

80 Tales of DBA Impact / 80 Récits d'Impact du DBA 2013-2023.
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Compte rendu

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Outside Anglo-Saxon counties, the Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) is an emerging qualification. According to providers, it is designed to transform managers into manager-researchers through a combination of rigorous academic research and practical business relevance. They add that this makes the DBA an attractive option for practitioners seeking to deepen their management understanding and contribute to their field through the 'translation' of tacit knowledge acquired over the years into something more tangible for others (Mitchell et al., 2021).

Indeed, as more and more managers from across the globe seek to find new purpose and meaning in their practice, the demand for the DBA would appear to be growing. This can be illustrated, for example, by the recent publication of the FNEGE's annual Observatory of Doctoral studies, in which we learn that 205 DBA theses were defended in France alone in 2023 (FNEGE, 2024) compared to 80 in 2019 when data first started to be collected (FNEGE, 2020).

"80 Tales of DBA Impact" encapsulates the experiences of alumni who have completed their DBA at the Business Science Institute, a program run in collaboration with IAE Lyon University School of Management in France. According to the authors, who are all members of the Institute's team, the book's genesis lies in the recognition of the transformative power of the DBA and its profound impact on individuals, companies, sectors of activity, and even wider society.

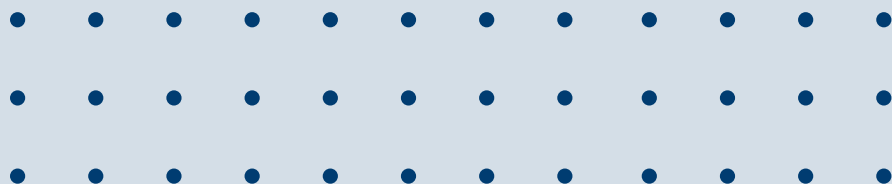
The book is structured around 80 concise profiles of DBA graduates from interviews conducted over a period of 12 months in 2022-23. The reader is therefore able to dip into these tales, in no particular order, to discover types of impact that are as varied as they are highly personal. The profiles are preceded by a thorough and informative introduction presenting the methodology used, the respondents, and the main impacts resulting from the interviews. This section sets the stage for the rest of the book, providing readers with an understanding of the research process and the context in which the DBA graduates' experiences are situated. Each of the 80 profiles is one-page long written in both French and English to cater for an international audience. The profiles

provide a snapshot of the graduate's current situation, key words that encapsulate their experience, a title that captures the essence of their journey, and key verbatim extracts from their interviews. By focusing on the first-hand accounts of manager-researchers, the book succeeds in providing a rich tapestry of experiences, insights, and impacts, offering readers a unique window into the transformative journey of a DBA graduate across different cultures.

The book offers a wealth of insights into the transformative power of the DBA. The profiles of the DBA graduates highlight how implementing doctoral research has enhanced their professional practice, driven change within their organizations, and contributed to their sectors. The book thus serves as a valuable resource for practitioners who are considering embarking on a DBA journey or who are interested in understanding the potential impacts of the program. For academics, the book provides a rich source of empirical data on the impact of doctoral education in business and management. The experiences and insights of the DBA graduates provides a potentially solid foundation for further research in this area. The book thus contributes to the body of knowledge on the value and impact of the DBA.

Readers of this special issue dedicated to *responsibility and international management*, will also be interested by the highly cosmopolitan nature of the DBA interviewees, who represent 27 countries (Belgium, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea, Hungary, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, UK, and the USA). And as educators, they will be encouraged to read how even at the pinnacle of their careers, senior managers are motivated to invest in their own personal development for the ultimate benefit of others.

The book indirectly contributes to our understanding of responsible management in international business. We learn that the DBA program cultivates a deep sense of responsibility among its graduates. This is evident in the way the graduates approach their work, their commitment to ethical conduct, and their efforts to contribute to their



companies, sectors, and society at large. Similarly, the DBA program encourages graduates to think holistically and understand the complexity of issues, equipping them to contribute to sustainable development. This is reflected in the impacts highlighted in the book, which include contributions to various fields of business and management that support sustainable development in the face of grand challenges. Indeed, an analysis of the DBA thesis titles presented in the book shows that 50% (40) of the topics have some link with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, as illustrated below in table 1. It is also worth noting that 88% of the DBA theses defended by doctoral candidates from the African continent aligned with at least one of the SDGs.

Lastly, accomplishing a research project also equips graduates with the skills and knowledge to drive change within their organizations in ways that support sustainability. This is evident in the experiences of the graduates, many of whom have used their research to implement measures or to improve processes, benefiting both their companies and their regional eco-system.

One example is Moussa Sow from Mali, whose 2020 DBA explored how management and family cohesion impact the performance of agricultural operations in N'Débougou and the Office du Niger. His research led to mobile training programs that provide farmers in war-torn, impoverished regions with crucial knowledge to boost their output and income, eliminating the need for dangerous travel to training centers.

Another is Paul Omandji from Congo. After completing his thesis in 2021 on the entrepreneurial representations of young Congolese university graduates, he founded the "Institut congolais d'expertise en entrepreneuriat et PME" to strengthen support and training for entrepreneurs. This initiative subsequently led to a collaboration offer from the Ministry for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

Finally, a European example is Céline Cheval-Calvel, whose thesis on responsible purchasing in the Swiss luxury sector led her to create Buyer-Beware. Through this company, she shares her expertise by offering training and raising awareness about sustainable practices among buyers and suppliers.

The book provides rich insights into the transformative power of the DBA and its impacts on individuals, companies, sectors, and society across a range of international realities. However, it primarily focuses on the positive impacts of the DBA, with less attention given to the challenges and difficulties encountered during the DBA journey. This focus on the positive aspects of the DBA experience may give readers an overly optimistic view of the program, potentially downplaying the challenges and difficulties that are also part of the DBA journey, and in particular for students from regions who do not benefit from the same level of 'comfort' in terms of infrastructure and study conditions as those located on the European continent. Furthermore, the book could benefit from a more detailed analysis of the specific contributions made by the graduates

TABLE 1
Examples of DBA research tackling SDGs

SDG	Number	Example of Thesis Topic Titles
1. No Poverty	1	How can the participative and self-centered management of communities driven by micro-financing contribute to reducing poverty? The case of the Republic of Guinea.
2. Zero Hunger	0	
3. Good Health & Well-being	6	The care partnership: an ecosystemic evidence / the case of the Lausanne Regional Healthcare Network (RSRL).
4. Quality Education	3	The involvement of stakeholders in developing the sustainability of private higher education institutions: the case of Mali.
5. Gender Equality	0	
6. Clean Water & Sanitation	0	
7. Affordable & Clean Energy	0	
8. Decent Work & Economic Growth	11	The satisfaction of local partners in international alliances: The case of joint ventures in Algeria.
9. Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	9	Evaluation of spin-offs in the context of corporate social responsibility The experience of the National Electricity Board in the Tunisian public sector.
10. Reducing Inequality	2	The resilience of host country nationals (HCNs) in multicultural work contexts.
11. Sustainable Cities & Communities	0	
12. Responsible Consumption & Production	2	Perceptions and effects of responsible purchasing in an upstream supply chain: The case of Swiss watch and jewelry companies and their suppliers.
13. Climate Action	1	Negotiation, dissemination and implementation of CSR: The case of the Air France KLM Group.
14. Life Below Water	0	
15. Life on Land	0	
16. Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions.	2	The role of governance in risk management systems: The case of a sample of banks located in Mali.
17. Partnerships for the Goals	3	Factors for the adoption of mobile money by small and medium enterprises: implementation in Cameroon.
	40/80	

in their respective fields in terms of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially on the African continent. The book provides brief profiles of the graduates and highlights some of their key impacts, but it does not dig deeply into the specifics of their contributions. A more detailed analysis of these 'wider' contributions would provide readers with a richer understanding of the potential impacts of the DBA. Looking ahead, future editions of the book could address these limitations by focusing on a smaller sample of graduates. Additionally, it might also be useful for the authors to aim for a more balanced sample of respondents in terms of gender and country origin. As indicated by Kalika in his introduction, 84% of the respondents were male and overwhelmingly represented Europe (49%) and Africa (37%), even if readers of *Management International* will undoubtedly appreciate the focus on these two continents.

In conclusion, "80 Tales of DBA Impact" is an unusual yet thought-provoking read for both academics and practitioners in the field of international management. It provides a unique insight into the transformative power of the DBA and its far-reaching impacts on individuals, companies, sectors, and society. The book serves as an example of how

executive education, and in particular doctoral-level studies can equip managers to drive positive change in their organizations and contribute to sustainable development. Despite its limitations, this book will provide prospective DBA candidates, practicing managers, or academics with valuable insights and inspiration, and perhaps a new understanding of the challenges faced by the modern-day manager across nearly 30 countries worldwide via their doctoral learning journeys.

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