

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor Professor Richard Pike. His wise guidance, intellect and unwavering encouragement have provided me the essential motivation to study in this area. He was always supportive, committed and enthusiastic throughout the whole research and thesis writing. I am thankful to him for introducing me to different aspects of the academic life. I also wish to thank Professor Ros Haniffa for her guidance and valuable suggestions in preparing the thesis.

A special note of thanks goes to Dr. Musa Mangena for his constructive suggestions. My gratitude and thanks also go to Dr. Deli Yang for her continuous support.

I gratefully acknowledge the funding granted by the School of Management, Bradford University. I am also indebted to the staff at the School of Management library, computing department, and doctoral office.

My special acknowledgement goes to my husband, Dr. Ci Lei, for his love, tolerance and encouragement throughout the Ph.D study.

Last, but not least, I am deeply indebted to my parents and sister for their love and support.