before doing research, I had the impression that I knew a lot of things, perhaps more than the average person, but now that I’ve done the DBA, I know one thing for sure: I don’t know very much! I’ve learnt to unlearn”, (Doctor Cyril Vidal, serial entrepreneur investor, and company research director).*

The title of *Doctor* boosts **self-confidence**, as the following excerpts testify:

- *“So, for me it had a big impact on credibility and also seriousness and confidence”, (Doctor Yves d’Aviau de Ternay).*
- *“First of all, it gave me a lot of confidence in myself. Confidence and serenity to lead this government”, (Doctor Mohamed Bilal Messoud).*
- *“I went, I met several professors, I exchanged ideas with other students, and it really gave me a lot of confidence”, (Doctor Guy Laurent Fondjo, Managing Director of an African bank).*
- *“I know how to speak in public very well, but now I have more self-confidence”, (Doctor Jean Elia, CEO of an international insurance subsidiary).*
- *“It helped me to push my limits and have more self-confidence”, (Doctor Raguiata Bah, international economist).*
- *“This programme has given me a lot more self-confidence. I’m now willing to take on more responsibilities, to speak in public, to contribute to activities and projects in my field*

and in others... And it has given me the confidence to envisage other opportunities and prospects”, (Doctor Frédéric Rozière, company director and judge).

2.1.2. In terms of working methods

Alumni also associate the DBA with greater rigour, a better ability to put things into perspective and the acquisition of new skills.

- The **rigour** of the research process is an asset that lasts after the defence. It has a lasting impact, as these few quotes clearly illustrate:
 - *“The DBA is academic; there is a rigorous approach to be followed”, (Doctor Joseph El Helou, civil engineer).*
 - *“The DBA gave me the ability to take scientific rigour and approach to do good theoretical contributions, but to marry that with practicality”, (Doctor David Hayes, professor in an international business school).*
 - *“I definitely have developed new skills and enhanced existing skills in terms of just the way I think about analysing a subject, the process and that level of rigor, my organization of things, which is not something that I intended, but just creating that level of organization for my research articles, my time management, my ability to interact in different cultural settings”, (Doctor Martin Lemelle, Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer of an American university).*
 - *“Research teaches you this scientific rigour that will naturally change your behaviour on a day-to-day basis, whether it's with your family or in the workplace”, (Doctor Ethmane Oumar, Managing Director of a steel company).*
- The **ability to put things into perspective** and question one's convictions is also mentioned as an impact of doctoral training:
 - *“But today, with the DBA, I have understood that most of the time you have to put things into perspective”, (Doctor Constantin Dabiré, chartered accountant and adviser to the Prime Minister of Burkina Faso).*
 - *“I managed to put certain things into perspective ... in the covid crisis we went through ... the level of discussion or ...*

the way of approaching an analysis of a situation”, (Doctor Frédéric Favre).

- *“So, my horizons have widened a lot more... I’m very convinced that I’ve developed this skill, because I used to take everything for granted, but now I say to myself that no, I need to put things into perspective. I think that the DBA encourages us to put everything into perspective, and to be less certain about certain things”, (Doctor Amadou Tall, Financial Director).*
- *“You also need to be able to question yourself”, (Doctor Frédéric Rozière).*
- *“You have to be able to question yourself a lot”, (Doctor Yves d’Aviau de Ternay).*

2.1.3. In terms of skills

It is worth highlighting the diversity of the new abilities that the Doctors have developed over the course of their DBA journey. Although they are linked, they can be divided into cognitive, managerial and methodological skills.

– **Cognitive** skills relate to understanding the context:

- *“I have a cognitive ability to work on any subject that has increased dramatically”, (Doctor Céline Cheval-Calvel, commodity purchasing manager in the watch and jewellery industry).*
- *“It’s thanks to a number of skills acquired through this programme that I continue to work as an expert in the company. ...It’s very important in terms of building a mindset and providing input in terms of managerial skills”, (Doctor Mohsen Ben Ali, senior director in charge of risk management in a Tunisian gas and electricity company).*
- *“I’ve actually really developed analytical and summarising skills that I didn’t have at the beginning when I started this course... thanks to the supervision I received and the various feedback I got on my work, which helped me to develop a critical mind”, (Doctor Mohamed Laye, head of division for major roadworks in a Senegalese public works company).*

- *“I have acquired a better ability to analyse personal and professional relationships within an organisation”, (Doctor Fadoua Tahari, Chartered Accountant and Director of Consolidation and Compliance).*
 - *“But it’s become even more marked since I did the DBA, that I simply look for more depth in conversations, even more depth than before, and that I can also very quickly unmask the other person if they don’t argue with as much depth”, (Doctor Julia Plüntsich, company director in the agri-food sector).*
- **Managerial** skills directly concern the way in which alumni operate in their organisations:
- *“We were talking about transformation earlier, but also in terms of the leader’s own skills”, (Doctor Luc Labelle, director and company administrator in Canada).*
 - *“I think, quite honestly, that the DBA has had an impact on a personal level, on my skills, on my professional life, because my contribution ... is appreciated; otherwise I wouldn’t have progressed in my career, and that’s vital”, (Doctor Didier Mwewa Wa Mwewa, programme specialist in a major international organisation in Paris).*
 - *“It also gave me a better understanding of the environment in which I was evolving and a better grasp of the development of my structures in Algeria”, (Doctor Malik Bouacida).*
 - *“As a manager researcher, that I acquired skills that distinguish me from others”, (Doctor Stefan Lettig, co-founder and CEO of a MedTech start-up in Switzerland).*
- **Methodological** skills are linked to the data collection and processing methods learned in the DBA:
- *“It’s true that after the DBA, your skills necessarily improve because you have a different working methodology”, (Doctor Aïssatou Sy).*
 - *“I used grounded theory in my research. So, for example, when I start a new project, I always start with many, many interviews”. This adds real extra value and depth to his work as a consultant, tapping into an “unbelievable pure*

amount of knowledge” and “really understanding the research methods”, (Doctor Gyula Nagy).

- *We see a “growth in skills (based on) doing research on the basis of this real-life business experience”, (Doctor Constantin Dabiré).*
- *“I was a hard-core economist with a very quantitative vision. It was really the Business Science Institute that opened my eyes to a much more mixed approach”, (Doctor Gabriel Tremblay).*
- *“I’ve developed critical thinking skills”, (Doctor Carol Ann Aebi).*
- *“Well, I would say there are a lot of competences that you gain throughout your DBA and there are a lot of upsides”, (Doctor Marie Lorek-Zinnkann, Head of Sales for the German market).*

2.1.4. In terms of career development

Interviews with alumni also highlight the professional impact of the programme. These include changes within the organisations in which they work, access to activities in academic institutions, the development of consultancy activities and business start-ups.

- Access to **new responsibilities**. The causality between new functions and a qualification is never immediate and obvious. However, the following accounts suggest otherwise.
 - *“I’ve seen a rapid increase in terms of responsibilities. So, this rapid evolution for me, I mean there’s always this link that I can’t minimise between what I’ve learnt and what I’ve become. It’s inseparable”, (Doctor Didier Mwewa Wa Mwewa).*
 - *“I’ve become legal director”, (Doctor Aïssatou Sy).*
 - *“When I finished my thesis, I was co-opted to be vice-chairman of CAMPC’s scientific advisory board”, (Doctor Guy Ablé, consultant trainer and vice-chairman of the scientific advisory board of a training centre in The Ivory Coast).*

- *“At the same time, I had the opportunity to sit on other boards of directors, of engineering schools in this case, and also on a start-up”, (Doctor Jean-Christophe Bogaert, chief strategy officer of a holding company).*
 - *“There have been some extremely important assignments”, (Doctor Yves d’Aviau de Ternay).*
- Access to the **academic world**. Even though the objective of the DBA, unlike the PhD, is not to secure an academic position, alumni testimonials show that some have used it as a leverage for permanent or part-time activities.
- *“It was one of the professors who was in the defence, and he was approaching me I think five minutes or after the defence asking if I didn’t want to consider an academic assignment in his university”, (Doctor Barbara Ofstad, head of vocational training in German company).*
 - *“And without the DBA, I would not have been able to teach there, would not have had the qualifications, and I certainly would not have had the research methodology capabilities that the school was looking for”, (Doctor Carol Ann Aebi).*
 - *“I lecture at the University of Paris”, (Doctor Yves d’Aviau de Ternay).*
 - *“My title as an engineer meant that I couldn’t be approached by the Ministry of Higher Education. My title as a doctor sometimes allowed me (to engage) on tricky subjects. So they gave me a look. I think that helped me to ... find this job”, (Doctor Diaga Basse).*
 - *“If you have the opportunity to do the DBA, it will open other doors, other horizons. So the DBA has opened this (academic) door”, (Doctor Joseph El Helou).*
 - *“But the way people look at things has changed. Every time I’m asked to give a course or a consultation, I feel that things have changed since I got my doctorate”, (Doctor Aboubacar Korao, Director of Administrative and Legal Affairs in Niger).*

- *Doctor David Hayes* took up a post at a university in Morocco and *Doctor Cédric Baudet*, a professor, has continued his career in Swiss higher education.
- Access to **consultancy** work
 - *“It was fundamental in getting his new job in innovation consultancy”, (Doctor Stefan Lettig).*
 - *“I think the reasons that pushed me to do a DBA were that it was part of a professional project to be able to do consultancy work later on, to be able to open a practice”, (Doctor Thierry Mindjos, B2B Marketing Manager in a Cameroonian telcoms company).*
 - *“Next year, I’m going to leave my full-time job to be an advisor to the President and at the same time open my own practice to do consultancy work”, (Doctor Oumar Soumaré, Deputy Managing Director of an agro-industrial group in Mali).*
 - *“And after finishing the DBA, I started part time as a freelance management consultant”, (Doctor Michel Zinnkann, independent management and business consultant).*

Similarly, a number of *Doctors*, including management consultant Ahmed Elsheikh, Hédi Guelmami, deputy general manager of a private clinic, and Dramane Sidibe, international consultant in internal audit, governance, risk and internal control, have developed their consultancy activities.

2.2. The impact of the DBA on others

Alumni indicate that the DBA has an impact on their entourage, i.e., family, colleagues and work relations outside their organization.

- **The family:** clearly, the doctoral project is not just the doctoral candidate’s project. The support of the family is necessary at every level. The DBA is a family adventure. The impact on the family was widely emphasised:
 - *“So, um, yes, my family supported me, my husband supported me, you know, but at the end you’re the one who is doing all the job, all the work...”, (Doctor Lindita Sirri, certified contract specialist for the US Navy).*

- *“I’m really happy because my family really supported me also financially”, (Doctor Raphael Bolsinger, Head of Controlling and Finance).*
 - *“My children have realised that there is no age limit for learning and continuing to study”, (Doctor Guy Ablé).*
 - *“But I can tell you, the first thing it has done for me is the impact it has had on my children”, (Doctor Guy Laurent Fondjo).*
- **Colleagues and business partners** perceive the DBA holder very differently, and this is one of the impacts frequently cited.
- *“But of course, me being the leader of the company and having this title really helped me to gain this recognition and assurance that they are not wasting their time, that they are talking with someone that knows, understands and knows what he’s talking about”, (Doctor Martin Cross, company director).*
 - *“My title is Doctor Badih Kazma and I have a signature which is beautiful. Now that I have the title and I have the degree, they look at it differently”, (Doctor Badih Kazma, finance director).*
 - *“We sit at the table, but with the credentials of having a DBA title, they realize that I sit on both tables legitimately, and I think that makes communication easier”, (Doctor Barbara Ofstad).*
 - *“There’s an impact on image... Because when you’re in the consulting business, a doctor’s title obviously carries weight and is an element of differentiation... It’s clearly an element of reassurance in the commercial relationship”, (Doctor Martine Story, company director and M&A expert).*
 - *“Having a chief executive who is also a doctor repositioned the relationship with the medical profession”, (Doctor David Larivière, hospital director).*
 - *“I’ve had a lot of respect from my colleagues and peers because I’m a doctor, and that’s something that’s extremely important in terms of ... respect”, (Doctor Mohamed Bilal Messoud).*

- “There is an image attached to the DBA that has had repercussions”, (Doctor Robert Sojic, managing partner of several insurance consultancy firms).
- “It adds something extra and a certain aura to the title. And I’ve also seen an increased level of trust with some of my partners and suppliers”, (Doctor Cécile Cheval-Calvel).
- “Becoming a doctor offers legitimacy in the workplace”, (Doctor Philippe Anhorn).
- “I think I was legitimate before, but it gave me extra legitimacy”, (Doctor Laurence Leung Tack, supply chain and operational excellence consultant).

Doctor Monhamed Compaoré, Managing Director of a group of insurance companies in Burkina Faso, (“by being a doctor, I have the confidence of others”) also cited this change, and Doctor Frédéric Ntezimana, independent manager and consultant, emphasised the impact on customer confidence.

2.3. The impact of the DBA on the company

The impact on the company is attributable as much to the image as to the ability to think in new ways and to the managerial recommendations made. As the subject is linked to professional position and experience, the impact is sometimes immediate and direct. Doctor Mohamad Gakou, Director General of a higher education establishment in Mali, notes with humour: “In other words, I consumed my thesis first before defending it”.

- “In relation to my consultancy work, there really is what you might call a creation of academic and shareholder value. The research carried out as part of my DBA has fed into my professional activity, my conferences and my training courses”, (Doctor Thierry Lamarque, director of a consultancy firm specialising in company takeovers).
- “This research has enabled me to identify the root causes of these incidents and therefore to make relevant recommendations to improve aviation safety”, (Doctor Diaga Basse).
- “I sit on the boards and committees of the Group’s various companies; I try to participate and draw a lot of inspiration from what I was able to study during my thesis. I think this has

had an impact, because little by little in some of these companies, we are taking inspiration from certain things, strengthening certain aspects, organising or reorganising things a little for the better. It's a direct impact of my thesis, which is happening in small steps", (Doctor Jean-Christophe Bogaert).

- *"I had an opportunity to move to the specific mine site where we were doing the digital transformation and be involved daily in terms of the actual work and be able to make a lot of changes based on the feedback, I was getting from my professors... there are some projects where we reduced hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs because of just a different approach. And, you know, it's because of those conversations (with my professors)", (Doctor Masialeti Masialeti, head of IT services for an American company).*
- *"It's totally changed the way I'm doing things, but also the way that I treat others. So, this also supports my decision making. For example, before I make a decision, I will collect data first. And when my staff provide me data, I now prefer to analyse it, so that's changed me personally, but also changed the way I treat others and the way that I manage my company", (Doctor Xiaolie Qi, former CEO of an Australian private education company).*
- *"I've also made concrete use of extracts from my work, in my communications with banks for example. The title of doctor was also very interesting for them. Yes, the banks were also very receptive", (Doctor Elmar Plüntsches, company director in the agri-food industry).*
- *"We have created a new project management method that is really there to optimise and improve the process. And it's all thanks, ultimately, to the DBA... to research. It's really a radical change in mentality, in the way we work, in the results... (It's had) an impact on turnover", (Doctor Alexander, project manager in the medical field).*
- *"I submitted a loan application in which I made a recommendation and told my CEO that we were in favour of the application... a synergy between banking and microfinance... this is one of the recommendations I made in my DBA thesis",*

(*Doctor Jean Tchangai, Director of Commitments for a major banking group*).

Several *Doctors* even mention having been asked to present their results within their company.

- “*Being brought into different workshops and group discussions regarding diversity, sustainability and cultural understanding, with the Global HR President asking to join in*”, (*Doctor Liang Rick Zhao, Head of Asia-Pacific Portfolio Management for an international automotive group*).
- “*It was a conference, there were a lot of people there, I think practically all the group’s employees*”, (*Doctor Aïssatou Sy*).

2.4. The impact of the DBA on the sector of activity and society

The characteristics of DBA theses are that they are grounded in the problems of business sectors and are conceptually well-founded. This explains the impact they have on the *Doctor’s* sector of activity and, more generally, on society. This more diffuse but very broad impact is achieved through publications and the *Doctors’* positions of responsibility:

- The **publication** of 26 books⁴ by the Business Science Institute doctors, the articles that appear in professional reviews, in the online Business Science Institute *Impact(s) Review*⁵ and under the *Impact Knowledge*⁶ section of the web site have had a wide impact. For example,
 - *Doctor Cyril Vidal’s* thesis and recently published book aim to transform the notarial sector⁷.
 - *Doctor Sébastien Bourbon*, who has published two books on cognitive rent and set up the Observatory

4. <https://www.editions-ems.fr/categorie-produit/collections/economie-et-societe/business-science-institute/>

5. <https://en.dba-knowledge.com/blog/categories/impact-articles>

6. <https://en.dba-knowledge.com/>

7. Vidal, C. (2023). *L’avenir de la fonction de notaire : Réalité (s) ou simulacre ?* Éditions EMS.

of Real Estate Sector Strategies⁸, is a driving force for change in his sector, which is currently facing a number of challenges.

- *Doctor Jean Elia* has published his findings on the digitalisation of companies in his book...⁹
- The **positions held** by the *Doctors* are also a factor in the dissemination of their work.
 - *Doctor Constantin Dabiré* is advisor to the Prime Minister of Burkina Faso and has become the undisputed expert on public-private partnerships in Africa.
 - *Doctor Philippe Anhorn* has been asked to “*chair an international society for the analysis of healthcare systems*”, and one can only imagine the impact of this work.
 - *Doctor Mohamad Gakou* has “*been asked to train African SMEs ... on issues of SME sustainability and, above all, development*”.
 - For *Doctor Malik Bouacida* it's very clear: “*the impact was immediate. I was quickly contacted by the Algerian authorities. I had the opportunity to take part in a number of conferences. I also contributed to the work of the National Economic and Social Council in Algeria and was approached by the French authorities in Algeria and the diplomatic representations, who asked me to speak to entrepreneurs who wanted to set up in Algeria and benefit from my experience*”.
 - *Doctor Jens Hoellermann* is clear about the impact of his thesis: “*I think the impact I had on my colleagues and clients was and is that they are now interested in sustainability and ESG as well. They picked that up. I like it when others see ESG as a serious topic, that they should consider as well going forwards. And then I think that's my kind of mission*”, While Jens is very modest about the potential impact of his research on the industry, in just one year his work was downloaded over 1,500 times worldwide, at the time of our interview him saying that his thesis topic was the

8. <https://www.business-science-institute.com/observatoire-strategies-acteurs-immobilier-osai/>

9. Elia, J. Y. (2020). *Lebanese banks: a factor of the current Lebanese financial crisis* (2019–2020).

“first and only one” on the topic of ESG in private equity and alternative investments.

- *Doctor Paul Omandji*, who wrote his thesis on youth entrepreneurship, explains: “*I have just created a structure called the ‘Congolese Institute of Expertise in Entrepreneurship and SMEs’ and I have been received by the Minister of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises... I am in the process of obtaining official authorisation so that I can actually start my project in collaboration with the Ministry of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and the Ministry of Higher and University Education*”.
 - *Doctor David Larivière*, hospital director, presented his findings on the resilience of the hospital sector during the Covid crises.
 - *Doctor Phay Som*, Deputy Secretary General of the Non-Banking Financial Services Authority in Cambodia, “*because this is the first DBA writing about the financial performance of insurance companies in Cambodia*”, underlines the interest in his work.
 - *Doctor Ulrike Vizethum*, business development manager for a dental company, has disseminated her work to her sector of dentists.
- **Teaching** is also a vehicle for dissemination, with doctors being frequently called upon.
- *Doctor Mohsen Ben Ali* says, “I have passed on all my knowledge through ‘entrepreneur’ cafés and seminars”.
 - *Doctor Stéphane Royer*, head of purchasing in the pharmaceutical industry, widely disseminates his research findings on conflict resolution during training courses in a number of companies.
 - “*I give courses. I share a lot and I try to disseminate my understanding of family farms, how we can better help them, support them... that’s why I’ve developed a concept where we talk about mobile training*”, (*Doctor Moussa Sow*, Director General of an educational establishment in Mali).
 - *Doctor Touba Fall*, a management and HRM training consultant, used case studies in his thesis: “*Every com-*

pany has its own history, experience and management practices. That's what I wanted to share, because we don't find many African cases in our business schools".

- *"I give the (private equity) course once per year and I always have around 30 students and it's a lot of fun doing that", Doctor Jens Hoellermann.*
- *"I'm currently working with a university in Germany ... I'm giving a course directly linked to the DBA: a course with the same title as my DBA work that presents a new method for improving the response to calls for tender", Doctor Alexander.*

One of the effects of research that is often overlooked is the impact on the people interviewed for the research. *Doctor Claude Gentile, a director and board member of Swiss companies, puts it clearly when talking about the entrepreneurs he interviewed as part of his thesis: "I interviewed entrepreneurs. And there, obviously, the impact that research work can have ... is great. I'd say it has a very direct impact. In other words, the subjects... came out, ...really, really shaken up because obviously it was the first time they had recounted their experience in this way, and they had to come up with some really profound things. The impact was already on them".*

We cannot end this long list of examples of the impact of the DBA without mentioning the impact of the Doctors who, after graduation, proposed the creation of programmes in their country or sector: Guy Ablé in Abidjan, Mohamad Gakou in Bamako, Malik Bouacida in Algiers and Sébastien Bourbon in the real estate sector.

The DBA is not just a qualification, it is a process of transformation that takes place over time. The factors likely to have an impact are therefore multiple, and it is illusory to try and distinguish between them exactly, even if we are able to associate certain impacts with certain stages or certain actors of the process.

Our alumni all agree that there is a "before" and an "after" DBA. Reading these accounts clearly shows that a DBA programme has a great many impacts, some that are expected, and others unexpected.

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