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Research and Teaching in Small Business Finance: A Note on Resources

Richard G.P. McMahon

In an emerging field of scholarship such as Small Business Finance, there is often a chicken-and-egg problem at the outset. Prospective researchers are generally discouraged by an initial lack of infrastructure such as relevant bibliographic facilities, journals, conferences and data sources. Those who would teach in the field, and so foster the interest of others, are frequently dissuaded from doing so by a dearth of suitable texts, references, case materials and other teaching aids. To embark on research or teaching in these circumstances very often requires a nontrivial investment of time and effort in developing resources, with very little in the way of immediate and tangible output. Most regrettably, the effort of those willing to take the plunge is often duplicated, an unaffordable dissipation of the scarcest of resources.

In the interests of conserving resources, the following details of research and teaching resources developed at or through the School of Accounting, Finance, and Management at The Flinders University of South Australia are made available:

- A literature database on Small Enterprise Financial Management has been created using the dedicated bibliographic database management system Pro-Cite™¹ (Version 2.02). Available on diskette, this database presently contains approximately 2,500 citations and is conveniently indexed on selected keywords. Citations range from 'how to' publications to works on research and teaching in the field.
- A literature database on Small Enterprise Theory, Research and Policy has also been created using Pro-Cite™. This database presently contains approximately 1000 citations, is indexed on selected keywords, and includes comprehensive lists of primary and secondary journals and major research conferences. Citations mainly relate to research and policy formulation 'trade craft' including taxonomy, conceptual frameworks and models, methodology, literature reviews, and

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research reviews and agenda. Citations on theoretical developments relating to small enterprise in a number of academic disciplines, amongst which are Finance, Economics, and Management, are also included.

- An interview schedule on financial management practices in small enterprises has been developed for use, as a whole or in part, in student assignments and academic research. The schedule contains 108 questions arranged in nine sections as follows: General Information, Accounting System, Financial Reporting and Analysis, Working Capital Management, Fixed Asset Management, Financial Structure Management, Financial Planning and Control, Financial Advice, and Financial Management Expertise. The schedule has been field tested over two years.
- A textbook entitled *Small Enterprise Financial Management: Theory and Practice* has been written and is expected to be available through Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in July, 1993. The authors are Associate Professor Richard McMahon and Mr. David Forsaith of The Flinders University of South Australia, Professor Scott Holmes of the Queensland University of Technology and Professor Patrick Hutchinson of the University of New England. The principal objective of the book is to provide an academically sound basis for study of the theoretical foundations, principles, practices, and institutions of small enterprise financial management. The book is intended to be a fully supported text for use in undergraduate and postgraduate university subjects in the field. It is assumed that the reader has already undertaken a basic study of financial management and is now in a position to consider the particular case of small enterprise which is more often than not ignored or glossed over in traditional financial management books.
- Course materials which include teaching outlines, reading lists, readings, class exercises, assignments, and examination papers have been prepared for a final year undergraduate subject entitled *Small Enterprise Strategy and Finance*. This subject, which considers small enterprise financial management within a strategic perspective and framework, has been taught for the last two years to students who have already undertaken an introductory subject in financial management. It is part of a minor sequence in Small Enterprise which also includes the subjects *Financial Management*, *Small Enterprise Economics*, and *Small Enterprise Theory and Policy*.

Further information about the Small Business Finance research and teaching resources outlined above is available from the author of this note. The author is also able to supply a contact list of those engaged in Small Business Finance research and teaching in Australian and New Zealand universities.

NOTE

1. Pro-Cite is a registered trademark of Personal Bibliographic Software, Inc.